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**NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE**

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**Contact  
Release**

**For Immediate**

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**COALITION OF STATE LEGISLATORS URGE ACTION ON  
STATE PLAN TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE**

*New York, NY-* In the wake of the horrific mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut that left 20 school children and 6 teachers dead, a coalition of more than 55 New York State Legislators presented a letter to legislative leaders urging them to pass a state plan to reduce gun violence. Joined today by advocates and victims of gun violence on the steps of City Hall, the coalition unveiled an eight point plan that will yield real results.

The public is demanding action following last week's massacre and so many other preventable acts of gun violence in recent years. The plan, which the coalition urges be passed when the legislature convenes, whether it be next week or in January, includes the following measures:

- **Require Universal Background Checks on the Sale of all Guns**
- **Strengthen Assault Weapons Ban**
- **Strengthen High Capacity Ammunition Magazine Ban**
- **Require Microstamping to Help Law Enforcement Solve Gun Crimes**
- **Require Gun Licenses to be Renewed Every 5 Years**
- **Improve Gun Dealer Regulations**
- **Regulate Ammunition Sales**
- **Limit Personal Gun Purchases to One a Month**

Many of these proposals have been longstanding bills in the legislature and have been endorsed by New Yorkers Against Gun Violence and the Violence Policy Center.

The letter to Assembly and Senate leadership and the legislative agenda are available online here: <http://bit.ly/T10sgZ>

**Senator Eric Adams, Co-Chair of State Legislators Against Illegal Guns:** "Numerous incidents throughout the year and most recently the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut makes it quite evident that gun violence is very prevalent in New York City and across the nation. This crippling epidemic must compel responsible legislators and community members to combat the

scourge of gun violence by demanding stronger gun control law reform. As legislators, we must collaborate on solutions to make our City a safer place. We have the duty to protect our citizens from the disastrous effects of gun violence."

**Assemblywoman Michelle Schimel, Co-Chair of State Legislators Against Illegal Guns and longtime gun control advocate:** "Are we at the tipping point on gun control? Can twenty babies and six dedicated teachers' lives change the political equation on strengthening gun laws in New York State and America? I hope so. New York State must be a leader on this issue. My constituents are demanding a plan. We have a plan."

**Assemblymember Brian Kavanagh Co-Chair of State Legislators Against Illegal Guns:** "The horrors of gun violence are never forgotten by the communities that experience them. We know that lax gun laws play a major role in contributing to this violence. We understand our obligation to take sensible action at the state level to alter the course we're on and keep our communities safe. We will not forget, and we will not rest until we've achieved this purpose."

Over 50 members of the New York State Senate and Assembly have signed the letter to state legislative leaders: Senator Dean G. Skelos, Leader, Republican Conference, Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, Leader, Independent Democratic Conference, Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Leader, Democratic Conference  
Assemblymember Sheldon Silver, Speaker, Assemblymember Brian M. Kolb, Leader, Republican Conference.

**Senator Michael Gianaris:** "How many atrocities are needed before we stand up and take action against the gun culture plaguing our nation? Newtown is only the latest of such avoidable horrors to visit our nation. The sensible gun proposals put forth today, which would make New York State the nation's toughest on guns, are the kinds of measures that must be passed to save the lives of innocent people. I join my colleagues in calling for immediate action on these proposals to make us safer from gun violence and keep such senseless, heartbreaking tragedies from repeating themselves time and again."

**Jackie Hilly, Executive Director New Yorkers Against Gun Violence:** "New York has always been a national leader on sensible gun laws. Every community in our state has the right to be safe and free from gun violence. Yet each week innocent children and women are injured and killed by high powered guns in the wrong hands. The legislation we support today addresses loopholes in our background check system, the horrible toll created by military style weapons and high capacity magazines in civilian hands, and the need for sensible regulations on the way guns are sold. 2012 has been the worst year for gun violence in our nation's history. These sensible and long overdue measures must be passed and signed into law this year. Then and only then can we honestly say that we are doing our best to keep New York safe."

