

Conservative Movement Leaders Express Need for Restrictions on Gun Ownership

NEW YORK – In response to Friday’s tragedy in Newtown, Conn., the leadership of Conservative Judaism, which includes the Rabbinical Assembly and the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, together issued the following statement:

The sacred Jewish text the Mishnah teaches that every human life is unique and precious, created in the divine image. In the Mishnah, our sages tell us that carrying a weapon is disgraceful; as it says (in Isaiah), “They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks...” (Shabbat 6:4).

Conservative and Masorti Jews join the world in mourning the victims of the senseless murder in Newtown, Conn., including 20 innocent children and their teachers and beloved principal.

The United States has recently witnessed the wanton killing of innocents by gunfire across the country, both in terms of mass killings in Colorado, Arizona, Wisconsin and Connecticut, among others, as well as hundreds of shootings, many fatal, in crimes, acts of passion and accidents each and every day.

In [1993](#), [1995](#) and [2012](#), United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism went on the record asking that action be taken to reduce the danger to our society from the too easy availability of guns, and in [1990](#), [1995](#) and [2011](#), the Rabbinical Assembly passed similar resolutions calling for very strict regulations on the manufacture, importation and sale of guns.

The leadership of Conservative Judaism, which includes the Rabbinical Assembly, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, the Jewish Theological Seminary, Cantors Assembly, Federation of Jewish Men’s Clubs, Women’s League for Conservative Judaism, the Jewish Educators Assembly, and the Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies reiterates its call for:

- a. Stopping sales of assault weapons for non-combat use;
- b. Creating a system to tighten and monitor sales of ammunition to individuals;
- c. Creating a system to lengthen purchase time for all weapons to ensure that a complete background check be made before sales of guns;
- d. Creating a system for coding all ammunition sold in the United States to be traceable to its purchaser;
- e. Requiring gun manufacturers to install the already developed system which codes ammunition with traceable markings for each gun; and
- f. Banning online sales of ammunition.

We ask that all Americans contact their elected and appointed governmental officials at the local, state and federal levels to echo the words of President Obama on December 16, as he addressed the families of Newtown: “We have to change.” The President vowed to use “the power of this office” to do whatever it takes to engage with law enforcement, mental health professionals, parents and educators in an effort to prevent more tragedies like Newtown.

We call for Americans of all faiths to plan for major advocacy in the coming weeks and months to show massive support for strong gun control legislation and enforcement in the United States.