

A Safer Future

Generation Z has grown up amidst a constant news cycle of gun violence, especially in schools. After the Parkland High School shooting in 2018, more young Americans than ever felt called to lobby for gun safety. That same spring, an estimated 1.2 to 2 million people participated in the first March for Our Lives, filling the streets of DC and hundreds of other cities worldwide¹. The second March for Our Lives in 2022 resulted in the successful Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), the first federal legislation concerning gun safety in almost 30 years². The White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention (WHOGVP) was established in 2023, and during its two years of operation, it centralized and coordinated federal response to gun violence, including state and local partnerships, designed executive actions, and carried out the BSCA³. On the first day that President Trump took office in 2025, his administration dismantled WHOGVP⁴. Gun control has become a paralyzingly divisive issue, but student activists are committed to continuing the momentum that sparked the BSCA.

March For Our Lives and Students Demand Action, both founded in 2018, are two of the largest student-led organizations committed to organizing and advocating against gun violence in America^{5,6}. Despite the closure of WHOGVP, progress in gun safety legislation at the state and local levels continues. In fact, states have already appropriated over \$110 million for Community Violence Intervention (CVI) since January of 2025⁷. Violence prevention and CVI are increasingly used to prevent gun violence before it happens. This national shift towards preventative action tackles all forms of gun violence, regardless of the context. For example, Extreme Risk Protection Orders (also referred to as red flag laws) allow community members to ask a civil court to revoke their immediate family members' access to guns if the individual poses a safety risk to themselves or others⁸. Firearm-related injuries are the *number one cause of death* for Americans aged 1-19, with yearly numbers only increasing since 2020⁹. But by mobilizing alongside one another in coalition, students can honor the lives lost to preventable gun violence and create a safer future.

¹ Cait Cafferty's "March for Our Lives (event)" in *EBSCO* (EBSCO Information Services, Inc., 2023)

² "The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, 1 Year Later," Center for American Progress (<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/the-bipartisan-safer-communities-act-1-year-later/>)

³ "White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention Year One Progress Report," The White House (<https://bidenwhitehouse.archives.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Year-One-Report-Final.pdf>)

⁴ "Trump Administration Actions on Gun Violence So Far," Everytown for Gun Safety (<https://www.everytown.org/trump-administration-guns-federal-action/>)

⁵, "Home," Students Demand Action (<https://studentsdemandaction.org/>)

⁶ "Home," March for Our Lives (<https://marchforourlives.org/>)

⁷ "CVI Policy Analysis and Tracking Hub," Giffords Center for Violence Intervention (<https://giffords.org/intervention/community-violence-intervention-policy-analysis-and-tracking-hub/>)

⁸ "The National ERPO Resource Center," Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (<https://erpo.org/#:~:text=What%20are%20E,for%20close%20attention%20to%20implementation.>)

⁹ Jason E. Goldstick et al. "Current Causes of Death of Children and Adolescents in the United States," in *New England Journal of Medicine*, vol. 386, no. 20, April 10, 2022