**Leah Gunn Barrett, NYAGV Board Member:** "I support the legislation announced here today because as a mother and a victim of gun violence, I have some idea of what the parents in Newtown are going through. Their pain is the worst kind of pain imaginable. They lost their small children in a horrific act of gun violence. Each death affects so many others - family members, friends, co-workers, whole communities. The true number of victims each year is hundreds of thousands, millions over the years. And each senseless death diminishes us as a nation. If we are honest with ourselves, the shooting in Newtown and countless other acts of gun violence could and should have been prevented. Our shame is that for years we have known what to do. We just haven't bothered to do it or to demand it of our elected officials."

**Assemblywoman Amy Paulin:** “As elected officials, we must join together and do all that we can to protect innocent children and all New Yorkers from more senseless tragedies. The legislative packet we are endorsing today imposes crucial protections that will go a long way toward stemming gun violence. Protective measures include regulating ammunition sales, requiring regular gun license renewals, improving gun dealer regulations, limiting the frequency of handgun purchases, strengthening the assault weapons ban, and other critical measures.”

**Congresswoman-elect Grace Meng:** “The shooting in Newtown was a horrible and senseless attack that shocked and saddened me and all Americans. There is no more time for procrastination. I hope that the recent events will open the eyes of those who have been so staunchly opposed to common sense gun-control laws in the past.”

**State Senator Jose Peralta:** “The blood stain of gun of violence will only grow larger until we resolve at every level of government-federal, state, and local-to bring common sense and sanity to our laws governing firearms availability, sales and possession. The fight against gun violence is not a political issue, it is a moral issue. We must set partisanship aside and do what is right.”

**State Senator Gustavo Rivera:** “I agree with President Obama that we can and should do more to address issues of gun violence. We have to come together as elected officials to pass common sense laws that will make our communities safer and give law enforcement much-needed tools to curb gun violence.”

**State Senator Daniel Squadron:** “Enough is enough. New Yorkers are crying out for the common sense protections that will help keep our streets and our families safe from gun violence. From my bill to crack down on assault weapons, to critical background checks and limits on gun sales and the vital crime-solving tool of microstamping, this package will create the basic regulations we need to truly protect lives. Thank you to all of my colleagues who are working to make these protections a reality.”

**State Senator-elect Brad Holyman:** “The tragic and heart wrenching events of the last week underscore the immediate need for policymakers at every level of government to take concrete steps to limit access to firearms. New York State hasn't revised its gun laws in more than a decade. I am proud to join my colleagues in both the Senate and Assembly to support this common sense plan for new gun laws that will help reduce gun violence and make our communities safer. The time to act is now.”

**Assemblyman Steven Englebright:** “It is important for the state of New York to pass meaningful gun control legislation and thereby provide leadership by example in our populous state that can help advance the growing movement for similar legislation at the national level.”

**Assemblywoman Ellen Jaffee:** “The public has made it abundantly clear: the time for laws that ban weapons designed to kill people is now. New York State can and must become the gold standard in gun safety legislation, if only we can muster the political will on both sides of the aisle. Deaths from gun violence have become all too commonplace in our communities. We must seize this time and enact tough gun safety laws now, without loopholes, in order to protect the public.”

**Assemblyman Micah Kellner:** “We cannot wait for the federal government to act. We must reduce gun violence in New York State now by banning assault rifles, requiring microstamping of bullets and regulating ammunition sales. I commend Senator Adams, Assembly Member

Schimel and Assembly Member Kavanagh for all of their hard work. I urge all New Yorkers to join us in these efforts to keep our state safe.”

**Assemblyman Dan Quart:** “What happened in Newtown should be an inconceivable tragedy, but it is now all too easy for us to imagine. Extreme acts call for extraordinary and coordinated action from all levels of government, which is exactly what is proposed in this agenda. Beyond legislative action, both Mayor Bloomberg and Governor Cuomo must use their executive power to ensure that New York City and New York State do not do business with the manufacturers of unnecessarily deadly, military-style weapons.”

