

The School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act

Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Jahana Hayes, and Lucy McBath

Sen. Michael Bennet

The American people deserve better data on school shootings. Congress must act to make that data available.

Background

In Sandy Hook, Parkland, and countless communities across the country, gun violence has claimed the lives of students and educators.

The first step toward stopping school shootings is better understanding when and how they happen. There is currently no official data collection on this issue, leaving a gaping hole in how the American public and policymakers communicate, track, and respond to these horrific crimes. Without a federal definition of “school shooting,” the media, interest groups, and the American public are left to cherry pick incidents and statistics, defining the problem on terms favorable to the position they hold. This lack of data hampers the ability of lawmakers to work with objective and universal data to craft legislative solutions to prevent, treat, and recover from school shootings.

Congress must act to ensure the safety of our children in their classrooms. Policymakers at all levels of government need better data to drive solutions and prevent these crimes.

The School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act

The School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act would provide uniform data to the American people who grapple with the recurring horror of school shootings, as well as policymakers who are responsible for addressing this problem. This bill creates a federal definition for “school shooting” and establishes an annual report regarding indicators of school crime.

Establishing a federally recognized definition of “school shooting” means that we can accurately track these incidents and better measure the impact of policy solutions that are implemented at the state and federal level. The bill:

- Defines “mass shooting” and “school shooting” for the first time in federal law.
- Directs the Department of Education, in consultation with the Departments of Justice and Health and Human Services, to annually report on indicators of school safety for each school shooting that occurs. Data includes statistics on school shootings, such as the number of shootings, the number of people killed, demographics of shooters and victims, the motivation of shooters, types of firearms and ammunition used, how the firearm was acquired, and more.
- Directs the Department of Education to collect the safety and prevention protocols in place at a school at the time of the shooting, such as information on the building designs, and communication and response plans.

Endorsed by: Everytown for Gun Safety, National Education Association, Newtown Action Alliance, National Association of School Psychologists, March for Our Lives, Giffords