December 2021

WoMen Against Gun Violence (WAGV) is one of the oldest gun violence prevention non-profits in the country. We’ve been around for almost 30 years and we know what it takes to get things done — networking, coalition building, and perseverance. Our Board of Directors and constituents represent many different communities and many points of view but we all agree that to make our communities safe we must do more than react to gun violence, we must prevent it before it starts. That is why this year we continue to focus on storing guns safely to prevent suicide, unintentional shootings, and school shootings. And that is why this year we have expanded our focus to embrace community violence intervention programs — a strategy that is proven to reduce gun violence.

Among charity watchdog organizations, the Better Business Bureau says at least 65% of a non-profit’s expenses should be for programs; Charity Navigator says the most efficient charities spend 75%+ on programs; and the American Institute of Philanthropy says at least 75% is ideal. WoMen Against Gun Violence consistently directs more than 80% of your donations to our program work and continues, year after year, to be a good steward of your financial support.

We are pleased to share with you just some of what, together, we have accomplished this year.

**WoMen Against Gun Violence is active on social media as a way to bring attention to issues, call for action, share successes, and discuss solutions. In 2021, WAGV posted over 800 messages across all our social media platforms ... Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter.**

**You can support our efforts by donating at [https://wagv.org/donate/](https://wagv.org/donate/)**
California gets an “A” from the Giffords Law Center Annual Gun Law Scorecard!

California has the strongest gun laws in the country and among the lowest gun death rate of all the states.

“California has the strongest gun safety laws in the nation, but we’re reminded every day that we can’t afford to be complacent in the fight against the gun violence epidemic in this country – we can and must do more,” said Governor Newsom.

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION

With our gun violence prevention coalition partners and with your help, the California legislature passed significant gun violence prevention bills that were signed into law by Governor Gavin Newsom. These include:

- AB 887 allows domestic violence survivors to file restraining orders online and SB 538 enables electronic filing and remote appearances
- SB 320 requires the implementation of uniform procedures to ensure individuals who are prohibited from owning firearms due to a domestic violence restraining order relinquish their weapons. This legislation also strengthens coordination between courts and law enforcement when there has been a violation of a relinquishment order.
- AB 1057 allows law enforcement to seize ghost guns under gun violence restraining orders and domestic violence restraining orders, expanding an important tool to protect survivors.
- AB 1191 requires the California Department of Justice to analyze crime gun data to trace the history of firearms used in crime and identify trends, providing important insight on how these guns are trafficked.
- SB 264 prohibits the sale of guns or ammunition at the Orange County Fair and Event Center. Gun violence prevention experts warn that gun shows can create a venue to circumvent gun safety laws.

Board Member Stephen Johnson continues to provide the law enforcement point of view and historical perspective on proposed local ordinances, statewide, and federal legislation while Board Members Lara Drino and Norm Dupont continue to provide legal analysis.

You can get more details on these new laws as well as information on local ordinances and federal legislation on our website at https://wagv.org/about-gun-violence/california-legislation/.
COLLABORATIONS INCREASE OUR IMPACT

**Hope and Heal Fund** and WoMen Against Gun Violence co-sponsored a very special event with *Washington Post* enterprise reporter and Pulitzer Prize finalist, John Woodrow Cox. Hope and Heal Fund Executive Director, Brian Malte, and John discussed John’s new book, *Children Under Fire: An American Crisis*, as well as the everyday gun violence epidemic we face in this country. Brian and John shared their thoughts and best practices on how we must address the ongoing trauma our children are exposed to living with violence in their homes, schools, and communities. Truly one of the best of this year’s online events, you can watch it at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo5oOCxKVEQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vo5oOCxKVEQ)

WoMen Against Gun Violence will again partner with Hope and Heal Fund on our educational summit focused on California’s parole and probation system. Our featured speaker will be Julia Weber with the Giffords Law Center. Panelists will include those impacted by the parole and probation system including both survivors of gun violence and those who have been incarcerated.

