



## **CASP Statement on Guns in Schools**

It is time to acknowledge that access to guns plays an important role in many acts of serious violence in the United States.

Multiple lines of research have demonstrated a clear connection between local availability of guns and gun-related violent behaviors, with estimates of close to 2 million children and adolescents having access at home to loaded, unlocked guns.

Although guns are never the simple cause of a violent act, the availability of lethal weapons including assault type weapons to youth and adults with emotional disturbance and antisocial behavior poses a serious public health problem. Our political leaders need to find a reasonable and constitutional way to limit the widespread availability of guns to persons who are unwilling or unable to use them in a responsible, lawful manner.

CASP strongly endorses a renewed nationwide and local effort to address the problem of mass shootings that have occurred repeatedly in our schools and communities. Now is the time for our political leaders to take meaningful action to address the need to support positive mental health development for youths, which would mitigate (highly) negative reactions that lead to tragedies related gun violence. At the same time, concerned citizens in every community should engage in comprehensive planning and coordination to promote prosocial behavior and prevent violence in our schools and communities. These plans must include planned access to high quality mental health services for youth especially for those who show signs of being overwhelmed by psychological distress, including depression, anxiety, withdrawal, anger, and aggression as well as assistance for the families that support them. These plans should not include arming teachers. Doing so places an unrealistic, unreasonable burden on America's educators, has the potential to cause more harm from unintentional or inaccurate discharge of firearms, and can undermine the sense of safe, supportive learning environments.

The bottom line is that we must all work together toward the common goal of nurturing youths for positive outcomes while keeping our schools and communities safe.

Adopted by CASP Executive Committee  
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