Do We Have to Draw a Picture for Them?
Handguns Are Killing California's Kids
Youth Want You to Know

Tell Them Like It Is:

Here’s How

Three simple ways you can let your candidate know that handguns are killing California’s kids:

1. Write a Letter to the Editor.

2. Write a Letter to a Candidate.

3. Circulate the Student Petitions Inside.

...And Earn a Free T-Shirt
Writing a letter to the editor is a good way to express your views on current events. Politicians and community leaders regularly read letters to the editor to check out public opinions. Write a letter to the editor of your local daily, school or community newspaper and tell them how important preventing handgun violence is to you. When writing a letter to the editor, keep the following points in mind:

- **The Basics.** Start your letter with “Dear Editor.” Include your name, address, date and phone number, an editor may call you to verify your information.

- **Tell why you are writing,** preferably in the first sentence. If you are responding directly to an article you read in a newspaper, state the article’s headline and publication date.

- **Limit the content to one or two key points.** Focus on the one strong message that you want readers to get from your letter.

- **Keep your letter brief.** Your letter should be three to four paragraphs at the maximum. The more direct and simple your letter is, the more likely it will be published.

- **Take a strong position.** Editors look for fresh facts, honest statements of opinion, and creative points of view. Use the facts that show the urgency or importance of your issue.

- **Send the Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids a copy of your letter to the editor.**
candidates running for office and elected officials pay close attention to the mail from their constituents regarding important issues. To let your local candidates know you're concerned about the effect of handgun violence against kids, write them a letter. They will certainly read it – and remember it.

Here's How:

- Look over the sample letter below for ideas.
- Fill in the name and address of the candidate or elected official you are writing.
- Be sure to make the letter personal. Explain to your candidate or elected official why preventing handgun violence is important to you.
- Send The Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids a copy of your letter to the candidate or elected official, as well as any response you receive.

Dear Mr./Ms. Candidate:

My name is Joe Smith and I am a senior at Valley High School. I am deeply concerned about the fact that handguns are the #1 killer of kids in California. Did you know that more kids are killed by handguns than by diseases or car crashes? Did you know that 10 kids are killed every day by handguns?

(insert personal message here)

If you are elected as __________, what will you do to protect young people from handgun violence? What will you do to make sure that our neighborhoods and schools are safer?

Please let me know your views on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Joe Smith
122 Maple Street
Mytown, CA 92220
(818) 555-1234
When candidates are presented a petition signed by the people who live in their district, they pay attention.

- Pass around this petition at your school or youth group, and send a message to your candidate that young people are committed to doing something about handgun violence.
- When you have completed the petitions, copy them and send the originals to your candidate with a letter asking him or her what they are going to do to prevent handgun violence.
- Send a copy of the signed petition to The Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids.
STUDENT PETITION
YOUTH WANT YOU TO KNOW

To: ____________________________
    name of candidate

We, the undersigned students of ________________________ are concerned about handgun violence in our community.

If elected in ____________________________, you will have the power to do something about handgun violence against
California kids. We ask that you make preventing handgun violence an important part of your campaign and legislative agenda.

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THE CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT HANDGUN VIOLENCE AGAINST KIDS
454 Las Gallinas Avenue, Suite 177
San Rafael, CA 94903-3618
(415) 331-3337 Fax (415) 331-2969

A public education campaign funded by a grant from The California Wellness Foundation
The Facts About HANDGUN VIOLENCE and Kids

Use these facts in your letters to the editor and letters to the candidates.

- A handgun is produced every 20 seconds in America.¹

- More kids are killed by handguns in California than by car crashes, diseases or drugs.²

- 10 kids are killed everyday by handguns.³

- In 1992, 37% of all firearm-related deaths were young people aged 10-25.⁴

- The average cost for one hospitalized gunshot wound patient is $33,000.⁵

- The direct costs to California taxpayers in 1991 for firearm injuries was estimated at $176.8 million.⁶

- A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to be used to kill a family member or friend or to commit suicide than for self defense.⁷

- There are 18 times more gun dealers than McDonald's in California.⁸

- There are fewer federal safety regulations for guns than for teddy bears.⁹

- Cheap, poorly made and easily concealable handguns called Saturday Night Specials, are disproportionately represented in homicides and other crimes. In 1993, 8 out of 10 guns most frequently confiscated by police in California were Saturday Night Specials.¹⁰

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