

Date

Elected Official

Address

Dear _____,

I am a parent of **(a) student(s)** in Okemos Public Schools. In the span of nine days, schools in our district had to close four times due to gun violence. We no longer count snow days, but gun violence days. One of our elementary school playgrounds was the site of a gun related suicide by an individual not connected to the district. Nine year old children at recess discovered the horrific scene. The next day, Okemos High School was the victim of a terrifying swatting incident that led to 1400 high school students and their educators fearing for their lives and being escorted from the building by officers with rifles. All of our students and staff at the other buildings in the district – preschool to middle school – were also in lockdown fearing their school was under active attack. While we were incredibly lucky that this turned out to be a “hoax”, our students, teachers, staff, and administrators experienced severe mental trauma from that event. Trauma that will undoubtedly stay with them forever. To them, that moment was real. Our Superintendent ran into the high school, alongside Ingham County Sheriff Wrigglesworth, believing they would find dead kids and an active shooter. Just as our community was beginning to recover and kids were trying to feel safe in school again, the unspeakable events occurred at Michigan State University where a single gunman was able to end the lives of three individuals and critically wound five more including an OPS alum. MSU is our neighbor. Many of our graduates are on that campus, many of our parents work at the university, and many of us know at least one of the victims. The horror we’ve seen other communities suffer through hit very close to home this week.

Personalization. Add your own personal stories, lived experiences, feelings etc.

I am writing to you today imploring you to take immediate action to curb school shootings and gun violence. According to Sandy Hook Promise, guns are now the leading cause of death for American kids and teens, and each day 12 children die from gun violence in the US. In the first 44 days this year, Americans have experienced 67 mass shootings, and 100 deaths. We are the only industrialized country with an average of 1.5 mass shootings a day and 2.2 people dying every day due to a mass shooting. I am asking you to take action to keep guns out of the hands of individuals who may want to harm themselves or others. Red flag laws and safe storage laws will help prevent suicides and shootings in domestic violence situations as well as mass shootings in places such as

schools. Laws holding gun owners responsible if their guns are used in a crime, such as the case at Oxford High School, would deter gun violence. Expanded background checks will go a long way to keep guns out of the wrong hands.

Our children are afraid to go to school. Our teachers are afraid to go to work. This cannot continue. I hold my breath when I see an ambulance or police car with sirens, watching to see if they turn towards my **child(ren)**'s school. I don't know how to comfort my **son/daughter** when **s/he** says **s/he** is worried about a shooter coming to **her/his** classroom. How can I ask my **son/daughter**'s teacher to sacrifice her life for my child? How are guns more important than our children?

Please vote to make change so that Michigan is safer for our children.

Sincerely,