

WE NEED COMMON SENSE GUN SAFETY MEASURES AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Presented at

“People’s Filibuster for Gun Safety”

Submitted by

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June 16, 2022

I am [Janet Murguía](#), President and CEO of UnidosUS, the largest national Hispanic civil rights and advocacy organization in the US.

The Latino community is still reeling from the hate-filled mass shooting in [Buffalo, New York](#) and most recently in [Uvalde, Texas](#), just a few weeks ago. Nineteen young children and two of their teachers—nearly all of whom were Latino and Latina—were brutally murdered in their classroom on what was one of the last days of school.

Protecting our children and helping them cope with the aftermath of such violence is of paramount importance to our community across the country.

As such, Hispanics have a vital interest in ensuring that our country takes long overdue steps to address the epidemic of gun violence. Nearly 20,000 Latinos are wounded or killed each year by guns, and Latino children are three times more likely to be killed by gun violence than white children.

In the aftermath of another shooting—the 2016 murder of 49 people, [36 of whom were Hispanic](#), at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida—UnidosUS announced our strong support for robust, common sense gun measures. We called for a ban on assault weapons, universal background checks, and other reasonable restrictions on the acquisition of firearms and ammunition consistent with the protections of the civil rights of all Americans, improved collection and analysis of gun violence data by the federal government, and an increase in mental health supports.

In the wake of Uvalde and Buffalo, we call for additional gun safety measures to help stem future mass shootings including:

- red flag laws
- closing loopholes in background check laws
- safe storage laws
- and raising the age to purchase assault weapons from 18 to 21.

While modest, we believe that the recent bipartisan agreement in the Senate is a good first step to enacting some of these long overdue policies.

We also firmly believe, though, that recognizing gun violence is a public health crisis must be an imperative for change. We support significant support for mental health services that not only help to reduce threats, but also help support communities that must grapple with the harms of gun violence.

And given our experiences in Orlando and El Paso, it is critical that those mental health services be linguistically and culturally competent, since language barriers and cost have been obstacles to care for many Latino children and adults.

We cannot allow future generations of children to die or suffer life-long mental and physical health effects from continued unchecked gun violence. We have do whatever we can to prevent the next Uvalde or the next Buffalo.

After so much horror and trauma, we must—and can—act to heal now and to change our future. We must do all we can to embrace every community that is suffering.

We need action now, starting with common sense gun safety measures and mental health resources, that protect our children and offer all of us a safer tomorrow.

Las familias de Uvalde siguen presentes en nuestros pensamientos y oraciones.

Necesitamos ayudarlos a ellos y a otras comunidades en nuestro país para que puedan sanar. Y debemos trabajar para cambiar nuestros futuros.

Necesitamos acción ahora, comenzando con reformas sensatas en nuestras leyes sobre armas de fuego y recursos de salud mental que protejan a nuestros niños y nos den a todos un mañana más seguro.

Thank you very much.