



June 2, 2022

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the 1.7 million members of the American Federation of Teachers, I urge you to vote in favor of the Protecting Our Kids Act, an omnibus bill that would raise the age for buying semi-automatic rifles from 18 to 21 years old; make it a federal offense to import, sell, make or possess high-capacity magazines, with some exceptions; support the safe storage of firearms; and stiffen penalties for gun trafficking and straw purchases. More still needs to be done, but this is a start. If we can put a person on the moon, the United States can pass commonsense gun safety measures.

In the past two weeks, we watched as Black grocery shoppers in Buffalo, N.Y., and fourth graders in Uvalde, Texas, were massacred by 18-year-olds armed with AR-15s. And just yesterday, there were shootings at a Tulsa, Okla., medical building, a Walmart in Pittston Township, Pa., and a high school in Valley Glen, Calif. Once again, lives were senselessly lost and communities torn apart, and our country is trying to make sense of why we continue to be plagued by preventable gun violence.

Teachers, paraprofessionals and other school employees should not have to put themselves in harm's way to protect their students, and they should not have to—time and time again—comfort students who have been traumatized by tragedy. And nurses and health professionals are tired of treating the victims of violence in their emergency and operating rooms.

These AFT members are not alone. The overwhelming majority of Americans want action on commonsense gun safety, and they want it now. The Protecting Our Kids Act provides proven and popular measures that will help save lives and prevent guns from getting in the hands of would-be shooters.

Gun violence like this is a uniquely American problem. In the aftermath of Scotland's school shooting and Australia's Port Arthur mass shooting, both countries passed commonsense gun violence prevention policies to keep people safe. We cannot continue to do nothing, shooting after senseless shooting.

The **American Federation of Teachers** is a union of professionals that champions fairness; democracy; economic opportunity; and high-quality public education, healthcare and public services for our students, their families and our communities. We are committed to advancing these principles through community engagement, organizing, collective bargaining and political activism, and especially through the work our members do.

American Federation
of Teachers, AFL-CIO

AFT Teachers
AFT PSRP
AFT Higher Education
AFT Public Employees
AFT Nurses and Health
Professionals

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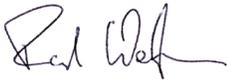
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We are still mourning the students and AFT members murdered in Newtown, Conn., in Parkland, Fla., and across the country in the more than 330 school shootings since Columbine. Gun violence isn't inevitable. We have the power to change this. While we mourn, and as we support survivors, I want us all to recommit ourselves to ending gun violence, and voting for the Protecting Our Kids Act is a good first step.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Randi Weingarten". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Randi" and last name "Weingarten" clearly distinguishable.

Randi Weingarten
President, American Federation of Teachers

RW : emc opeiu #2 afl-cio