



To: Interested Parties
Fr: Charlie Kelly, Senior Political Advisor
Da: January 27, 2020
Re: \$60 Million Electoral Program for 2020

As the country prepares to cast the first votes in the 2020 elections, we can be certain of one thing — gun safety is a more powerful electoral force than it’s ever been. This is evident in polling, which shows [90 percent-plus support for policies like background checks on all gun sales](#), and that [voters for the first time consider it a top-three motivating issue at the ballot box](#). It is also evident in the electoral success of candidates running on gun safety, most recently in surprising places like Virginia, where this past November control of the legislature flipped for the first time in decades on the strength of voters who were focused first and foremost on reducing gun violence. This built on the results we saw in 2018, when congressional candidates around the country ran and won on the issue, ultimately flipping the House of Representatives to a gun sense majority and electing Governors, Attorneys General and legislators, even in western states. And finally, it can be seen in the diminished power of the NRA, which finds itself hemorrhaging money and embroiled in international and domestic corruption scandals.

Given this momentum, Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund and Victory Fund are poised to execute our largest and most well-resourced electoral effort ever. **In total, we will invest at least \$60 million** — double what we spent during the 2018 elections, and more than the NRA spent in 2016 — in order to elect a gun sense president, flip several U.S. Senate seats, defend the gun sense majority in the U.S. House, and elect gun sense champions up and down the ballot.

At the same time, to capitalize on the unprecedented level of enthusiasm from the nearly six million Moms Demand Action, Students Demand Action and Everytown supporters advocating for gun safety at the grassroots level, we are preparing to re-launch our 2020 Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidate distinction program for candidates in non-presidential races. Distinctions were awarded to more than 3,000 candidates during the 2018 election cycle who demonstrated their commitment to gun safety by completing a 10-point questionnaire. Already, all of the Democratic candidates for president have completed a two-step application process, including a meeting with Moms Demand Action members, in order to receive the distinction, and presidential candidates are now highlighting the distinction on social media and in their campaign stump speeches. We anticipate that even more candidates will seek the distinction this year, and we will begin distributing our detailed questionnaire to candidates for state and federal office in the coming weeks.

Given the power of gun safety as an electoral issue, we believe these unprecedented financial and grassroots investments can be the deciding factor in elections across the country.

Our principal electoral strategy for 2020 will focus on growing our recently gained advantage in the suburbs, where gun safety has become a litmus test issue, particularly among women. We'll also invest significantly in growing the electorate by mobilizing young voters and communities of color. This will be done, in part, by investing significant resources into registering students and young people to vote. Amongst these key constituencies, it is clear that gun safety is now a kitchen-table issue and a difference-maker in competitive elections, and we aim to take advantage of that.

RECENT ELECTORAL SUCCESSES UNDERSCORE POTENCY OF GUN SAFETY ISSUE

Everytown spent \$30 million during the 2018 midterms, [outspending the NRA](#) for the first time in our history. During that historic election, our investments and support helped flip the U.S. House to a gun sense majority.

- In 2018, of the 43 federal races where an Everytown-endorsed candidate faced an NRA-endorsed candidate, 77 percent of NRA-backed candidates lost.
- Overall, we helped elect 171 gun sense candidates to Congress; 15 gun sense governors; 12 gun sense attorneys general; and 16 Moms Demand Action volunteers and survivors of gun violence. This included now-Congresswoman Lucy McBath who ran proudly as a gun safety advocate in Newt Gingrich's former congressional district.
- Our investments helped successfully flip key state legislative chambers in Colorado and Minnesota.

[Pre-election polling](#) in 2018 revealed that the “intensity gap” had flipped — by a two-to-one margin, voters preferred candidates who did not receive money or support from the gun lobby, prompting the NRA to [pull down its database of candidate grades](#). And there were twice as many single-issue gun safety voters as single-issue NRA voters.

