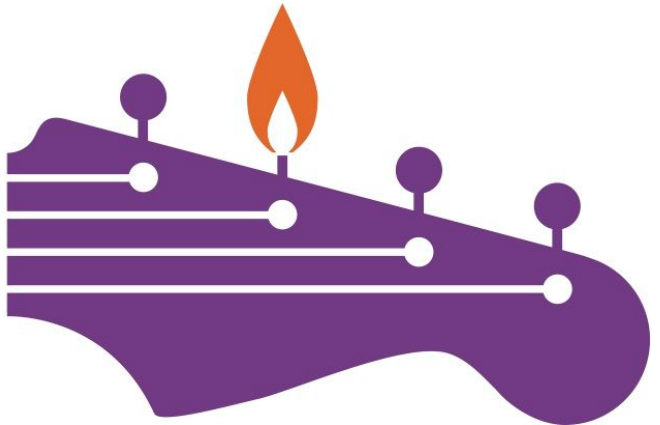


THE CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA™ TO END GUN VIOLENCE

9.25.16



Assets: Interviews, B-roll, Photos

Media Notice

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Music Event a "First Dance" to Begin a New Public Health Discussion about Making Minnesota a Safer Gun State

'THE CONCERT ACROSS AMERICA TO END GUN VIOLENCE' HOPES TO SEND GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION MESSAGE IN THE TWIN CITIES AT INTERNATIONAL MARKET SQUARE SEPTEMBER 25

J.D. Steele, New Sound Underground, The R Factor and Celebrated Area Choirs Featured in Concert

MINNEAPOLIS -- August 11, 2016 -- One of Minnesota's oldest, leading advocacy organizations devoted to gun violence prevention (GVP) -- Protect Minnesota* -- will host an afternoon of music- and message-making September 25 at International Market Square to raise awareness and funds as part of "The Concert Across America To End Gun Violence" events being held in every state across the country that day.

The family-friendly Minnesota event will include performances by three popular regional bands—[The R Factor](#), [New Sound Underground](#), and [J.D. Steele](#), the event's Musical Director—performing a wide range of popular music between 4-7p.m. Three Community choirs directed by Steele, [Capri Glee! Choir](#), [Mill City Emanuel House Choir](#), and [The MacPhail Community Youth Choir](#), will perform from 3-4 p.m. Church and community choirs and individual singers are invited to sing along. Food, beverages and information tables staffed by supporting organizations will also be available.

- Tickets are only \$15.00 . Kids and students get in FREE. Tickets may be purchased on-line at www.protectmn.org, or at the door. International Market Square is located at 275 Market St, Minneapolis, MN 55405.

Gun Violence Is A Public Health Issue with Spiraling Costs to Home, Individuals and the U.S. Economy

[Protect Minnesota](#), the 25-year-old non-profit led by charismatic Lutheran minister [Rev. Nancy Nord Bence](#), wants to focus on the many public health issues related to gun violence that devastates families, enables suicides and accidental shootings, and costs the U.S. more than \$174 billion, or 1.15% of our gross national domestic product, in 2010 alone.

Other statistics tell the rest of the story (for more such data and insights, See MEDIA KIT BACKGROUNDERS), including:

- **In Minnesota, more than one person is killed by a gun and one person is injured by a gun every day.**
- **11,000 Americans are murdered with a gun each year.**
- **More than 32,000 Americans die from gun violence.**
- **A gun in America is ten times more likely to be used in the commission of a crime than for lawful self-defense.**
- **A mass shooting now occurs every 64 days in America, a 3-fold increase from 2011.**
- **About half of all households in Minnesota are gun-owning. Nationally, 33% of U.S. households contain a gun.**
- **Guns in the home are 22% more likely to be used to shoot a family member (accidental shootings, homicides and suicides) than for self-defense.**
- **50% of households with guns don't store them locked up and unloaded, including 40% of households with children.**
- **A child or teen dies or is injured from guns every 30 minutes. More children and teens die from guns every three days than died in the Sandy Hook School massacre.**
- **American children are 16 times more likely to be killed in unintentional shootings than kids in similar countries.**
- **The presence of a gun in the home makes it 5 times more likely that a woman will be murdered by her domestic partner.**
- **Women in the U.S. are 11 times more likely to be killed by a gun than women in other high-income countries.**
- **In Minnesota, 82% of all gun deaths are suicides, which occur disproportionately in suburban and rural counties and are overwhelmingly white.**