As a survivor of the North Valley Jewish Community Center shooting, Board Member Josh Stepakoff was interviewed on the podcast *Beyond Barriers Radio: From Hate Crime Survivor to Activist*.

Also in September, Board Member Donna Finkelstein spoke about gun violence prevention activism on *Making It*, a podcast with Terry Wollman. Also on the podcast was former WAGV Board Member Hollye Dexter and Po Murray, Co-Founder of Newtown Action Alliance.

Arizona State University (ASU) is developing a memorial app that will share the stories on those impacted by gun violence. After viewing WAGV’s Legacy Series online, ASU reached out to the Foster family – Ruett, Rhonda, and Alec – to take part in the inaugural release.

As a member of States United To Prevent Gun Violence, WAGV’s work as trickle up activists was highlighted during the *Concert Across America to Prevent Gun Violence*. You can watch the Concert at [https://www.facebook.com/ConcertAcrossAmerica/videos/866508597559603](https://www.facebook.com/ConcertAcrossAmerica/videos/866508597559603) and watch the WAGV segment at the 34:40 mark.
Throughout 2021, Board Members Mayra Alcantar and Ruett Foster have worked with the LA City Attorney’s Office Neighborhood Prosecutor Program to present safe gun storage information to both the business community and local neighborhoods throughout Los Angeles City.

WAGV’s safe gun storage information and its TALK Project brochures are now available in Spanish and English at the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles.

We continue our collaboration with Mark S. Kaplan, DrPH, Professor of Social Welfare at the UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs with our presentations to his undergraduate course in firearm violence. In 2021, Lara Drino presented an extremely well received curriculum and has already signed up to lead the session in 2022.

The GW/Rodham Institute hosted a special online screening of the documentary film The Price of Freedom. The film provides an unflinching look at the gun violence epidemic in America and the role the National Rifle Association plays.

After the film, WAGV Chairperson Loren Lieb was one of the guest panelists discussing the film, gun violence prevention, and the NRA. You can watch the excellent discussion here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R6_jkMtQsdw&t=38s The Rodham Institute newsletter also highlighted WAGV in their partner spotlight.
COLLABORATIONS INCREASE OUR IMPACT continued

WoMen Against Gun Violence partnered with Giffords on the installation of a gun violence memorial at Exposition Park in Los Angeles.

In collaboration with the Los Angeles City Attorney’s Office, WoMen Against Gun Violence is currently developing a gun safety curriculum for convicted and diverted gun crime defendants in Los Angeles. We will be administering the program and provide speakers to share how gun violence has impacted their lives, and will also have speakers from law enforcement and first responders or medical providers. Attendance will be a term of diversion or probation.
Since 2014, students in the Communication Arts Department at Otis College of Art and Design have collaborated with WoMen Against Gun Violence to lend a strong visual voice to the fight to end gun violence in America. Each year, Otis illustration students, initially led by Assistant Professor Kim DeMarco and now led by Lorenzo Hurtado, create engaging message-related posters and other materials for display at WAGV’s Annual Leadership Awards Event. Many of these images have become iconic and have been used over a multi-year period and on a variety of social media platforms.

Always timely and reflective of current events, this year’s images further heighten the impact of the wave of young voices gathering visibility around this national crisis. This is what Otis’ collaboration with Women Against Gun Violence is about – to visualize the issue and to move viewers to discussion and action.

Artwork by Anastasia Shi
Otis College of Art and Design

Artwork by Kamile Fagher
Otis College of Art and Design
BULLET POINTS – WAGV’S MONTHLY 15 MINUTE PODCAST

Since its initial release in May 2020, WAGV has continued to publish its monthly podcast covering hot topics in the gun violence prevention movement. This succinct production has covered topics such as firearms and suicide, firearms and domestic violence, court rulings impacting California’s cutting-edge gun violence prevention legislation, gerrymandering and its impact on gun violence prevention, stand your ground laws and racial bias, and ghost guns. November 2021’s episode discusses the Rust film set shootings with WAGV Board Member Jode Mann who also brings with her expertise as a Property Master. Listen on Apple podcasts or on Podbean.

