

CEASE FIRE PA CONFERENCE

City Hall

Thursday, August 31, 2023 | 3:00PM

Jerry Jordan, President, Philadelphia Federation of Teachers



Good afternoon. While I appreciate the opportunity to join so many valued partners today, I wish that events like these, where we once again call attention to the urgent need for legislative action around gun violence, were unnecessary.

- Again and again we gather, we rally, we march, we call out the deeply human toll of this devastating crisis, but *Republican leaders at both the state and federal levels rebuke our collective efforts to something so fundamental— **safety in our daily lives.***

In just a few short days, our students will enter their classrooms for the first time this school year— classrooms that educators have been working all week (and truthfully much of the summer) to prepare as they plan for the year ahead.

- This is a time filled with **hope**, with **anticipation**, and with the **dreams** and **aspirations** of the very future of this great city and nation—*our children.*
 - But once again, the year begins with the pervasive gun crisis that has wreaked havoc on so many of our young people's lives.
- Last school year alone, **thirty three of our students were killed** and **199 were shot**— these are numbers with names behind each of them—and these numbers and names should horrify us all.
- In just the last few days, we have seen the horrific racist murder of three individuals in **Jacksonville** and the murder of a **UNC professor.**

And as we begin the school year ahead, ***it is absolutely reprehensible that Congress would do anything but take the urgent action this moment demands.***

- There are legislative solutions that exist—and they are simple. I will defer to Congresswoman Scanlon to outline more about this legislation, but it should be no question that assault weapons have no place in our society.

Every day, guns rob our students and communities of so much.

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- Children should be able to play outside,
 - Students and staff should be able to go to and from school – and work and learn in school buildings,
 - Neighbors should be able to come together for a block party,
 - and seniors should be able to take transit to go the doctor
 - ***without fear.***

But every day that Congress refuses to act, those fears are all too real. And the reality is far too deadly.

- Shame on every single elected official who refuses to act with the life and death urgency this crisis demands.

Thank you.