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Support of a Minnesota Ban on the Sale and Transfer of Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Magazines

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What we want. We want the Legislature to approve a ban on the sale and transfer of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, which would make Minnesota the eleventh state to do so. These mass “killing machines,” especially assault rifles, are semiautomatic versions of weapons created for deadly battlefield purposes. We know they are the weapon of choice for mass murderers, responsible for most of the devastating mass shootings, including mass shootings in our schools. An analysis of public mass shootings resulting in four or more deaths found that more than 85% of such fatalities were caused by assault rifles.¹ An assailant with an assault rifle is able to hurt and kill twice the number of people compared to an assailant with a non-assault rifle or handgun.² An article in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* stated, “AR-15 bullets can penetrate the soft body armor typically worn by police, which is built to stop handgun rounds.”³

Veterans know first-hand the damage these weapons of war cause. One Vietnam vet described how two young Vietnamese boys planted a bomb on his fire support base that went off prematurely. The assault rifle rounds fired by his fellow Marines literally ripped and exploded the boys’ bodies to shreds as they tried to escape. An Army medic in Vietnam described how an M16 round entered the left wrist of an attacking enemy soldier, traveled along his arm, through his chest and abdomen, and finally exited out the top of his right thigh.

Such horror stories aren’t limited to veterans. An emergency room doctor said damage done by assault rifle bullets looks like a grenade went off in a body, while damage from a 9mm handgun bullet looks like a bad knife cut. The gunman with assault weapons at a Las Vegas concert fired 1,000 rounds in ten minutes, murdering 60 people and injuring nearly 900. The damage was so devastating for the victims of the Robb Elementary School massacre in Uvalde, Texas, parents had to submit DNA swabs to identify the remains of their children.⁴ Using his legally acquired assault rifle, the shooter at Annunciation Church and School in Minneapolis on 8/27/25 fired 116 high-powered, military rounds in just a few minutes killing 2 children and wounding 23 people including 20 children.

We know that bans are legal and effective. Numerous studies confirm that state bans save lives. According to a study published in *Applied Economics Letters*, “[I]t was found that assault weapons bans in the states that approved them reduced the number of school shooting victims by 54%.”⁵ Similarly, a Johns Hopkins University study stated, “[W]e see a

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70% lower rate of individuals killed in mass shootings associated with state bans of [high-capacity magazines].⁶

We know that the experts and Minnesotans want them. According to a recent statewide poll, 61% of Minnesotans support a state ban on assault weapons, and 64% support banning high-capacity magazines.⁷ Gov. Walz has also voiced his strong support.⁸ The mayors of Minneapolis and St. Paul and seven other cities stated support for a ban, and the city councils of Minneapolis, St. Paul, and West St. Paul approved official actions in support. As a part of the hearings by the Senate Gun Violence Prevention Working Group, 10 organizations submitted “proposals” that stated support for a state ban on assault weapons, including 3 medical groups with a total of 14,000 members.¹⁰

We know the gun industry is about profit not protection. Their ghoulish marketing now targets women and children even though the plague of gun violence is the leading cause of death for American youth.¹¹ Our schools—with their regular, lock-down drills—have become a place of fear for our children. Yet the industry’s latest weapon is a smaller assault rifle for kids, the JR15, that fires a .22 caliber round. Advertising includes the company’s logo that features child skulls with rifle crosshairs for eyes and a pacifier.



It's about the guns. When it comes to mass shootings, it's about banning these weapons of war, not some imaginary Second Amendment right to buy them,¹² nor the dodge of blaming inadequate mental health services,¹³ nor the lie that AR-15-style rifles are not “weapons of war.” When firing either military or civilian ammunition, AR-15-style rifles are actually more powerful than the military’s standard-issue, M4 assault rifle that replaced the M16. What is more important is that this ammunition can tumble and fragment upon impact, which makes them horribly deadly. It's about our citizens—especially our children—and the lives that would be saved by this ban.

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For more information, see Everytown for Gun Safety, <https://www.everytown.org>, Brady, <https://www.bradyunited.org>, and Giffords, <https://giffords.org/?s=assault+weapons>. Two *Washington Post* articles provide graphic explanations of the grizzly effects of high-powered, assault weapon rounds.¹⁴

¹ Source: Giffords, https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/hardware-ammunition/assault-weapons/#footnote_1_5603.

² Source: Giffords, *ibid*.

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Source: "A 'good guy with a gun' doesn't stand much of a chance against an AR-15 style rifle and body armor," Ralph A. Weber, *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*, 6/14/2022.

⁴ Source: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2022/06/02/remarks-by-president-biden-on-gun-violence-in-america/#:~:text=The%20damage%20was%20so%20devastating, and%20those%20under%20restraining%20orders>.

⁵ "The effects of state and Federal gun control laws on school shootings," Mark Gius, *Applied Economics Letters*, 4/19/2027, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13504851.2017.1319555>

⁶ "Policies That Reduce Gun Violence: Restricting Large Capacity Magazines," Daniel Webster, Johns Hopkins University, 5/24, 2021, <https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2021/policies-that-reduce-gun-violence-restricting-large-capacity-magazines#:~:text=Our%20estimate%20was%20that%20laws, is%20licensing%20for%20firearm%20purchasers%20>

⁷ "New Poll: Majority of Minnesotans Demand Assault Weapons Ban; Pressure Mounts As Governor Walz Fails to Call Special Session One Month After Annunciation Church School Shooting," 9/29/2025, <https://www.everytown.org/press/new-poll-majority-of-minnesotans-demand-assault-weapons-ban-pressure-mounts-as-governor-walz-fails-to-call-special-session-one-month-after-annunciation-church-school-shooting#:~:text=61%25%20support%20a%20state%2Dlevel,address%2C%20surpassing%20taxes%20and%20education>

⁸ "Walz makes gun control central to pitch for third term: In Congress, Gov. Tim Walz received an "A" rating from the NRA. Now he wants action to curb gun violence," Allison Kite, *Minnesota Star Tribune*, 9/17/2025, <https://www.startribune.com/a-look-at-walzs-political-evolution-on-guns-as-he-launches-governor-bid/601475196>

⁹ Source: <https://www.mprnews.org/story/2025/09/19/gov-walz-interview-running-for-third-term>

¹⁰ Source: <https://www.senate.mn/schedule/senate/20250917>

¹¹ Source: "Preventing firearm violence and injuries impacting children and teens," Centers for Disease Control, 12/16/24, <https://www.cdc.gov/firearm-violence/php/research-summaries/children-and-teen-impacts.html#:~:text=Introduction,19%20in%202020%20and%202021>.

¹² On June 26, 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed by a vote of 5 to 4 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in *Heller v. District of Columbia* and established that the Second Amendment protects an individual right to possess firearms for self-defense in the home. The Court also specified that this protection extends to "arms" in common use for lawful purposes, such as self-defense, and that handguns are "arms" for the purposes of the Second Amendment. The decision does not protect weapons that are not "in common use" for lawful purposes, such as modern military weapons.

¹³ Claiming it's a mental health issue is just a dodge. In 2025, the Trump Administration and Congressional Republicans cut \$11.4 billion from various mental and behavioral health services that Democrats in Congress were able to approve over Republican opposition during the prior four years. Blaming inadequate mental health services is just bait-and-switch propaganda from the gun lobby and the NRA

¹⁴ https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2023/ar-15-force-mass-shootings/?itid=lk_inline_manual_2&itid=lk_inline_manual_2

https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2023/ar-15-damage-to-human-body/?itid=lk_inline_enhanced-template