



PHILADELPHIA

FEDERATION of TEACHERS

Jerry T. Jordan, President | Tuesdays with Toomey Gun Violence Call to Action

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Good afternoon. I'm Jerry Jordan, President of the Philadelphia Federation of Teachers.

- We're here in **solidarity**, in **sorrow**, and in **rage**.

We're here because the crisis of gun violence continues unchecked. And **far** too many elected officials in Harrisburg and Washington continue to refuse to take action either because they simply don't care—or because their votes are bought and paid for by the gun lobby.

- Or maybe both.

I've said this so many times: the crisis of gun violence is *too much to bear*. So many lives stolen:

- Ten people in Buffalo in a predominantly Black neighborhood.
- Twenty-one people—including nineteen fourth-graders and two teachers—in Uvalde, Texas.
- Three young souls in a mass shooting right here in Philadelphia this weekend.
- In the last ten days, there have been at least 94 shootings here in our beloved city.
 - This weekend, on the same day as the mass shooting on South Street, a pregnant woman was murdered—doctors saved her unborn child who now comes into this world under such trauma and sorrow.
- And let's be very clear that the impact of this deadly crisis disproportionately impacts Black and brown communities.
 - Black and brown people are living with, *and dying from*, this crisis at rates that are [staggeringly higher](#) than white people.

- In Philadelphia, 77% of the shooting victims in 2022 have been Black. 14% have been Latino.
- **We do not have to live like this, and we sure as hell don't have to die like this.**
- We continue to talk about these tragedies—as we should, and as we must—and we must also talk about solutions—because we know they exist.
 - We know that any reduction in gun violence must come in a multipronged approach— and we know that means *true investment* in our communities.
 - It means meaningful, sustainable funding for public education. More counselors. More teachers. More support staff. More resources—*resources that in wealthier, whiter school districts are considered non-negotiable.*
- And we also know that a real, actionable solution is meaningful gun reform.
 - The legislation is written. And it's the will of reasonable elected officials, and it's the will of the people. Today, we're calling on Senator Toomey, once again, to take action.
 - We're calling on him to make the desperately needed changes we need to this nation's gun laws:
 - Laws that permit 18 year olds to buy assault rifles.
 - Laws that make it easier to get an assault rifle than it is for a woman to make her own health care choices.
 - Laws that make it easier to get an assault rifle than it is to go to a school that is adequately staffed.
- But it does not stop with Senator Toomey.
 - In the state legislature, as Rep. Malcolm Kenyatta pointed out, the House Democrats have put forth more than *five dozen* gun safety bills.
 - And you know how many the Republican majority has allowed to come up for a vote? *Zero.*

- We are a **city, commonwealth, and nation in crisis.**
 - Shame on every single elected official who sits idly by in the name of so-called-freedom while our neighbors, our families, and our loved ones are killed.
 - Shame on elected officials who are proposing outrageous ‘solutions’ like arming teachers or simply making schools ‘harder.’
 - *It doesn’t have to be this way, and shame on Senator Toomey and every elected official who allows this devastation to go on.*