

March 8, 2018

To: Governor Phil Scott,  
Speaker Mitzi Johnson,  
Pro Tempore Tim Ashe

From: Essex Westford School District School Board  
Re: Resolution Related to Action on Gun-Related Violence Prevention

Whereas, gun related violence at American public schools, including frequent mass shootings like the one last month in Parkland, Florida in which 17 staff members and students were killed, have reached epidemic levels; and

Whereas, our schools in Vermont are not immune to both the possibility and reality of such gun related violence and mass shootings, as evidenced by the 2006 shooting at our Essex Elementary School, the threat of violence at Essex High School last year, significant threats of violence last year against students at South Burlington High School, and most recently the thwarting of a plan for a mass shooting at Fair Haven High School; and

Whereas, Vermont school children spend increasingly more time participating in lock-down and active shooter drills (now more common than fire drills), detracting from time spent on critical classroom learning and invoking significant anxiety and fear among students and teachers; and

Whereas, Vermont school districts are forced to spend larger and larger portions of their limited budgets on security-related facilities upgrades, security personnel, trainings, and drills to defend our students, staff, and community members against military-style attacks on our students, staff, and school buildings; and

Whereas, students have the right to attend school free from the fear of death or injury as a result of gun-related violence; and

Whereas, parents have the right to send their children to a school in which they have confidence in their children's physical, psychological, and emotional safety; and

Whereas, communities have a right to protection against mass violence and abhorrent tragedy as the result of gun-related violence; and

Whereas, we are local elected officials charged with ensuring the education, health, and safety of students on behalf of parents and our community, and strive to build interpersonal, school, and community connections so that every student feels valued and safe,

We, the Board of the Essex Westford School District, declare it resolved that our elected officials in the Vermont House and Senate must pass common-sense gun violence prevention legislation during the 2018 legislative session, and that Governor Scott must sign such legislation into law to take effect immediately.

Four relevant pieces of legislation are currently before the VT House or VT Senate: S.6 related to universal background checks; H.422 related to removing guns from the scene of a domestic violence crime; S.221 related to enabling law enforcement officers to get an order to remove guns when a person shows signs of threat and danger; H. 876 related to prohibiting bump-fire stocks for firearms; S.55 related to the disposition of unlawful

and abandoned firearms; and H675 related to conditions of release prior to trial. We urge careful consideration of these and similar bills.

In addition, we urge the drafting and passage of legislation that has been proposed in previous legislative sessions which would prevent the possession, sale, or manufacture of military-style “assault weapons.” Such weapons are commonly used in mass shootings at schools resulting in tragic and widespread devastation and death. It is long past time when inaction is ethically or morally acceptable. We need you to help us keep our students and schools safe from gun-related violence.

cc: [Senator Tim Ashe](#)  
[Senator Philip Baruth](#)  
[Senator Debbie Ingram](#)  
[Senator Ginny Lyons](#)  
[Senator Christopher Pearson](#)  
[Senator Michael Sirotkin](#)  
[Representative Robert Bancroft](#)  
[Representative Betsy Dunn](#)  
[Representative Dylan Giambatista](#)  
[Representative Lori Houghton](#)  
[Representative Linda Myers](#)

[Senate Education Committee](#)  
[Senate Judiciary Committee](#)  
[House Education Committee](#)  
[House Judiciary Committee](#)  
[Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, Vermont Agency of Education](#)  
[Nicole Mace, Vermont School Boards Association](#)  
[Jeff Fannon, Vermont-National Education Association](#)  
[Jeff Francis, Vermont Superintendents Association](#)