

# The Adults in the Room: March for Our Lives' Platform is Commonsense and Responsible



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Following the school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February, students across the nation have banded together to call for action on gun safety, forming March for Our Lives. Unsurprisingly, their activism and leadership has drawn the ire of the NRA, which at every turn has tried to mischaracterize and discredit the movement.

Even a passing glance at what March for Our Lives actually wants however, reveals an incredibly well thought out, reasonable, and commonsense platform. They aren't asking for the red herrings the NRA uses to scare its members – like a national gun registry, a ban on all semiautomatic weapons, or even the repeal of the Second Amendment. They're asking for solutions consistent with the views of the vast majority of Americans, 66% of whom still agree we should have stricter gun laws.<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Universal and comprehensive background checks

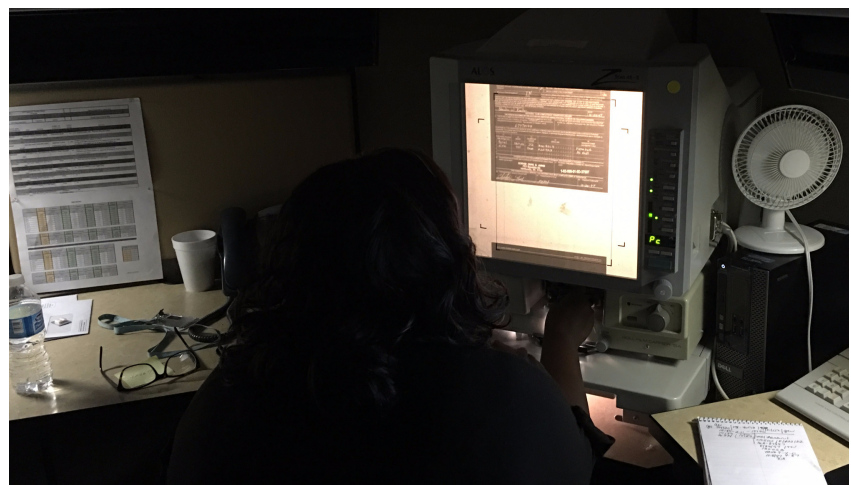
A staggering 97% of Americans support universal background checks.<sup>2</sup> It's painfully obvious that background checks for

every firearm transaction should be the law of the land. However, while federal law requires background checks for any firearm purchased at a gun store, anyone can buy a gun from a stranger they met on the internet or in person and never go through a background check.<sup>3</sup> It makes zero sense that we wouldn't require the same due diligence for these sales that we require when a person walks into a gun shop.

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Boxes of firearms records. (Del Quentin Wilber / Los Angeles Times)



An analyst reviews firearms records on microfilm. (Del Quentin Wilber/Los Angeles Times)

## 2. Digitizing the ATF's records system

We live in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and our government records systems should reflect that. Yet, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF) is still required to keep all of its gun records in a non-searchable format. So when a police officer requests information on a firearm that was used in a crime, **ATF personnel have to manually scroll chronologically through thousands of images from a specific gun dealer to find the correct record.** <sup>4</sup> This is ludicrously inefficient. Imagine if the DMV had to search all of its records manually. In any other area of government, we wouldn't accept this type of recordkeeping, but it's the asinine reality for the ATF because the NRA has done everything it can to hamper the efforts of that agency for years.

### **3. Funding CDC research on gun violence**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) conduct extensive research on all issues that impact the health of Americans, except for gun violence. <sup>5</sup> And while Congress recently clarified that the CDC is not prohibited from researching the effects of gun violence, the CDC is still banned by federal law from advocating for specific solutions to gun violence. <sup>6</sup> So while they can now research the issue, they still can't tell us how to fix it. The CDC has published information on everything from texting while driving to dog bites. <sup>7</sup> **There's no sensible justification for refusing to fund research on any issue that ends the lives of over 15,000 Americans each year, and Americans agree.** <sup>8</sup> A recent poll found that 55% of Americans believe the CDC should study ways to prevent gun violence. <sup>9</sup> The simple fact is that we don't have anywhere near enough research on the impacts of gun violence on public health.

### **4. Banning assault weapons**

The NRA desperately wants people to believe this is a controversial proposal. It isn't. 68% of Americans – nearly seven in ten – support a ban on assault weapons. <sup>10</sup> We've also had this type of law before. In 1994 and 1993, 38 House Republicans and 9 Senate Republicans joined their

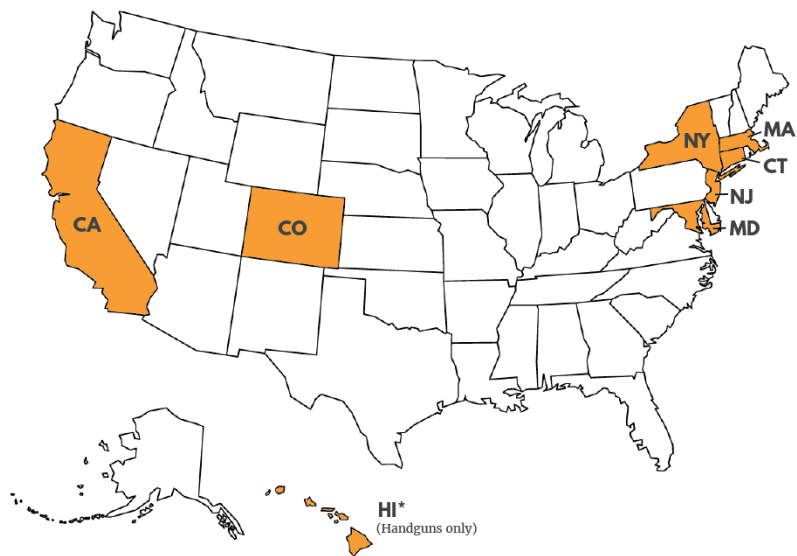
Democratic colleagues to keep weapons of war off of our streets, but that law expired in 2004. <sup>11</sup> Now, undisputed majorities of Americans, including our nation's surgeons and doctors, agree that assault weapons should have no place in our civilian society.

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### 5. Banning high-capacity magazines

Like assault weapons, banning high capacity magazines may appear contentious at first glance, but 70% back it in recent polling. <sup>12</sup> Moreover, just like assault weapons, restrictions on high-capacity magazines were included in the 1994 gun safety law. <sup>13</sup> High-capacity magazines are used at alarming rates in mass shootings. <sup>14</sup> And there is a strong correlation that suggests that restricting magazine sizes saves lives. **In the eight states that restrict magazine capacities below 10 or 15 bullets, mass shooting rates are 63% lower than in their unrestricted counterparts.** <sup>15</sup>



### Conclusion

Across its platform, March for Our Lives is calling for eminently reasonable gun safety reforms. Their proposals

wouldn't lead to the extreme policies the NRA is fearmongering to its base. No one is calling for a registry or to do away with the right to bear arms. The students simply want policies that are in line with the mainstream political views of most Americans. Voters are tired of the continual cycle of gun violence, and they are eager to see commonsense gun safety legislation passed. The students aren't radical or out of touch. That's the NRA.

#### TOPICS

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#### ENDNOTES

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