**Assemblymember Annette Robinson:** “I stand today with my fellow colleagues from the State as well as other concerned citizens in support of this major legislation to address the continuing issue of getting guns off the street. In the wake of the heinous killing of the school children and adults at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut, this legislation is not only timely but necessary. The time for talking is over. We must come together as a State and as a Nation to insure what happened in Newton, Connecticut does not happen again. Over the years in my own community, I have witnessed and been informed by our local precincts about the many instances of gun violence that has taken the lives of our young and senior citizens. We have held many protests against the gun violence that now seems so pervasive in our society. I stand with all in seeking change in our attitudes toward gun ownership and advocate for meaningful legislation to address this problem.”

**Assemblywoman Linda B. Rosenthal:** “It has unfortunately taken the massacre of 20 young children to force the country to started talking about strengthening gun laws. Though New York has some of the strongest gun laws in the country, we can do more. Military-style assault weapons have no place outside of the battlefield, and banning these weapons is a reasonable step to making the country safer and more secure. The Assembly has passed bills such as this time and time again, and it is time that the Senate muster the political courage to do what is right, and not merely what is politically expedient.”

**Assemblyman David Weprin:** “All of our lives have been forever changed by this horrific event. It is so hard to understand this terrible tragedy; it is unthinkable, it is unimaginable, it is incomprehensible. But so sadly, it is real. This time, it must be different; we must not look the other way. We must take action. Enough families have shed tears for their loved ones who have been victims of these heinous acts of violence. I will continue to work with my colleagues in Albany to tighten our gun control laws here in New York State.”

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NEW YORK STATE ASSEMBLY



NEW YORK STATE SENATE

December 20, 2012

Senator Dean G. Skelos, Leader, Republican Conference  
Senator Jeffrey D. Klein, Leader, Independent Democratic Conference  
Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Leader, Democratic Conference  
Assemblymember Sheldon Silver, Speaker  
Assemblymember Brian M. Kolb, Leader, Republican Conference  
New York State Capitol  
Albany, New York 12230

Dear Legislative Leaders:

The Sandy Hook School shootings have changed Americans' collective consciousness about gun violence in our country. The horror of witnessing 20 innocent elementary school children and their teachers being violently murdered will not be forgotten. It deserves the attention it is getting.

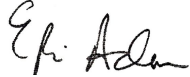
Yet we know that America's gun violence has been exceptional in the world for some time now. We know that every day children are being murdered with guns and it hardly makes news. Even mass shootings have become common enough that it takes an extraordinary horror to draw major news coverage. We also know that lax gun laws play a major role in contributing to this violence. We, as legislators, believe that we have an obligation to take sensible action to alter the course we're on and keep our communities safe.

There has been an appropriate focus on the need for federal action. We do indeed need such action, but we know that state legislators in New York and across the country have often created stronger laws than our federal counterparts can achieve consensus on, and whatever federal action may be taken now is unlikely to be an exception. As state legislators, we can and must lead the way. Our constituents are counting on it. They will demand a plan.

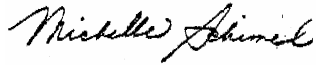
As our legislative leaders, we are calling upon you to move a legislative agenda that will yield real results in reducing gun violence. Our proposed agenda, which is attached ("Stronger Gun Laws: A Plan to Protect New Yorkers"), has been extensively reviewed by New Yorkers Against Gun Violence as well as the Violence Policy Center in Washington, DC. We are asking that these proposals be passed when the legislature convenes—whether it be next week or in January—and sent to Governor Andrew Cuomo, who has called for strong, prompt state action.

