

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Look for articles, editorials, or opinion pieces in your local paper about children killed or injured by guns—then reference that article at the top of your letter to the Editor.

Dear Editor:

In response to the recent article, *insert title of article and date*, about the tragic death of *insert child's name* by gun violence, we mourn with the family for their terrible loss and we mourn that we as a community have not stood up to stop the epidemic of gun violence that kills or injures a child or teen every thirty minutes. It is up to us to stop these preventable tragedies that rip families apart, and like the massacre in Newtown, Connecticut frighten our children and make them afraid to walk the street or go to school. We need to make our homes and streets and schools safe for our children. It's long past time to pass common sense gun safety laws and protect children, not guns.

SAMPLE OP-ED

The massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School shocked the nation. We mourned with the mothers and fathers and sisters and brothers who would never see their loved one again. We learned heartbreaking details about the six- and seven-year olds who would not be home for Christmas. Did you know every three days in America more children and teens are killed by gun violence than were killed that horrible December morning in Newtown, Connecticut?

Each and every day, bullets pierce the hearts of more than seven mothers who have to bury their children instead of tucking them into bed at night. Where is the safe harbor for our children? How young do the victims have to be and how many children need to die before we stop the proliferation of guns in this country and the killing of innocent children?

This gun violence epidemic that kills or injures a child or teen *every thirty minutes* must be stopped. People of faith and good conscience must not stand by and let our political leaders protect gun makers and gun owners instead of vulnerable children who rely on us to protect them. It is up to us to stop these preventable tragedies that tear families apart and fuel recurring nightmares in our children making them afraid to leave the house to go to school.

By any standards of human and moral decency, children in America are under assault. Since 1979 when gun death data were first collected by age, a shocking 119,079 children and teens have been killed by gun violence. That is more child and youth gun deaths than all the Americans killed in action in every war since World War II combined. Where is the anti-war movement to stop the killing fields here at home?

It is way past time for all of us to stand up and demand common sense gun safety laws so we protect children, not guns. Reasonable people should agree we have no need for weapons of mass destruction on our streets like the assault rifle used to kill the first graders in Newtown. Do gun owners really need high-volume ammunition magazines for sport or self-protection? When toy guns and teddy bears are regulated by consumer safety standards, why in the world aren't real guns that relentlessly kill our children week in and week out? Isn't it time we close the gun show loophole so 100 percent of gun buyers have to pass a background check before buying a gun?

Thirty-two years ago a mother lost her 13-year-old daughter when a repeat offender drunk driver killed her daughter on the streets of California. She started a movement and she called it MADD, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. Laws and our culture of drinking and driving changed. Now it's time to join with the Children's Defense Fund to Protect Children, Not Guns. Arm yourself with the facts and then stand up and speak up and demand the President and members of Congress pass common sense gun safety measures and protect children, not guns.