



To: Honorable Rick Scott, Governor and Members of the Florida Legislature
From: The Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence
Date: March 1, 2018
RE: Our Position on SB 7026/HB 7101 and Gun Violence and School Safety Reforms in Florida

The Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence **cannot support SB 7026 and HB 7101 as these bills currently exist.**

We cannot support dangerous measures that put more guns in schools, and we join the vast majority of Floridians who refuse to ask teachers and administrators to serve as armed security guards. We reject the assertion that teachers and administrators can viably match the training and expertise of professional law enforcement and fundamentally believe that a teacher's job is to teach. More guns in schools **exponentially increases the likelihood of gun violence or mishaps on campus. The gun lobby believes the answer to all problems is more guns and will oppose** any legitimate reform, tooth and nail. We cannot indulge a fantasy that putting guns in our teachers' and administrators' hands will protect students from an assailant with easy access to a semiautomatic assault weapon.

This Coalition joins with Parkland students and parents in vigorously opposing provisions of these bills like the so-called Marshal Program. The call to action from Parkland survivors and the families of those taken by this tragedy is clear: Ban semiautomatic assault weapons and large capacity magazines, and institute laws that require every person purchasing a firearm to pass a substantive background check. We join them in each of these demands and reject measures that put our students and teachers at even greater risk.

While the Coalition appreciates the efforts to address these challenging issues, these bills are woefully insufficient as written. We fervently reject any notion that their redeeming elements cannot be accomplished without the poison pill of arming our teachers. Lawmakers can and should address critical needs for school hardening and mental health funding. The Coalition rejects the premise that this cannot be accomplished without putting more guns on campuses with our state's children. The Coalition also urges you to advance--in SB 7026 and HB 7101 or as stand alone legislation--the existing bills for risk protection orders (HB 231/SB 530), an assault weapons ban (HB 219/SB 196), and comprehensive background checks (HB 838). This absolutely can be done. For the students, teachers, administrators, and staff of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, Parkland, your constituents, and residents of Florida, it must be done.

Sincerely,

The Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

Formed shortly after the tragedy at Pulse nightclub in 2016, the Florida Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence is the leading voice for gun safety reforms in Florida. The coalition represents over 125 organizations committed to reform in Florida including the League of Women Voters of Florida, the Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus, the Florida Parent/Teacher Association, and Equality Florida.