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GUN POLITICS IN 2018 AND WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2019

Friday marks six years since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook School, where 20 students and six educators were shot and killed in a tragedy that felt unimaginable for the quiet town. In the years since then, Americans have continued to experience the heartache that gun violence causes, from a high school in Parkland, Florida, to a synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to a bar in Thousand Oaks, California, to countless tragedies that never make headlines.

But signs of progress are everywhere and 2018 will go down as a turning point in the fight for gun safety, when millions of Americans channeled their anger into action by marching in the streets, lobbying in statehouses and voting at the ballot box. *And, they're winning.*

Americans have realized that gun safety isn't a right-or-left issue — it's a life-or-death issue. Here's what happened in 2018 and what's ahead for the gun safety movement.

Gun Safety was on the Ballot in the Midterms — and Won

In November, voters elected gun sense champions up and down the ballot. Americans turned out to support candidates who promised to make gun safety a priority while rejecting extreme, NRA-backed candidates. The NRA once was an electoral kingmaker, but this cycle its support was a liability in races around the country. In fact, of the 43 federal races where an Everytown-endorsed candidate faced an NRA-endorsed candidate, **77 percent of NRA-backed candidates lost.**

In total, Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund spent \$30 million this cycle on contributions, independent expenditures and voter motivation and mobilization to elect members of Congress, governors, attorneys general, state cabinet members and state legislators who will pass and enforce strong gun safety laws and block bad bills.

Everytown's strategy included:

- Reaching more than 12.7 million young voters, women and people of color via a \$5 million voter motivation and mobilization campaign called **"Not One More"** in 16 critical congressional districts. **Gun safety candidates won in 15 of these races.**
- Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund endorsed 196 key gun sense champions this cycle. **Gun safety candidates won in 150 of these races.**
- In a first-of-its-kind program that started in February, candidates around the country sought and received a Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidate distinction this cycle, pledging to vote on the side of gun safety if elected into office. It's undeniable that the NRA was on its heels this cycle. A pre-election poll revealed that the "intensity gap" has flipped — **by a two-to-one margin, voters preferred candidates who do not take gun lobby money.** And there were **twice as many single-issue gun safety voters** as single-issue NRA voters.

During the midterm elections, more than 1,000 gun sense candidates were elected to office, including:

- 171 gun sense candidates were elected to Congress;
- 15 gun sense governors were elected;
- 12 gun sense attorneys general were elected; and
- 16 Moms Demand Action volunteers and survivors of gun violence were elected.

Moms Demand Action volunteers, who spent months phone banking and canvassing, had conversations with more than 1.2 million voters this cycle.

The election results speak for themselves. This cycle, we redrew the electoral map in states around the country, including:

- **Georgia:** Lucy McBath defeated her NRA A-rated incumbent opponent, Congresswoman Karen Handel, to represent Georgia's 6th Congressional District.
- **Colorado:** Jason Crow defeated his NRA A-rated incumbent opponent, Congressman Mike Coffman, to represent Colorado's 6th Congressional District.
- **Nevada:** Steve Sisolak defeated his NRA A+ rated opponent, Attorney General Adam Laxalt, for governor, while at the same time, Aaron Ford defeated his NRA A-rated opponent Wes Duncan for attorney general.
- **Kansas:** Laura Kelly defeated her NRA A+ rated opponent, Kris Kobach, for governor.

Americans from All Walks of Life Stepped off the Sidelines

The gun safety movement grew tremendously this year.

- **Everytown has more than 5 million supporters — nearly 700,000 of whom joined in the wake of the Parkland shooting and throughout 2018.** More than **130,000 new grassroots donors** contributed to Everytown this year, bringing the **total number of donors to more than 350,000.**
- **In March, more than 2 million Americans**, led by students and survivors of gun violence, attended the flagship March for Our Lives event in Washington, D.C. and more than 750 sibling marches around the country.
- Students Demand Action, which began as a pilot program in California in 2016, grew into a movement of nearly **100,000 students, with more than 200 groups across the country.**
- In June, during National Gun Violence Awareness Day and Wear Orange Weekend, Americans gathered at more than 400 events across the U.S., and more than 1,500 influencers, corporate brands, elected officials, partner organizations and a series of iconic landmarks participated in the campaign to honor all survivors of gun violence and call on our nation to do more to end gun violence.

- Survivors of gun violence continued to turn their own experiences into action, working to help prevent others from going through the same experience — whether they're forming a sense of community with other gun violence survivors as part of the Everytown Survivor Network, or lobbying members of Congress and local legislators.
- At the local level, **98 mayors joined Mayors Against Illegal Guns in 2018**, including **36 from states President Trump won in 2016**.

A Moms Demand Action volunteer takes an action every minute.

Gun Safety Won in Statehouses Around the Country

This year, momentum in the states offered some of the clearest proof yet that public sentiment on gun violence prevention is shifting, as more and more lawmakers bucked the NRA and stood up for gun safety. Gun violence prevention advocates showed up at statehouses in full force and helped to ensure **20 states passed significant gun violence prevention bills this year, including:**

- Proving that gun safety isn't a right-or-left issue, **nine Republican governors signed meaningful legislation to prevent gun violence.**
 - In the weeks following the Parkland shooting, Republican governors in both Vermont and Florida signed sweeping gun violence prevention packages over the gun lobby's objections.
 - Republican governors in Kansas and Tennessee signed legislation to keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers.
- Across the country, advocates won long-fought battles to protect victims of domestic violence. Moms Demand Action volunteers and gun violence survivors spent years building support for bills to disarm domestic abusers and helped pass **new laws to protect victims of domestic violence in 12 states.**
- Following reports that the Parkland shooter had displayed warning signs before the shooting, **eight states passed red flag laws**, empowering law enforcement and family members to seek a court order to temporarily block someone from having guns if they are at risk of harming themselves or others. These laws are already saving lives.
- In the face of congressional gridlock, **ten states acted to prohibit bump stocks**, devices that allow a semiautomatic firearm to mimic the firing speed of a machine gun. And after public participation in the regulatory process, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is preparing to take action as well.