The Los Angeles City Council has passed an ordinance prohibiting the possession, purchase, sale, receipt, or transport of Ghost Guns! Letters in support of the ordinance were submitted by WAGV and Board Members Norm Dupont and Loren Lieb. WAGV was represented by staff member Alec Foster and Speakers’ Bureau member Lorraine Morland at the press conference announcing this exciting news! Watch the press conference here.

- In 2020, LAPD recovered 813 ghost guns in Los Angeles City.
- So far this year, LAPD has recovered 1,637 ghost guns and is anticipating a total of 2,000 recovered by the end of 2021.

In 2021, WAGV emailed over 15 Action Alerts, each to over 7,700 constituents, calling for phone calls, emails, and letters to legislators and policymakers on gun violence prevention issues. To sign up to receive our Action Alerts, email us at wagv@wagv.org.

WoMen Against Gun Violence
10401 Venice Boulevard, #723 Los Angeles, CA 90034
www.wagv.org www.thetalkproject.org wagv@wagv.org
LOS ANGELES TIMES LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Predictably, after yet another high-profile shooting in America (the 232nd mass shooting of 2021, according to the Gun Violence Archive), attention is focused on the shooter’s motive. Does the shooter’s motive matter? Is there a motive that would make this latest mass shooting acceptable?

Rather than pondering why he did it, shouldn’t the first question be how did it? How did the shooter acquire the tool of mass murder? How do our lax gun control policies enable mass shootings to continue unabated? How can we lessen the likelihood of the next mass murder?

We must demand that our legislators do more by standing up to the gun lobby and passing sweeping gun safety reforms supported by the majority of Americans. Lives depend on it.

LOREN LIEB
Northridge
The writer is chairwoman of Women Against Gun Violence.

I grieve for the death of Hutchins.
I also grieve for the death of the 106 people who are shot and killed each day in the United States and for the 90 people each day who are shot unintentionally and survive, according to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

But the stories of these 196 people are often not reported in our newspapers or given much thought. Does it take the mention of a film star to bring attention to citizens who aren’t shot by famous people?

SHEILA GOLDBERG
Venice
The writer is a member of the board of directors for Women Against Gun Violence.

OCTOBER 29, 2021
IN RESPONSE TO RUST SET SHOOTING

Since you asked
Yes.

MARGOT BENNETT
Culver City
The writer is executive director of Women Against Gun Violence.

DECEMBER 9, 2021
IN RESPONSE TO “IN SCHOOL SHOOTINGS, SHOULD PARENTS BE LIABLE?”
WAGV IN THE NEWS: NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

From the Swedish News Agency TT, the Swedish equivalent of Reuters or AP and a leading news provider in Scandinavia – an interview with Board Member Josh Stepakoff about gun violence on the rise in the U.S.

Vapenvåldet har ökat i USA: Har hittills varit förordande

USA


Männivel från sjukvården är ofta.

- Jag visar upp jag en person som kom in. Därefter kom igång och han därmed att inte rest scen av gålvik och speng så bör jag kunna berätta det.

Det var en enig majoritetslaga 1999 i Los Angeles när världen sköts i Hollywood och en ledare i den kommunala Rodeo Drive fick ut i North Valley Jewish Community Center Los Angeles. Får jag vara intresserad av att avvika 70 skott på en månad och hela.

De av dem gå igenom välstånd, men på andra Joshua Stepakoff, fri fasnade i holländska. An han röst det kunde panna ut till säkerheter är hur i efterhand i holländska.

- Jag tycker det inträffar jag vet, att dessa rengöringsinsattens och säkerheter som jag definitivt är rädd om detta säger han.

