



Stowe Middle School  
CONSTRUCT | EXPRESS | ACT

To: Sen. Baruth, Sen. Balint, Sen. Benning, Sen. Bray, Sen. Ingram, Sen. Whitney, Rep. Sharpe, Rep. Pearce, Rep. Webb, Rep. Beck, Rep. Conion, Rep. Cupoli, Rep. Giambatista, Rep. Joseph, Rep. Long, Rep. Mattos, and Rep. Miller.

Materials Submitted by: Sarah Evans, 8th Grader, Stowe Middle School

- Testimony for March 21st, 2018
- Petition signed by 262 Stowe Middle High School Students.

Contact via School Principal: [dan.morrison@lssuvt.org](mailto:dan.morrison@lssuvt.org) or 802-253-6913.

### **Testimony on School Safety for March 21st, 2018**

Good afternoon, my name is Sarah Evans and I attend Stowe Middle School. I have lived in Vermont long enough to know that we are a progressive, supportive state, and I am proud to call The Green Mountain State my home. I love Vermont, and the community that surrounds me. Everyone knows everyone, we stand with each other in tough times, and I ask that, today, on March 21st we stand together on the issue of school safety and specifically gun violence.

Parkland, Florida was voted one of the safest places to live. We often hear that Vermont is one of the safest states to live in, so this might not seem like a pressing matter. But how safe students, like me, feel in school is what we need to pay attention to. With the tragic school shooting that happened just over a month ago in Parkland, Florida at the back of students' minds, many of us want to make a difference, so we can prevent more school shootings. I do not want my parents to worry about whether or not they will ever get to see their children come home from school. So students do not have to feel the life-long pain of losing their best friend at such a young age. So that more students do not have to be sacrificed for our nation to see that there is a problem.

My school safety should not be a part of an ongoing debate, it should be a given. I understand that the problem is complex, and that the solution is not as simple as any one answer. But, I believe we need to require enhanced background checks and close the gun show loophole. I believe we should raise the legal age a Vermonter can purchase and own a firearm to 21. With

the current laws in place, anyone over the age of 16 can purchase and possess a handgun without the consent of a parent or guardian. That is younger than you need to be to be entrusted with the right to vote, to serve in the military, and to purchase alcohol. It is actually easier in Vermont for a 16 year old to buy a weapon than it is to get a driver's license.

I am only 14 years old, but all decisions concerning guns affect my life right now. I cannot imagine middle schoolers being able to buy a gun in two or four years. **THEY SHOULD HAVE TO WAIT!** I do not want to have to worry about a school shooting ever happening again. We are only 13 weeks into 2018, and we have already had over 18 school shootings nationwide. If this does not send an urgent enough message, I hope that the voices you hear today make it more clear. It is time to put an end to school violence, and to create safer learning environments for students, for your children, and for our teachers, because those 17 lives lost in Parkland, Florida will never step foot in a school again.

I know that some of the senators and representatives in this room are educators and parents and this has to impact you too. I ask for your support. I do not want to ever have to send a frantic text to my parents, as I hide in my classroom, trying to fit in a goodbye that I should never have to make. Just to make sure my parents know how much I love them, just in case I never see them again. No student should ever go through this, *ever* again. The time is now to make a change.

Thank you very much for your time, and for letting me speak today.