

Temple Sinai Gun Violence Prevention Group

Presentation to the Temple Sinai Steering Committee
of the
Davis Center for Social Justice
February 3, 2022



2016-2021 Activities & Accomplishments

- July 2016 - Social Action Committee creates a new Temple Sinai Gun Violence Prevention Group (GVP Group) with Steve Klitzman, Chair, and Robin Gerber, Vice Chair. Seeks to “educate, engage and activate members of Temple Sinai to confront the gun violence epidemic in our community and nation.” Grows by 2021 to nearly 100 members with new Vice Chair, Sally Greenberg.
- 2016-2021- GVP Group organized 15 educational programs, engaged in successful legislative advocacy on various GVP issues on the local, state and federal levels, built as well as joined GVP coalitions both interfaith and with national GVP organizations, and sought effective ways to engage both more fellow congregants as well as temple students on GVP.

Program on Implementation of DMV “Extreme Risk Protection Order” Laws (October 14, 2021)

A Zoom Discussion of “Extreme Risk Protection Order Laws: What Are They, Do They Save Lives from Gun Violence, How Can They Be Strengthened to Save Even More Lives?”

October 14, 2021, 7:00-8:30 pm

Register at tinyurl.com/oct14gvp

A growing legal tool called “extreme risk protection orders” (ERPO) temporarily prohibit gun purchase and possession by a person deemed by a court to be dangerous to self or others. The District of Columbia enacted its ERPO law in 2019 and Maryland in 2018. On April 10, 2020, Virginia became the 20th state to enact an ERPO law to help reduce gun suicides and mass shootings. [Read more.](#)

How do these three DMV area laws compare, how have they been working, do they provide sufficient due process and time coverage, and how can they be strengthened and used more by the police, the courts, mental health professionals and the public to save more lives from gun suicides and mass shootings? An expert panel will discuss these and related questions on October 14, 2021, 7-8:30 pm.

This event is co-sponsored by the gun violence prevention committees of Temple Sinai (DC), Rodef Shalom (Falls Church), and Mishkan Torah (Greenbelt), three area chapters of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, and Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence.

Panelists



Josh Horwitz, Executive Director, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, an ERPO policy expert and exponent



Shannon Frattaroli, PhD, MPH, Professor, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Center for Gun Violence Prevention and Policy



Leslie Parsons, Assistant Chief, Investigative Division, D.C. Metropolitan Police Department



Quinita Garrett, Baltimore Crisis Response, Inc., Director, Hotline Services



Darren Popkin, Sheriff, Montgomery County, MD



Moderator, Petula Dvorak, Columnist, Washington Post



Kathleen Murphy, Delegate, Virginia House of Delegates, Dist. 34- McLean, Great Falls, parts of Vienna and Loudon Co., Co-Founder of GVP Caucus in the VA House of Delegates and a Gun Violence Survivor

Want More Information or to Get Involved?

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Interfaith Program on “Gods and Guns: How to Engage the Faith Community on Gun Violence Prevention” (December 6, 2021)

**DEC. 6, 2021- GVP INTERFAITH PROGRAM
CO-ORGANIZED BY TEMPLE SINAI GVP GROUP
AS PART OF 7TH ANNUAL NATIONAL GVP
CONFERENCE, CENTER FOR AMERICAN
PROGRESS**

Gods and Guns- How to Engage the Faith Community on Gun Violence Prevention

2:45 p.m. ET: Breakout sessions

[Gods and Guns: How to Engage the Faith Community in Gun Violence Prevention](#)

Speakers:

Susan Bender, Chair, GVP Committee, Bethesda United Methodist Church; Chair, GVP Social Action Team, Baltimore-Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church

Rabbi Joel Mosbacher, Senior Rabbi, Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York City, National Co-Chair, “Do Not Stand Idly By” Campaign of the Metro Industrial Areas Foundation

Rev. Rob Schenck, President, Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute, Washington, DC; Administrative Bishop, Methodist Evangelical Church USA; Executive Advisor to the Secretary General, World Evangelical Alliance

Organizers & Moderators:

Steve Klitzman, Chair, Temple Sinai Gun Violence Prevention Group; Co-Organizer, DC Area Interfaith Gun Violence Prevention Network

Robert More, Council member, Pax Christi Metro DC-Baltimore; Coordinator, Pax Christi, St. John Neumann Church, Reston, Virginia

