

# CLC leaders call for prayers and action after school shooting

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Two officials with Texas Baptists' Christian Life Commission joined more than 100 other evangelical leaders nationally in calling for prayers and action after the school shooting in Parkland, Fla., that left 17 dead and dozens injured.

CLC Director Gus Reyes and Public Policy Director Kathryn Freeman signed the [Prayers and Action for Gun Safety in America](#) petition calling for "common-sense gun laws." Freeman noted the job titles listed on the petition were for identification purposes only, and the commission has not taken a position on the issue.

"As we mourn for our brother and sisters who have died, we pray fervently for their friends and family who grieve. We also accept and declare that it is time to couple our thoughts and prayers with action," the petition states.

While the petition acknowledges actions might take different forms for various Christians, it calls on "all Christian leaders to join together as brothers and sisters in Christ to become part of the solution."

"We acknowledge our biblical responsibility to protect life by lovingly guiding those who are suffering from severe mental illnesses to the appropriate professional resources, by urging America's lawmakers to pass common-sense gun laws, and by encouraging gun owners to take precautions against the risks associated with allowing firearms in their homes when children are present or when a family member is dealing with crisis," the petition states.

## **‘Hopeful prayers and thoughtful action’**

Christians should respond to gun violence with “both hopeful prayers and thoughtful action,” Freeman said.

“I think we need to move beyond the same old binary thinking that causes both sides of the debate to remain recalcitrant. I am not only concerned with the mass shootings which now seem to be a regular occurrence, but the woman whose life is endangered by her abusive ex-husband and the kid struck by a stray bullet while playing in the park,” Freeman said.

“We need a new conversation and new solutions that address our cultural obsession with violence, but we also need to address the lack of access to affordable mental health care services, the unlimited access to automatic weapons, and the connection between gun violence and domestic violence.”

## **‘Not acceptable in a civilized culture’**

The mass shooting of students simply is “not acceptable in a civilized culture,” said Rob Schenck, president of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute and an original endorser of the petition.

“When children wake up in the morning, they should only worry about homework or a test, not whether they will be killed in a hail of gunfire. No parent should worry that a gun battle will break out or that they’ll be met at the end of the school day at the emergency room by a grim-faced chaplain,” Schenck said.

“If the solution to this deadly disease in American society is more guns, then the United States—with over 300 million weapons in general circulation—would be the safest place on earth. We have a moral

emergency in our country. It's time we wake up, face it, and fix it. Now."

On Feb. 20, President Trump announced he signed a memo directing Attorney General Jeff Sessions to draft regulations to ban "bump stocks" and other devices that essentially enable semi-automatic weapons to operate like automatic firearms.