This issue cries out for legislative action that puts the safety of all New Yorkers above considerations of politics and partisanship. It is time to act. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Sen. Eric Adams



A.M. Michelle Schimel



A.M. Brian Kavanagh

Additional Signatories\*

Sen. Joseph P. Addabbo Jr.	A.M. Thomas Abinanti	A.M. Alan Maisel
Sen. Tony Avella	A.M.-Elect David Buchwald	A.M. Margaret M. Markey
Sen. Ruben Diaz	A.M. Karim Camara	A.M. John J. McEneny
Sen. Martin Malave Dilan	A.M. Barbara M. Clark	A.M. Grace Meng
Sen. Thomas Duane	A.M. William Colton	A.M. Joan L. Millman
Sen. Adriano Espaillat	A.M. Vivian E. Cook	A.M.-Elect Walter Mosley
Sen. Michael Gianaris	A.M. Marcos A. Crespo	A.M. Francisco P. Moya
Sen. Ruth Hassell-Thompson	A.M. Jeffrey Dinowitz	A.M. Catherine Nolan
Sen.-Elect Brad Hoylman	A.M. Steve Englebright	A.M. Daniel J. O'Donnell
Sen. Timothy Kennedy	A.M. Rafael Espinal, Jr.	A.M. Amy Paulin
Sen. Liz Krueger	A.M. Vanessa L. Gibson	A.M. N. Nick Perry
Sen.-Elect George S. Latimer	A.M. Deborah Glick	A.M. Dan Quart
Sen. Jose Peralta	A.M. Richard Gottfried	A.M. Annette Robinson
Sen. Bill Perkins	A.M. Dov Hikind	A.M. Robert J. Rodriguez
Sen. Gustavo Rivera	A.M. Earlene Hooper	A.M.-Elect Gabriela Rosa
Sen. John Sampson	A.M. Rhoda Jacobs	A.M. Linda B. Rosenthal
Sen. Jose M. Serrano	A.M. Ellen Jaffee	A.M.-Elect Nily Rozic
Sen. Daniel Squadron	A.M. Micah Kellner	A.M. Aravella Simotas
Sen. Toby Ann Stavisky	A.M.-Elect Ron Kim	A.M. Harvey Weisenberg A.M.
	A.M. Charles D. Lavine	David Weprin
	A.M. Barbara Lifton	

\* List of signatories in formation. Revised letter will be sent in the coming days.

Attachment

## **Stronger Gun Laws: A Plan to Protect New Yorkers**

### **Require Universal Background Checks on the Sale of all Guns**

- Require all gun sales to go through a licensed firearms dealer where a background check can be performed and proper records kept.
- Require criminal background checks on all gun dealer employees handling guns.

### **Strengthen Assault Weapons Ban**

- Broaden the definition of assault weapon to ban any weapon that has one prohibited characteristic rather than two as specified in current law. Include a provision for Superintendent of State Police to review new assault weapons and add them to a list of banned weapons if they meet statutory criteria.
- Ban possession and sale – no grandfathering.

### **Strengthen High Capacity Ammunition Magazine Ban**

- Ban possession and sale of all high capacity ammunition magazines over 10 bullets.

### **Microstamping Legislation to Help Law Enforcement Solve Gun Crimes**

- Require all semi-automatic handguns sold or delivered in New York to be equipped with a new technology that imprints a unique code onto the shell casings every time a gun is fired.

### **Require Gun Licenses to be Renewed Every 5 Years**

- Require 5-year renewable licenses for all those owning handguns. Currently licenses are only required to be renewed in New York City, on Long Island and in Westchester.

### **Improve Gun Dealer Regulations**

- Require gun dealers to have stringent recordkeeping, submit inventory to law enforcement, store firearms safely, and report lost or stolen firearms.

### **Regulate Ammunition Sales**

- Require background checks or showing of a permit on all ammunition sales. Look into types of ammunition sold if one does not have a handgun permit.

### **One Gun a Month**

- Limit people to the purchase of no more than one handgun a month.