RELEASE: Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence – Statement on Parkland School Shooting and Call to Action

Date: February 16, 2018

Contact: Stasha Rhodes, J.D. Center for American Progress

Phone: (202) 682-1611

Email: srhodes@americanprogress.org

Interfaith Coalition Issues Statement on Parkland School Shooting and Call to Action

On Wednesday, February 14, seventeen lives were taken from this Earth at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. We mourn this loss of life, and the transformation of a place of learning and community into a site of death and destruction. To the dead, the injured, and the hundreds of family members, friends, and communities that are grieving, we commit our prayers and our tireless action to prevent gun violence.

The shooting in Parkland is the 30th mass shooting since the beginning of the year, six weeks ago. No other country in the world tolerates this level of deadly slaughter. Gun violence shames this country daily.

As members of the faith community, we firmly believe that in the face of gun violence, the invocation of “thoughts and prayers” without action is sacrilege. The job of people of faith—especially those legislators who profess faith—is not to offer empty words. The role of the faith community does not begin after the killings. Statements, prayers, and funerary rites do not exhaust the extent of our work, nor the substance of the faiths we claim. Our faiths call us to transformative action that heals our society.

Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence is a coalition of 50 national faith organizations, denominations, and groups committed to the prevention of gun violence. We engage in advocacy and organizing, seeking legislative and societal change that will transform the reality of “93 gun deaths daily.” In recent months we have held press conferences, advocated with Congressional leaders, worked against state bills that would allow guns in houses of worship, and opposed federal proposals to mandate concealed carry reciprocity.

It is time for faith-based organizations to become part of this larger movement to prevent gun violence. We invite all national faith-based groups to join our coalition.

We call on all faith communities to engage in this work, take up this cause, and ensure that the voices of people of faith are present in the development of solutions to prevent gun violence.

We urge all local, state, and regional faith groups, denominations, and houses of worship to reach out to the members of Faiths United who represent you at a national level in our coalition. Below is a list of these member organizations of Faiths United. Online at www.faithsunited.org, you can read about the policies and actions we support. We stand ready to help you engage in the call to end gun violence. Together, our voices will be even stronger. Together, we can make a meaningful difference.

We are with you in prayer, in work, and in action of solidarity.
Signed,

FAITHS UNITED TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE
African American Ministers In Action
African Methodist Episcopal Church – Social Action Commission
Alliance of Baptists
AME Church – Social Action Commission
American Baptist Home Mission Societies
BPFNA ~ Bautistas por la Paz
Bend the Arc Jewish Action
Bishops United Against Gun Violence
Bon Secours Health System, Inc.
Bon Secours Kentucky Health System
Catholic Health Association of the United States
Catholic Health Initiatives
Catholics in Alliance for the Common Good
CHURCH WOMEN UNITED, INC.
Conference of Major Superiors of Men
Congregation of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, US Provinces
Disciples Justice Action Network
Dominican Sisters of Peace
The Episcopal Church
Episcopal Peace Fellowship
Faith in Public Life
Fellowship of Reconciliation
Franciscan Action Network
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Global Justice Institute
God Before Guns
Heeding God’s Call to End Gun Violence
Jewish Women International
Leadership Conference of Women Religious
Mennonite Central Committee U.S. Washington Office
Methodist Federation for Social Action
Metropolitan Community Churches
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Council of Churches
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service and Campaign Nonviolence
Pax Christi USA
Progressive National Baptist Convention, Inc
Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbis Against Gun Violence
Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association
Sikh Council on Religion and Education
Sisters of Mercy of the Americas’ Institute Leadership Team
Unitarian Universalist Association
United Church of Christ, Justice and Witness Ministries
The United Methodist Church – General Board of Church and Society
United Methodist Women
Union for Reform Judaism
Washington National Cathedral
Women of Reform Judaism