



Protect Minnesota was founded in 1991 as a coalition of 16 statewide groups committed to working together to prevent gun violence. The Minnesota Public Health Association was one of our first and most active member organizations, establishing the public health model as our primary approach. Originally named Citizens for a Safer Minnesota, we were instrumental in passing legislation at both the state and national level to keep guns out of the hands of convicted domestic abusers. 25 years later, Protect Minnesota is still the only independent, statewide gun violence prevention organization in Minnesota.

Join Our Efforts to Protect Minnesota!

Go to www.protectmn.org to make a donation, sign up to volunteer, or request a speaker. You can also "like" us on Facebook and follow us on twitter @protectmn.

Protect Minnesota is a 501.c3 tax exempt organization. All donations to Protect Minnesota are tax deductible and will be used for educational purposes.

From Our Executive Director



In my 17 years of ordained ministry serving suburban parishes, I officiated at six funerals for gun violence victims. Most, but not all, were tragic suicides that might have been prevented if guns had not been readily available. I also worked with families devastated by gun homicides related to drug crime and domestic abuse. Year after year I got angrier, wondering why the right of all Americans to live free from gun violence doesn't figure more prominently in our national discussion about gun rights. After the mass shooting in San Bernardino, I made the decision to step away from parish ministry and devote my energies to preventing gun violence through Protect Minnesota.

If you, too, are angry about the epidemic of gun violence in our communities; if you recognize that gun violence is EVERYONE'S issue, including those who live in suburban and rural areas; if you have seen or experienced the lifelong pain that gun violence causes in the lives of victims and survivors, I urge you to join us. Become a member of Protect Minnesota. Make your voice heard.

*Peace,
The Rev. Nancy Nord Bence
Executive Director*

Protect Minnesota

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Who We Are and What We Do

Who We Are

Gun violence affects all of us through hundreds of annual suicides, homicides, unintentional shootings and lives lost to domestic violence.

Protect Minnesota works to prevent gun deaths and injuries through education, advocacy and grassroots organizing. Using an evidence-based public health model, we seek to build a strong, statewide coalition to prevent gun violence.

As the only independent state-based gun violence prevention organization among large national groups, **Protect Minnesota** is in a unique position to give legitimacy and relevance to the call for gun safety reform throughout the state and at the Capitol.

While respecting the rights of responsible gun owners, **Protect Minnesota** defends the inalienable rights of **all** Americans to life, liberty from the threat of gun violence, and the pursuit of happiness in safe communities.

What We Do

Public Policy and Legislative Action

In partnership with other gun violence prevention organizations, advocacy groups and law enforcement, **Protect Minnesota** promotes preventive policy solutions to gun violence and mobilizes our members to work for common-sense legislative reform.

Our Top Legislative Priorities:

- 1) Closing the background check loopholes that enable felons, domestic abusers and other legally prohibited individuals to purchase guns from unlicensed dealers, at gun shows, and online without a criminal background check. The buyers of up to 40% of guns purchased in the US evade background checks through these means. Our #1 priority is passing legislation that would mandate criminal background checks before ALL gun purchases.
- 2) Passing legislation authorizing Gun Violence Protection Orders, so that family members and law enforcement officers can have firearms removed from the possession of individuals who are exhibiting signs of dangerous mental illness, until they get the help they need.
- 3) Removing prohibitions in state law against the collection of data about gun violence and gun deaths which prevent law makers from having the information they need to make informed decisions about gun safety.

Suicide Awareness and Prevention

Over 80% of gun deaths in Minnesota are suicides. People who live in homes with guns have three times the risk of dying by suicide compared to those who live in homes without guns. Background checks have been shown to decrease gun suicide rates by up to 48%. But education is also vital to saving lives. An important mission of **Protect Minnesota** is to

work with mental health and public health partners, faith communities, gun owners and licensed gun dealers to educate families about the need to identify, get help for, and keep guns away from those vulnerable to suicide.



Activist Training and Support

Protect Minnesota offers regular "Organize to Mobilize" activist training classes. Participants are encouraged to join one of our growing number of caucus groups and trained to expand it by organizing and mobilizing their peers.

Our current caucuses include:

Interfaith Alliance for Gun Safety

People of faith and religious organizations from all faith traditions and denominations.

Minnesotans OUT for Gun Safety

Members of the LGBT community and allies.

Health Care Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence

Public health professionals and health care providers.

Teachers United for Gun Reform

K-12 teachers, administrators, school staff members and concerned parents.

Responsible Gun Owners of Minnesota

Hunters, sport-shooters and gun dealers who support commonsense gun legislation.