



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

A Service Sorority Founded in 1913

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Statement from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. Regarding the Losses of Life from Gun Violence Over the Past Week

My Dear Sorors,

Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated sends heartfelt condolences to the loved ones of the 16 victims killed across the country, including a high school student who died today in Matthews, North Carolina. The losses of life over the past week are a gut-wrenching reminder of the dire need for common sense gun reform in America. While we grieve my sisters, we must also fight. We cannot allow rampant gun violence to become a new normal in America. **If not us, who? If not now, when?**

We must also address the massacre in a Pittsburgh synagogue and the hate-filled shootings in Kentucky. In Pittsburgh, a man ran inside the Tree of Life synagogue shouting anti-Semitic slurs and opened fire on the congregation, killing 11 people and injuring six in the attack. The victims were Jerry Rabinowitz, Brothers Cecil and David Rosenthal, Rose Mallinger, Bernice and Sylvan Simon, Daniel Stein, Joyce Fienberg, Richard Gottfried, Melvin Wax and Irving Younger. In Kentucky, two innocent African Americans, Maurice Stallard and Vickie Jones, were killed at a Kroger Grocery Store by a white man with a history of violence after a failed attempt to barge into a Black church. They were murdered for no other reason than hate.

These shootings took place a few days after we mourned the loss of two members of our organization whose lives were cut short by gun violence: Officer Farrah Turner and Angela M. Bledsoe. Soror Turner, a law enforcement officer, died after being ambushed while trying to serve an arrest warrant. She later passed away at a hospital in South Carolina. Soror Bledsoe was found in her home with multiple gunshot wounds. Media outlets are reporting that she was a victim of domestic violence. According to local authorities, her partner and the father of her young child is a suspect. He remains at-large. We will continue to lift their families in prayer.

Gun violence comes in many forms - mass shootings, domestic violence, drive-by shootings and criminal acts. These senseless acts occur daily in cities across this country, and the proliferation of guns in our communities must be contained through common sense gun reform. Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. has long held the position that we can save thousands of lives with common sense measures such as universal background checks, waiting periods for gun purchases and raising the gun purchase age to 21 years old.

While we pray for the victims and their families, we will also push for gun reform. The lives of our loved ones and all citizens depend on it.

Sisterly,

Beverly E. Smith

Beverly E. Smith
National President and CEO