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| Respectfully, We Will Not Be SilentA Call to Action to End the Violence Plaguing the U.S. by Richard S. Hamburg, Executive Director, Safe States Alliance    |

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| Today, on the two-year anniversary of George Floyd’s senseless murder, one week after the deliberate mass murder of black Americans in a Buffalo supermarket, and now the day after 19 innocent children and two adults at Robb Elementary in Texas were gunned down, I am at a loss for words, plagued with questions. How often can we make public statements, express our outrage, and still take no action? When will this country finally put politics aside and respond to the needless violence in meaningful ways? What can we do as individuals and organizations to protect our children and humanity? How do we prevent ourselves from being complacent and move to meaningful action?  Safe States Alliance will not be silent and stand idly by. We are committed to working with our members, partners, elected officials, and funders to apply a [**public health approach to gun violence prevention**](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnA9MSZ1PTQxOTY0NzQzMSZsaT0zNTQzNzk3OA/index.html) and keeping this life and death issue prioritized in our programs, policies, and communications.   We are at a critical juncture. And the facts don’t lie. According to [*A Year in Review: 2020 Gun Deaths in the U.S.*](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnA9MSZ1PTQxOTY0NzQzMSZsaT0zNTQzNzk3OQ/index.html) from the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions, * Gun violence was the leading cause of death among children, teens, and young adults under 25
* There were 45,222 gun deaths in the U.S., the highest ever
* From 2019 to 2020, firearm homicides increased by 35%
* Black males were 20 times more likely to be a victim of gun homicide
* Every 2.5 days a child or teen was killed by an unintentional gun injury

And to cite a number from a 2018 Small Arms Survey – **civilians in the United States own 393 million firearms**. That is 120.5 firearms per person, more than 40 percent of all the civilian-owned guns in the world!   Don’t be swayed by gun lobby efforts to divert our attention by talking about the rise in homicides by other means (knives) or arguments that gun violence is just a manifestation of our mental health crisis. Yes, that crisis is real and investments in programs that promote health and prevent substance misuse and suicide, including support for school programs focused on students’ mental health and preventing substance use; and the strengthening of trauma-informed and culturally competent linguistically appropriate programs within all youth-serving agencies, including the juvenile justice system, are needed ([*Pain in the Nation 2022*](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnA9MSZ1PTQxOTY0NzQzMSZsaT0zNTQzNzk4MA/index.html)).  But let’s be clear, the majority of homicides and suicides involve firearms! We need common sense laws to address gun violence, not token action! Comprehensive actions like universal background checks, safe storage initiatives, a ban on military-style assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, implementation of Extreme Risk Protective Orders, and increased training on the safe and appropriate use of firearms, can make a significant impact.  Safe States calls for action today! [**Contact your elected officials and urge them to take action now to save lives!**](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnA9MSZ1PTQxOTY0NzQzMSZsaT0zNTQzNzk4MQ/index.html)   |

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| **Safe States Alliance**5456 Peachtree Blvd #244Atlanta, Georgia 30341 |

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| Email Us | 770-690-9000 | [www.safestates.org](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnA9MSZ1PTQxOTY0NzQzMSZsaT0zNTQzNzk4Mw/index.html) | [Unsubscribe](http://SSA.informz.net/z/cjUucD9taT0zNjQ1OTA0JnU9NDE5NjQ3NDMxJmxpPTM1NDM3OTg0Jmw9aHR0cDovL1NTQS5pbmZvcm16Lm5ldC9TU0EvcGFnZXMvZGVmYXVsdF91bnN1YnNjcmliZT9fenM9VldtNGR8X3ptaT1PbWZJ/index.html) |

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