- When ATF proposed a new rule to regulate bump stocks, Everytown and Moms Demand Action mobilized tens of thousands of gun safety supporters to submit formal comments. An analysis showed that in a second round of public comments, more than 72 percent of the comments expressed support for regulating bump stocks.
- Just last month, news broke that ATF is preparing to announce final regulatory action to prohibit the production, sale, and possession of bump stocks by categorizing them as machine guns, which are illegal under the National Firearms Act.

As they fought for lifesaving legislation, advocates also worked tirelessly to defeat the NRA's top priorities, ensuring that the gun lobby closed legislative sessions this year on a losing streak.

- Bills that would have allowed people to carry hidden, loaded handguns in public without a permit **failed in 17 states**, including Oklahoma, where Republican Gov. Mary Fallin vetoed a permitless carry bill.
- Lawmakers in **16 states rejected legislation** that would have forced public colleges and universities to allow guns on campuses.
- Bills that would have allowed guns in public K-12 schools **failed in 18 states.**

2018 Paints a Clear Picture: The NRA is Toxic and on Defense

As the NRA's brand suffers, the gun lobby spent 2018 playing defense on all fronts: at the ballot box, with the American people and on Russia.

- Earlier this year, a poll by NBC/Wall Street Journal found that **the NRA's favorability ratings are underwater** for the first time since 2000.
- **The NRA did a disappearing act this cycle.** In June, the NRA scrubbed a database of past candidate ratings from its website acknowledging, "our enemies were using that." Everytown quickly compiled and reposted more than 60,000 grades stretching back to 2009. And, after losing \$55 million in revenue in 2017, the NRA spent far less on the midterm elections than it had in years past.
- **Corporations including Delta, Hertz, MetLife, and United cut ties with the organization**, ending discount programs for NRA members. Other corporations including Dick's Sporting Goods and Citigroup enacted policy changes to address gun safety. And iconic brands like Levi Strauss & Co. and TOMS are standing up for gun violence prevention by launching campaigns to galvanize Americans to take action.
- **The NRA spent much of 2017 refusing to answer basic questions about its ties to the Kremlin.** In 2018, between a reported FBI investigation into whether Russians funneled money through the NRA to help Trump in 2016, and the arrest of accused Kremlin agent Maria Butina, who allegedly used the NRA to gain access to Republican political circles, the NRA's silence has become deafening.

Judges Rejected NRA Extremism and Cities Took Gun Safety Fights to Courtrooms

Once again, the courts repeatedly rejected gun lobby-backed challenges and other efforts to block sensible gun laws, including in cases brought by Everytown's growing litigation team and others in which Everytown litigators filed briefs supporting states and cities defending their laws.

- Reviewing challenges supported by the NRA and other gun lobby groups, federal appeals courts across the country — including the First Circuit, Third Circuit and Ninth Circuit — upheld sensible gun laws, including restrictions on the carrying of concealed weapons in public and on the sale and possession of large capacity magazines. In amicus briefs in these cases and others, Everytown litigators highlighted the legal and historical precedent for the laws in question and helped persuade the courts that the Second Amendment is not a barrier to reasonable gun regulations.
- Meanwhile, in a reflection of growing frustration with preemption laws — which block local governments from adopting reasonable gun laws tailored to local conditions — a number of cities went to court this year as part of their efforts to implement new gun safety ordinances.
 - City officials in Seattle and Edmonds, Washington, passed responsible storage ordinances this year, knowing that gun lobby groups would likely challenge the new ordinances in court. With the help of Everytown's litigation team, the NRA's challenge to the Seattle ordinance has already been thrown out.
 - In **Broward County, Florida**, several cities proposed gun safety ordinances as well, but because they faced severe penalties if the ordinances were found to be preempted, they went a step further: Represented by Everytown's litigation team, they are challenging the punitive aspects of the state's firearms preemption law.
 - And in April the city of Missoula, Montana, also represented by Everytown, went to court in an effort to enforce its local background check ordinance. In October, the court ruled in the city's favor, rejecting the arguments of both the state and the NRA. When the state asked the court to reconsider, it refused.

More information about these and other key cases can be [found here](#).

What's Next?

2018 was the year candidates ran on gun safety and won. The gun violence prevention movement flipped the political map and proved that standing up for gun safety isn't just the right thing to do, it's also good politics.

Voters demanded stronger laws — and Everytown has a strategy to pass them from Washington, D.C., to Washington state. On January 3, 2019, members of the 116th Congress will be sworn in and **they must #BreakThePattern of gun violence by passing common-sense gun laws.**

To do so, lawmakers in Congress and the states must:

- Keep guns out of the wrong hands by building a better background check system;

- Protect kids and communities by supporting red flag laws, requiring responsible storage and limiting easy access to firearms and accessories capable of inflicting mass casualties;
- Address America's uniquely lethal domestic abuse problem and disarm domestic abusers;
- Combat daily gun violence by supporting research, law enforcement and local, evidence-based solutions; and
- Hold the gun industry accountable for failing to make guns safer and for marketing weapons and hardware that have no place in the hands of civilians by repealing statutory immunity.

Gun safety is winning and, in 2019, Americans from all walks of life — elected officials, gun safety advocates and gun violence survivors — are starting the year in a new world of possibilities for lifesaving gun laws.