Virginia's 2019 elections further proved the political saliency of the gun safety issue. **Everytown was the [largest outside spender](#) in Virginia's 2019 election, [investing \\$2.5 million](#) and significantly outspending the NRA in the state where it is headquartered.**

- [Public polls](#) indicated gun safety was the top issue among Virginia voters.
- In [post-election polling](#) of competitive swing suburban districts, a plurality of voters — 28 percent — said that a candidate's positions on gun issues was the most important issue to their vote, a significant jump from Virginia's 2017 elections, in which [gun safety ranked third](#), behind jobs and the economy, and health care.
- Gun issues clearly benefited the Democrats in Virginia, as Democratic candidates won gun issue voters by [66 percent to 32 percent](#).

Democratic presidential candidates have recognized this new political reality and have continuously sought to be the strongest on gun safety. The issue has come up in virtually every debate this cycle and sixteen Democratic presidential candidates participated in the [Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund Presidential Gun Sense Forum](#) in Des Moines last year, which was organized with only a week's notice following the mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio.

2020 PRIORITY STATES AND RACES

We'll continually assess where our investments can be most impactful as the election approaches, but there are already some clear 2020 targets. What's more, given the quickly shifting politics on gun safety, the universe of possibilities is substantial, and we are evaluating races up and down the ballot in states like **Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas, Wisconsin, and more.**

Some initial targets include:

- **Defeating President Donald Trump.** President Trump has had every opportunity to take meaningful action to reduce gun violence. He's refused to do it. No matter which Democratic presidential candidate emerges as the nominee, we'll invest in key swing states to defeat Trump.
- **Flipping control of key U.S. Senate seats.** Alongside President Trump, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is the impediment to meaningful action on gun safety at the federal level, refusing to allow votes on House-passed gun safety legislation, including background checks on all gun sales, which was passed 11 months ago. **For the first time in our history, we'll invest in flipping seats that could determine control of the U.S. Senate, starting with investments to defeat Senators Cory Gardner in Colorado and Martha McSally in Arizona.**
- We'll defend the gun sense majority in the U.S. House, which has prioritized gun safety. We'll work to reelect gun sense champions like Representatives Jason Crow in Colorado and Lucy McBath in Georgia, and target additional suburban congressional districts in emerging battlegrounds like Texas and other states.
- We'll engage at the state level, defending allies like North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper and Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro, and work to elect more gun sense champions to state capitals as competitive races emerge.
- We'll replicate our 2019 Virginia model, and flip targeted state legislative chambers to gun sense majorities if legislators refuse to act during this year's state legislative sessions.

DEPLOYING MOMS DEMAND ACTION'S GRASSROOTS ARMY

Since its formation, Moms Demand Action has grown from an online organizing network to a grassroots force, measuring nearly six million supporters nationwide with chapters in every state. Last year in Virginia alone, Moms Demand Action volunteers knocked on tens of thousands of doors and made more than 100,000 phone calls, working closely with candidates and campaigns to flip key districts.

In addition, in just over two years, Students Demand Action has grown from a pilot program into a full-fledged, student-led grassroots movement, with nearly 400 groups in communities, high schools and on college campuses. Students Demand Action now has more than 1,000 student leaders and nearly 200,000 student supporters, who host voter registration drives and mobilize voters in support of gun sense candidates. **We aim to register tens of thousands of students energized by gun safety.**

Already this cycle, Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action volunteers are a constant presence on the campaign trail, and have attended more than 140 candidate events in 19 states and pressing candidates for their plans to address America's gun violence crisis.

GROWING OUR GUN SENSE CANDIDATE PROGRAM

In 2018, we first launched the Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidate program as a way to identify and elevate candidates who have completed a questionnaire demonstrating they will govern with gun safety in mind. During the 2018 election cycle, more than 3,000 candidates — from state legislatures to U.S. Senate — were awarded the distinction.

Already, each major Democratic candidate for president has been awarded the distinction for 2020. We will soon launch the Gun Sense Candidate program for non-presidential candidates running in 2020, and expect a record number of candidates to seek — and receive — the distinction.

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