2006 ökade det drygt 12 000 personer av vapen i USA, enligt Proces. Påttar avvar tilltät 19 422, en ökning av 1,22 procent, enligt polisverksamheten. Enligt skolblod och njattna har 2021 en trevlig.

- Yta under en gång i stort uttalande om att en skolblod avvar. Vi har en riktig av varje skolblod, enligt som skolblod och njattna. Det är skolblod och njattna.

De skolblod som skolblod och njattna eller, när folk inte förbjudet avvar vapen pågår skit. Eftersom tiotusen tiotusen har varit hänvisning

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June 10, 2021
Article on ruling overturning California's Assault Weapons Ban
Article available at:  https://laopinion.com/2021/06/10/activistas-y-politicos-apelaran-el-fallo-sobre-las-armas-de-alto-calibre/

It has been more than 20 years since Loren Lieb had the worst experience of her life when she learned that the camp where her two sons were had been attacked. A white supremacist fired at the Granada Hills Jewish Community Center in the San Fernando Valley. When Lieb arrived at the scene she learned that her 6-year-old son Josh Stepakoff had been shot twice. Her eldest son Seth Stepakoff, 8, was safe.

"We learned that the shooter had many high-capacity weapons and tons of ammunition and cartridges," Lieb recalled.

Now she can tell her story with relief as her son recovered physically but it took him years to overcome the post-traumatic stress of the terrifying event.

Lieb has since decided to become an activist with the organization Women Against Gun Violence to advocate for gun control in California. For her it was a way to cope with the anxiety, anger and disbelief she initially had. Lieb said it was very frustrating to hear a recent decision by a federal judge overturning California's high-caliber gun ban. Worse, it was knowing that he issued his order on National Violence Awareness Day.

"It's really disturbing," Lieb said in an interview with La Opinión. "We're stepping back rather than moving forward by lifting this important law that we've had in California for 30 years."

Alan Stepakoff with his son Josh Stepakoff at the Million Mom March in Washington DC in May 2000
U.S. District Judge Roger Benitez of San Diego issued his ruling Friday that the assault gun ban violates the Constitution's Second Amendment right to bear arms and deprives Californians of possessing assault weapons that are allowed in other states. Lieb said the judge is far removed from reality as there are many models of firearms to choose from and they are not as dangerous as assault weapons.

He said it was fair to eliminate the use of particularly dangerous weapons—such as the AR-15—which has been frequently used in mass shootings, where the number of victims is high.

**Supporting an appeal**

Following Judge Benitez’s announcement of the order, California Attorney General Rob Bonta said they will appeal, saying the decision is fundamentally flawed. He added that it is illogical to compare assault rifles to Swiss army knives.

"We need to take action to end gun violence now. We will fight this ruling and continue to advocate and defend common sense gun laws that will save lives," Bonta said.

Judge Benitez’s decision came on June 4, which was Gun Violence Awareness Day, and just days after the shooting in San Jose, where the suspect killed nine people before killing himself.

Margot Bennett, executive director of Women Against Gun Violence, said it’s not the first time Benitez has endangered state security. "He has overturned California law requiring background checks on the purchase of ammunition. In 2019 he [also] overturned California's ban on high-capacity magazines," Bennett said in a statement. "California appealed both rulings and will appeal this current ruling on the assault weapons ban."

For the time being, the current law remains in force.

Josh Stepakoff testifies at a Los Angeles city council meeting about a gun-related ordinance.
Los Angeles Assemblyman Miguel Santiago said it's unbelievable to see the judge likening a weapon of war to a Swiss army knife.

"What is this judge going to say next, that a bicycle is the same as a cargo truck?" questioned Assemblyman Santiago, who is a member of the public safety committee. "The judge has now legalized the same AR-15s that were used in the Sandy Hook and Parkland school shootings."

Santiago said he also fervently supports the appeal of this ruling.

"I hope it will be annulled so that we can protect our children and loved ones," the assemblyman said.

