

## MEMORANDUM

To: Reporters, Editors and Producers  
From: Stacey Radnor, Deputy Communications Director, Everytown for Gun Safety  
Re: Gun Politics in 2015 and What's Ahead in 2016

---

As you prepare coverage and commentary to close out the year, and following multiple high-profile shootings in San Bernardino, Colorado Springs and Umpqua Community College that have renewed interest in America's everyday gun violence – it's easy to fall back on the conventional wisdom that gun politics will never change.

But in 2014, in spite of continued gridlock and intransigence in DC, we committed to take the gun safety movement to the states – and in 2015 that's exactly what we did. Through the work of our grassroots supporters, who are part of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America and the Everytown Survivor Network – now more than 3.5 million strong, we went head to head with the gun lobby in states across the country. And we made remarkable progress by advancing common-sense gun laws, beating back the NRA's guns everywhere agenda, building our movement, and positioning ourselves for a suite of legislative, electoral and ballot initiative victories in 2016.

The politics of guns in America is already changing. Governors, legislators, and even Presidential candidates are standing up to the gun lobby, ushering in a new era of strength on the side of gun safety. Here's what we did to make that happen:

***We Racked Up Proactive Victories for Safer Gun Laws – and Saw Governors Stand Up to the Gun Lobby in the Process.***

- **Background Checks:** Oregon became the [18th state in the country](#) to require background checks on all handgun sales – and the sixth state to pass background check legislation since Sandy Hook.
- **Domestic Violence:** Legislatures in nine states – AL, DE, LA, ME, NV, OR, SC, VT and WA stood up for women and enacted legislation to protect victims of domestic violence by keeping guns out of the hands of dangerous abusers.
- **Governors bucked the NRA** – including in NH, MT and WV – by vetoing NRA priority legislation that would have dismantled state concealed carry permitting systems and let people carry concealed, loaded handguns without a permit or training.

### ***We Also Defeated the NRA's Priorities.***

This year Everytown led campaigns to defeat dangerous NRA-backed gun proposals in states across the country – in fact, at least **64 gun lobby priority bills** were defeated or failed to advance this past legislative session.

- **Permitless Carry:** We defeated bills in at least 16 states that would have dismantled state concealed carry systems and let people carry concealed, loaded handguns in public with no permit and no training. States included: **CO, GA, IN, IA, MN, MO, MT, NV, NC, NH, SC, SD, TN, TX, UT and WV.**
- **Guns on college campuses and in K-12 Schools:** We defeated bills that would have forced colleges and universities to allow people to carry guns on campus in **15 states, including in: AR, CO, FL, GA, IN, MT, NC, NV, OK, SC, SD, TN, VA, WV and WY.** And, we defeated bills that would have allowed people to carry guns in public schools in **16 states, including in: AR, CO, IL, FL, IA, MO, MT, NC, NV, ND, OK, TN, TX, VA, WA and WY.**

In Texas, the only state where a guns on campus bill was passed, the final version was so significantly watered down that even the [key proponent of the bill said](#), “As much as we dislike it, we must give the devil its due – we got outplayed on every front. We’re not happy about it, but we can admit when we’ve lost. We don’t need to hide behind a gutted bill to save face. We’ll try again in 2017.” **You know you’re winning when the other side says they lost.**

### ***We’re Making Guns a Winning Political Issue for Candidates – Even on the NRA’s Home Turf.***

You can tell from the presidential campaign trail – where for the first time in many cycles, candidates are proactively addressing our country’s gun violence problem and presenting plans for how they will save lives as president.

It’s in no small part because in the 2014 midterm elections we proved that gun safety is a winning issue [with decisive victories around the country](#). Fast forward to state legislative elections this year in Virginia – the backyard of the NRA – where, in two major State Senate races, gun safety was either the [winning factor or helped tighten the race](#) in a previously non-competitive district. The results coming out of Virginia are a sign of what’s to come: gun safety is gaining ground and the gun issue – once considered a political third rail – can help close the gap for candidates.

### ***We Are Making the Case for the President to Take Executive Action on Guns.***

Just last month, [GQ released an interview](#) with President Obama where he said that he hopes guns will be the dominant issue of his last year in the White House – and that he

"will do everything [he] can to make sure that there's a sustained attention paid to this thing." Everytown recently released [Business as Usual](#), a first-of-its kind analysis and recommendations for executive action on guns. The report gives the President the evidence he needs to use executive orders to crack down on gun trafficking by setting a standard for what it means to be engaged in the business of selling guns and be required to run a background checks on gun sales.

### ***Beyond Politics, We Are Building a Movement and Changing the Culture of Gun Safety.***

- This year our movement grew from 2.4 million supporters to more than 3.5 million supporters nationwide. On top of that, we doubled our donor base to 85,000. These are the same supporters and donors who are showing up at statehouses, making calls and sending emails to let legislators know that we expect them to stand on the side of public safety and will hold them accountable for that at the ballot box.
- In addition, after a cruel summer of gun violence from Chicago to Charleston, Chattanooga and the Lafayette movie theatre shooting – capped off by a high profile murder of a reporter and her cameraman live on TV in Roanoke, Virginia – we launched the [Everytown Survivor Network](#), which brings together Americans who have been personally affected by gun violence to work together to fight for solutions to reduce gun violence. The Survivor Network, along with many other Americans, pledged to do ‘**Whatever It Takes**’ to prevent gun violence in America. With nearly **1,000 survivors of gun violence as members**, CNN called this network of powerful new advocates [“The Other Gun Lobby.”](#)
- This year we also launched the **Everytown Creative Council**, [chaired by Julianne Moore](#). With nearly 100 cultural influencers joining forces so far, they will help amplify the gun safety movement.
- **Moms Demand Action** also [launched a national public education](#) campaign this year asking gun owners and non-gun owners alike to [Be SMART](#) to reduce the number of unintentional child shootings with responsible gun ownership.
- And, our supporters came together to end gun violence and marked the first ever National Gun Violence Awareness Day in June when more than 200 organizations and cultural influences including President Obama, Motown Records, the New York Mets, MTV, and many more wore orange, all while the **#WearingOrange** hashtag trended worldwide on Twitter and reached more than 220 million people worldwide in a single day.

***Now We Set Our Sights on 2016.***

When we launched Everytown, we embarked on a new journey in the gun safety movement, with a renewed focus on winning in the states. Building off the background check win in Washington state last year, we're embarking on two new ballot measure battles in 2016 to require background checks on all gun sales: Nevada and Maine.

Nevada's background check initiative qualified for the 2016 ballot with a record number of signatures and in Maine, we're well on our way to qualifying – in fact, in a single day, we gathered 10,000 signatures.

The gun lobby learned a tough lesson in 2015: when you go toe-to-toe with gun safety advocates, you'll lose. And looking ahead to the 2016 Presidential elections, we'll continue to elevate the issue of gun safety to the national platform because moms, gun violence survivors and everyday Americans will trail the candidates to ask a simple question: "What will you do to prevent the gun violence that kills 88 Americans every day?"

###