

February 24, 2026

Minnesota State Capitol Room 120
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Members of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the undersigned medical organizations, representing thousands of physicians across the state, we respectfully urge you to support legislation to ban assault weapons and high-capacity magazines in Minnesota.

The leading cause of death for children in the U.S. is not cancer, car crashes, or overdose – it is firearms. According to a report published in 2024 by the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, firearm deaths among those aged 1 to 17 have increased by 106 percent since 2013 and have been the leading cause of death among this group since 2020. Episodes of school shootings have also risen sharply in recent years. These tragedies, including the August 27 shooting at Annunciation Catholic Church and School, leave children and families devastated, and leave a lasting impact on survivors and other school-aged children. Increased exposure to gun violence adversely impacts the psychological and mental well-being of children and adolescents and negatively affects their educational performance and social development.

In addition, studies cited by Everytown for Gun Safety found that states with bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines experienced a lower rate of mass shooting fatalities compared to states without such bans. Furthermore, studies have also found that mass shooting fatalities were 70% less likely during the 10-year period of the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban, compared to the periods before and after the ban expired in 2004.

According to the latest finalized data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 48,204 people died from gunshots in the U.S. in 2022 – the second highest total ever recorded. More people suffer nonfatal firearm-related injuries than die, but those who survive often experience long-term traumatic impacts. These include problems with memory, thinking, emotions, paralysis, other physical disabilities, and chronic mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

There is no other way to say it – death and injury by firearm is a public health crisis. In 2022, firearm injuries ranked among the five leading causes of death for people ages 1-44 in the U.S. Physicians and other healthcare professionals witness firsthand the devastating impact of firearm violence on individuals, families, and communities. As physicians, we respectfully call on state lawmakers to enact evidence-based firearm policies to save lives and protect the well-being of all Minnesotans, but especially those who are most vulnerable – children and adolescents.

Sincerely,



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President, Minnesota Medical Association



Katie Smentek, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics



Jamie Conniff, MD, MPH
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