2022 Plans

- Future GVP policy priorities for possible programs, legislative advocacy, coalition building, and enhanced congregational and student engagement include:
 - ❖ Supporting enactment in 2022 session of Maryland General Assembly of bills to require serial numbers on “ghost guns” and strengthen child access protections. E.g., a Zoom program in March 2022 with Maryland state officials, GVP advocates, impacted citizens to raise public awareness and increase support for bills.
 - ❖ Opposing roll back of GVP reforms in 2022 Session of Virginia General Assembly and supporting enactment of VA ghost gun bill.
 - ❖ Monitoring implementation of DMV area “extreme risk protection orders” laws to help reduce gun suicides, two-thirds of all gun deaths each year in America. Follow up to Oct. 2021 well attended Webinar on area ERPO laws with over 100 participants. Co-sponsored by GVP Committees of Rodef Shalom Congregation in Falls Church, Congregation Mishkan Torah in Greenbelt, and Temple Sinai GVP Group, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, and area chapters of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.
 - ❖ Communicating with gun owners as well as interfaith social justice groups over issues of mutual concern such as reducing gun suicides and increasing child safety.
 - ❖ Evaluating efficacy of area and nationwide “violence interruption programs” to reduce gun homicides in DMV area and elsewhere, e.g., in newly expanded VI program in New York City and growing “Building Blocks” program in DC.
 - ❖ Reducing illegal gun trafficking in the DMV area through supporting DC police enforcement and more resources for federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF).
 - ❖ Supporting temple youth groups to engage more actively and effectively on GVP issues with the local chapters of the national, youth-led March for Our Lives, e.g., participating in GVP student legislative lobbying during the Jan.-April 2022 sessions of the Maryland and Virginia General Assemblies.
 - ❖ Organizing possible Zoom conversations with San Jose, CA Mayor Sam Liccardo. Sponsor of just adopted ordinance requiring every household with a gun owner to have liability insurance coverage for their firearms and to pay a \$25 licensing fee to be invested in evidence-based gun violence reduction programs; Rep. Jamie Raskin on fighting gun violence “insurrection;” and DC City Council Member, Mary Cheh, on making DC streets and neighborhoods safer.

Memorial to the Lost (October 2016-2017)

October 2016-October 2017 (High Holy Days) - GVP Group helped Temple Sinai become the first area synagogue to mount on temple grounds over 200 colored T-shirts with the names, ages and dates of death of area gun violence victims in 2015-2016 as part of a “Memorial to the Lost.”



Steve Klitzman and GVP Group members at October 2016 installation of “Memorial to the Lost” in memory of over 200 gun violence victims in DC metro area.

Memorial to the Lost (October 2016-2017)



- Blue shirts were Montgomery County, MD residents, white shirts were Washington, DC residents, and yellow shirts were Northern Virginia residents.
- In Oct. 2016, the Temple Sinai GVP Group also produced and distributed over 100 signs to members of the congregation captioned “91 Gun Deaths a Day - Enough Is Enough” in the form of a tombstone.
- A sad commentary on the gun violence epidemic in America: according to Everytown for Gun Safety, the latest number of daily gun deaths in America from both suicide and homicide is now an estimated 109, a 20% increase just since 2016 for a grand total of nearly 40,000 gun deaths a year.

“You are not obligated to complete the work, but neither are you free to desist from it (Pirkei Avot 2:21).”

2016-2021 Activities & Accomplishments

- November 2017 - Presented another program on links between gun violence, mass shootings, and domestic abuse with victims, advocates, police, etc. First of three well attended GVP programs co-sponsored by Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America. One of panelists was Mildred Muhammad, abused ex-wife of John Muhammad, the infamous “DC Sniper,” who came to the DC area in 2002 in a white van gunning for his ex-wife and killed 10 people.
- November 2018 - Presented fourth well attended program on gun suicide and saving lives with “extreme risk protection orders” AKA “red flag laws” with GVP advocates, Maryland state legislator, psychiatrist, survivor, police, etc.

2016-2021 Activities & Accomplishments

- February 2019 - Presented photographic and video exhibit and panel discussion entitled *“Washington’s Other Monuments”* - documentation over 20-year period of informal community memorials to local victims of gun violence.



2016-2021 Activities & Accomplishments

- April - May 2019 - Presented three GVP programs attended by over 175 as part of a “community forum” on gun violence:
 - ❖ the “growing threat of gun violence” at St. John’s Episcopal Church in Chevy Chase, MD,
 - ❖ “finding common ground: what gun owners can teach us,” at Bethesda United Methodist Church, and
 - ❖ “reducing urban gun violence: what works and how you can help,” at Temple Sinai.



Gun violence is real. People don't come back.
- Stevie Wonder

Community Forums on Gun Violence

Please join your local faith leaders, policy advisors, advocates and activists for open, honest conversations about the gun violence epidemic in America and how to best address it. All are welcome.