Rev. Bence Left Her Parish of 11 Years after 6 Funerals Related to Gun Violence And Considers GVP Her New Ministry

"The event is not anti-gun -- or anti-Second Amendment -- it's about anti-gun violence and finding ways to support common-sense legislation through better regulation -- similar to the way car ownership is regulated," says Rev. Nord Bence. "Our Twin Cities Concert Across America To End Gun Violence is a new way to start thinking about the issue, it's like a first dance with the broader community to begin to resolve this public health menace."

"Better regulation of guns will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous and suicidal individuals, and prevent the unintentional injury and death of children," she adds. "We believe gun ownership should be well regulated the way car ownership is, otherwise we will continue to see the impacts of gun violence spiral out of control."

"I am excited to be a part of this event because I passionately believe in the need to get guns off the streets in our community -- especially our communities of color where daily shootings are harming our children and innocent bystanders as collateral damage," explains the event's Music Director, J.D. Steele. "We must press for stricter gun legislation in our nation. Events like this can only increase awareness and inspire change."

The independent, non-partisan organization was instrumental in Minnesota passing the first law in the country preventing domestic abusers from purchasing guns, which later became the model for the national law. It is still in effect. Rev. Bence herself decided to resign from her parish of 11 years and take over the leadership role at Protect Minnesota this year after officiating six funerals related to gun violence, all suicides. She considers her GVP role now as a new calling, or ministry: "It has become my spiritual pilgrimage."

Among Protect Minnesota's many proactive initiatives, it has created the [Interfaith Alliance for Gun Safety](#), because faith communities working together are the most powerful agents for change in Minnesota. It also sponsors several [caucus groups](#) through which its members can organize and mobilize their constituencies, including the Health Care Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, Teachers United for Gun Reform, Minnesotans OUT for Gun Safety, Coalition for Workplace Safety and Responsible Gun Owners of Minnesota.



* **About Protect Minnesota**

Protect Minnesota is the ONLY independent, state-based organization devoted to gun violence prevention (GVP) in Minnesota. We are a grassroots organization with just a few paid staff members and a volunteer board of directors.

We are not anti-gun; we're anti-gun violence. We support common sense legislation that will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous and suicidal individuals, and prevent the unintentional injury and death of children. We believe gun ownership should be "well regulated", the way car ownership is.

We've been around for 25 years. We started out as a coalition of 16 statewide medical, public health, justice and faith groups, including:

- American Academy of Pediatrics, Minnesota
- American Association of University Women
- Association of Minnesota Chiefs of Police
- Church Women United, Minnesota
- Joint Religious Legislative Coalition
- League of Women Voters, Minnesota
- Minneapolis NAACP
- Minnesota Education Association
- Minnesota Emergency Room Physicians
- Minnesota Nurses Association
- Minnesota Public Health Association
- The Urban Coalition, Minnesota

We passed the first law in the country preventing domestic abusers from purchasing guns, which later became the model for the national law, still in effect.

We take a public health approach to gun violence, recognizing that the solution means changing societal expectations around gun ownership through education, legislation, litigation, community investment and technological innovation. We look to the public health community and its successes against the tobacco industry as our model and inspiration.

Protect Minnesota had created the Interfaith Alliance for Gun Safety, because faith communities working together are the most powerful agents for change in Minnesota. We also sponsor several caucus groups through which our members can organize and mobilize their constituencies, including the Health Care Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence, Teachers United for Gun Reform, Minnesotans OUT for Gun Safety, Coalition for Workplace Safety and Responsible Gun Owners of Minnesota.

It also works in partnership with national GVP groups, **including The Brady Campaign, Americans for Responsible Solutions, Everytown for Gun Safety, and Moms Demand Action**, but receive no funding or support from them.

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