Janet Carter, director of matters and appeals for Everytown Law, the litigation arm of the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, said the decision is far outside the judicial mainstream. It also contrasts with the opinions of appeals courts across the country, as well as another federal court that examined this same law in California in the past.

"Whenever the courts consider a case with the potential to affect public safety laws, there is a lot at stake, but this opinion is only the first chapter of a judicial process that will unfold over the next few months or more," Carter said.

Loren Lieb and her husband Alan Stepakoff wearing orange T-shirts on National Gun Violence Awareness Day, which was June 4, 2021.
SAFE GUN STORAGE SAVES LIVES!

WAGV Board Members Donna Finkelstein, Giulia Erickson, Jode Mann, and Norm Dupont continue to focus on WAGV’s School District Project and the passage of **AB 452**, legislation that would require school districts throughout California to distribute safe gun storage information to all student households. This life-saving bill has been repeatedly delayed but will be heard in the Assembly Education Committee on January 12, 2022 and hopefully be before the full State Assembly for a vote before the end of January. If you are interested in working on this critical issue, please email us at wagv@wagv.org.

In California, so far in 2021, there have been at least 11 unintentional shootings by children, resulting in 3 deaths and 8 injuries.

Two TALK Project tutorials on safe gun storage and featuring WAGV Board Member Diana Georger are now available on our websites at www.wagv.org and www.theTALKProject.org

WELCOME NEW WAGV BOARD MEMBERS

**Mary Kopp**, brings to WAGV over three decades of program management experience at non-profits and news media companies. She has served as an independent consultant to a variety of local, state, and national non-profit organizations, providing financial management, event planning, grant writing, technical assistance, and program management services and is currently the program manager at Hope and Heal Fund.

**Ruett Foster**, is the senior pastor of the Community Bible Church of Culver City, which partners with local police to provide empowerment programs for first-time youth offenders. Since son Evan was killed by gun fire, the Fosters (Rhonda is also a WAGV Board Member) have appealed to communities to choose peace over violence and love over retaliation, working with juvenile offenders and community members to save young lives.

**Kyland Turner**, has performed his original poetry at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC and at the White House during President Obama’s administration. He starred as Dante in the modern musical of the same name at the critically claimed Actors’ Gang Theater and recently worked in the writer’s room of the Netflix hit series “On My Block” as a story consultant (2017-2020). As an aspiring writer of film, television, and music, Kyland is using his talents and platform to be an advocate for mental health, community organizing and preventing gun violence.
**BALLOTS STOP BULLETS**

Since 2018, when we held our first Voter Registration event, *Ballots Stop Bullets* has remained one of our signature programs. This year we have expanded this critical program to include a series of nonpartisan on-line conversations with Los Angeles City candidates, providing them with an opportunity to share what they will do to help prevent gun violence. To receive notice of these conversations and to receive a Ballots Stop Bullets bumper sticker, email us at wagv@wagv.org.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

After holding both its 2020 and 2021 Leadership Awards events online, WoMen Against Gun Violence will be returning to the Taglyan Cultural Center in Hollywood, California for its 29th Annual Leadership Awards Brunch and Silent Auction. Mark your calendars for **Sunday, May 15, 2022**, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. We’ll see you – in person – there! You can watch our 2020 and 2021 events on our YouTube channel [here](#) and [here](#).

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**WOMEN AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE**

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021-2022**

- Mayra Alcantar
- Giulia Erickson
- Ruett Foster
- Stephen Johnson
- Loren Lieb
- Josh Stepakoff
- Lara Drino
- Donna Finkelstein
- Diana Georger
- Mary Kopp
- Jode Mann
- Kyland Turner
- Norm Dupont
- Rhonda Foster
- Sheila Goldberg
- Ann Reiss Lane
- Alan Stepakoff

WAGV websites — [www.wagv.org](http://www.wagv.org) and [www.thetalkproject.org](http://www.thetalkproject.org) — are now available in 5 languages: English, Spanish, Armenian, Korean, and Filipino.