The Growing Threat of Gun Violence
with Rob Wilcox, Everytown for Gun Safety and others
Tuesday, Apr 30 at St. John's Episcopal, Norwood Parish, 6701 Wisconsin, Chevy Chase, MD

A GVP Conversation with David Chipman
Sr Policy Advisor, Giffords, and former Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
Tuesday, May 7 at Bethesda United Methodist Church, 8300 Old Georgetown Road, Bethesda

Reducing Gun Violence: What Works?
with DC Office of Neighborhood Engagement, police and other officials
Wednesday, May 15 at Temple Sinai, 3100 Military Road, NW, Washington, DC

Sponsored by the hosts and:



MOMS DEMAND ACTION
FOR GUN SENSE IN AMERICA

Each event is from 7 to 9 pm and features guest speakers, facilitated discussions, literature tables, and refreshments, and may include music.

For more info and to RVSP, please see event listings at EventBrite.com or call 202-XXX-XXXX.

2016-2021 Activities & Accomplishments



Panelists at a May 15, 2019 program entitled *“Reducing Urban Gun Violence: What Works and How You Can Help.”* Panelists include Robert Contee, current DC Police Chief (second from left)

October 2020 - Presented our first online Webinar entitled The ‘Intersectionality’ of the Gun Violence Epidemic and the Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic: Summoning the Youth Response”.



IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION

Legislative Advocacy

- Fall 2017- Successfully advocated vs. enactment in Congress of NRA legislation for national “concealed carry reciprocity,” deregulation of gun silencers, armor-piercing bullets, and illegal gun trafficking.
- January - April 2018 - Successfully advocated vs. legislative proposals in MD and VA General Assemblies to authorize guns in houses of worship.
- January - April 2018 - Successfully advocated for enactment of stronger MD law disarming Maryland citizens convicted of domestic abuse.
- January - April 2019 - Successfully advocated again against enactment of legislation in MD and VA General Assemblies to authorize guns in houses of worship.
- April 2019- Helped organize with Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute in DC visits of 20 clergy from around the country with just Senate Republican staffers to support Senate passage of the universal background check bill the House passed in Feb.2019 as well as a national extreme risk protection order bill

Legislative Advocacy

- November 2019- Helped support as individuals, not as Temple Sinai, pro-GVP candidates in election for Virginia General Assembly. Helped elect a pro-GVP majority in both the Virginia House of Delegates and Senate for first time in over 25 years. Went on to enact a number of long-stalled pro-GVP bills.
- May 2020- Opposed decision of Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan to designate gun stores as “essential businesses” during the early days of the Pandemic.
- May 2020- Urged Gov. Hogan not to veto \$3 million in funding for Maryland’s first “violence interruption” program.
- June 2020- Testified before the DC Committee on the Judiciary in favor of increased money for DC “violence interruption” programs.
- November 2018, 2020 – Helped Get Out the Vote for the critical 2018, 2020 elections to Congress, and the Presidency. Helped elect to the House over 40 pro-GVP candidates in 2018.
- August 2021- Sent letter to Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives in support of proposed federal ATF regulation of “ghost guns.”

Coalition Building

- March 2017 - Interfaith- Co-founded with GVP Committee of the Washington National Cathedral the “DC Area Interfaith Gun Violence Prevention Network.” Now has over 100 area churches, synagogues and mosques on its contact list, with over 50 core members including TSGVPG actively working to advance GVP
- 2016 – Present - National GVP Groups - Developed information-sharing and co-advocacy relationships with several national GVP groups, including Brady Campaign, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Everytown for Gun Safety, Giffords, Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence, as well as the DMV chapters of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America.
- December 2020 – Joined new area faith-based group to support the work of Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence.



Community and Student Outreach

- 2019 - 2020 - Instituted and continued outreach to other community and student groups interested in GVP, including the Thurgood Marshall Academy Public Charter High School in southeast DC, Communities United Against Hate, Chevy Chase, MD, the Montgomery County Students for Change, as well as Temple Sinai students and young adult religious school alumni in DMV area.

Award Recognition

December 2019 - The Temple Sinai GVP Group received a 2019 Irving J. Fain Social Justice Award from the Commission on Social Action, Reform Judaism, at the Biennial Meeting in Chicago, IL. GVP Group cited for its “outstanding” and “innovative” program, and as “inspiration to the greater Reform Jewish community, encouraging others to undertake similar inspiring initiatives.



Steve Klitzman, Chair, Temple Sinai Gun Violence Prevention Group, holds 2019 Irving J. Fain Social Justice award at 2019 Biennial in Chicago with Temple Sinai supporters from left to right: Liz Dunst, outgoing Chair, Commission on Social Action, Rabbi Jonah Pesner, Director, Religious Action Center, Shelly Cohen, Chair, Fain Award Committee, Steve Klitzman, Justine Lisser, wife, Steve Klitzman, Deitra Reiser and Cantor Laura Croen.

Questions?



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