



INTERFAITH CENTER ON CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**INVESTORS CALL FOR MEANINGFUL CORPORATE ACTION TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE**

*In light of inaction at the federal level, corporations have a clear responsibility to take action to help reduce gun deaths.*

**NEW YORK, NY, THURSDAY, MARCH 29<sup>TH</sup>, 2018** – In a [statement](#) issued today, a group of [142 institutional investors](#) collectively representing US\$ 634BN in assets, are strongly urging gun manufacturers, retailers and distributors, as well as companies with financial ties to these industries, to review their operations, supply chains and policies and take meaningful action on this significant public safety concern.

The statement was drafted by members of the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility (ICCR) who have led [engagements with gun manufacturers](#) and retailers for several years. It was endorsed by many investors within the ICCR coalition along with other investors in the U.S. and overseas that share concerns about the tolls of gun violence.

Episodes of gun violence are a daily occurrence in the U.S., but a series of recent mass shootings involving semi-automatic assault weapons has focused national attention on the ease with which these military-style weapons can be acquired by civilians. The most recent event at a school in Parkland, Florida which ignited a student-led national movement for increased gun control has raised important questions about how corporations and investors may unwittingly be funding or fueling gun violence.

Said Sr. Judy Byron of the Northwest Coalition for Responsible Investment who filed a shareholder resolution on gun safety with American Outdoor Brands this year, ***“As investors who have been engaging the companies in our portfolios on this issue for many years, we see this moment as an inflection point: companies that want to exhibit corporate citizenship and play a positive role in society need to get off the sidelines and take a public stand in favor of improved gun safety.”***

According to the Centers for Disease Control which tracks gun deaths, more than 33,000 people die each year in the U.S. in firearm-related deaths. A [John Hopkins University Study] revealed the annual cost of care for victims of gun violence to be an average of \$2.8 billion in emergency-room and inpatient charges alone; when lost wages are factored in, the financial burden rises to \$45 billion annually. On an average day, 96 Americans are killed by guns, including seven children and teens. Meanwhile, the racial

justice implications of gun violence are especially pronounced as black men are 13 times more likely than white men to be shot and killed with guns.

***“Gun violence in the U.S. is a public health and human rights crisis with extraordinary and escalating human and economic costs, and hospitals are on the forefront of this crisis,”*** said Colleen Scanlon of Catholic Health Initiatives, who filed a resolution this year with Sturm Ruger. ***“While gun manufacturers and retailers are most exposed to the risks and controversies, there is a positive role to be played by all companies to help stem the tide of deaths due to gun violence.”***

In their statement, the investors argue that the responsibility to take action rests not only with gun manufacturers and retailers, but extends to all companies, including those with indirect financial and business ties to the industry.

The investors have identified several steps they recommend be taken by gun makers and retailers - as well as companies lending to or underwriting in areas related to these businesses - to reduce gun violence risks.

***“ICCR members have a long history of addressing violence in our society through many, diverse corporate connections, and moving the conversation on gun violence beyond the manufacturers and retailers is a critical next step,”*** said Mark Regier of Everence Financial/Praxis Mutual Funds. ***We recognize those companies that have already begun to address the rising risks a culture of gun violence poses and look forward to working with others in the weeks ahead.”***

The statement also identifies a series of commitments every company should consider to protect their employees, consumers and communities, including revisiting their political spending and lobbying activities relative to this issue, and ending any commercial relationships or promotional ties with the NRA.

In the days following the shooting in Parkland, several companies adopted new policies and severed business relationships with the NRA to respond to the controversy. Examples are Dick’s Sporting Goods and Walmart which no longer sell assault weapons, and along with LL Bean, are prohibiting sales of guns to anyone under 21; Kroger, which has chosen to exit the firearms business entirely; Citigroup which imposed new restrictions on lending to retail clients involved in the gun business; car rental companies Hertz, Alamo and National; hotels Wyndham and Best Western; and airlines Delta and United, which stopped offering NRA-related promotions.

Said Adam Kanzer of Domini Impact Investments, ***“The bravery and eloquence of the Parkland students has brought us to a tipping point on this issue. Today, we are asking investors and corporations large and small to take a hard look at their connections to gun violence and do what they can to restore peace and safety to our communities. We hope that our recommendations will serve as a blueprint for these actions.”***

#### [About the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility \(ICCR\)](#)

Celebrating its 47th year, ICCR is the pioneer coalition of shareholder advocates who view the management of their investments as a catalyst for social change. Its 300 member organizations comprise faith communities, socially responsible asset managers, unions, pensions, NGOs and other socially responsible investors with combined assets of over \$400 billion. ICCR members engage hundreds of corporations annually in an effort to foster greater corporate accountability. ###