



HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

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*Joint statement by Bishop Eric Matsumoto and
Rev. Blayne Higa, Chair of the Committee on Social Concerns*

Gun Violence

We mourn the innocent lives lost in yet another mass shooting in our country. Our hearts go out to the families and communities that have been torn apart by these senseless acts of violence. Gun violence is an uncontrolled plague on our society and the cause of so much suffering. The recent shocking events in Texas, New York, and California remind us how much damage can be caused when these weapons are so easily obtained by those who would use them to harm others.

Gun violence is an unresolved public health crisis in our country. The proliferation of guns on our streets and our culture of violence needs to be addressed. We can and must do better to make our homes and public spaces including schools, churches, and stores where large numbers of people regularly gather safer.

We call upon our national leaders to have an honest and respectful debate on reasonable policies to curb gun violence. We need to enact sensible regulations to save lives and make our communities safer. Such measures include a ban on assault weapons, universal background checks on all gun purchases, removing loopholes that allow gun sellers and buyers to bypass checks, prohibiting high-capacity magazines, preventing gun trafficking, and improving access to quality mental health care.

In addition to immediately pursuing sensible gun regulations as a key element of addressing gun violence in this country, we also need to cultivate the conditions for transforming anger and hatred which are the cause of these violent acts including the usage of the language of violence. Changing our hearts and minds is essential to transforming our society.

The Buddha taught how conflict can be resolved through wisdom and compassion. Let us be guided by this teaching to mend our brokenness and heal our wounds on the journey to mutual peace, harmony, and respect for all. May the light of all-

inclusive wisdom and all-embracing compassion guide all our thoughts, words, and actions.

In Gassho,

Bishop Eric Matsumoto

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HHMH Committee on Social Concerns

A statement on gun violence issued in 2018 and reissued in 2019 is available at <http://honpahi.link/gv2018>.