

**AN INVITATION TO FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS,
CONCERNED FOLKS
TO WALK FOR BAN ON ASSAULT WEAPONS
AND FOR UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS
MAY 5, 2023 FROM 1 TO 2:15 P.M.**

On Friday, April 5th, some 200 joined in a silent walk to express support for the banning of assault weapons and for broader background checks. This walk came about when some of us, tired of simply complaining about the horror of mass shootings, often with assault weapons involved, realized that some kind of public expression was and is needed. The response, with very short notice, was enthusiastic and inspiring.

Now we want to extend an invitation to any of you who are concerned that weapons meant for military conflicts are so readily available across our country. We know that there was a ban on assault weapons that expired a few years ago and that mass shootings have increased significantly since then. We also realize that gun violence and violence, in general, raises many issues, concerns and questions. There are many issues needing to be addressed. Yet, as stated in the memo, every worthwhile endeavor begins with a first, focused step.

Please join us in taking one more step in creating a movement toward meaningful gun reform. It is our intention to gather on the first Friday of each month from 1 to 2:15 p.m. at the north most edge of Saint Mary's campus and to walk the path along Indiana 933 from there to Angela and back. We want to continue to walk in a quiet, reflective manner, letting our presence and the signs we carry speak. We want to emphasize that this is an ordinary people movement, not sponsored or identifying with any one group, organization, faith tradition, political party, or other persuasion. We are simply folks who desire a safer, more peaceful environment for every person, young, old, in between, as we mourn the lives so unnecessarily lost by gun violence.

Do share this invitation with others who are concerned and who may want to find a more public way to witness to our shared concerns.

MEMO

Date: April 20, 2023
To: Friday Gun Reform Walkers
From: Anne Luther and Joy O'Grady
Subject: Your Response

There are no adequate words to express appreciation for your enthusiastic response to our invitation to walk and your participation last Friday. We will need to ask you to share this message with folks you may have invited who also participated as we do not have a complete list of names and emails. Not only did many of you join us, but you also invited others. THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

As many of you were leaving our walk on Good Friday, you left signs saying "we can use these for next time." This prompted us to think about how we might continue to give public witness for banning assault weapons and urging universal background checks. We know that every worthwhile challenge begins with a first step which is repeated in some form until laws are changed. Here is what we are thinking as possible next steps:

1. 1:00 to 2:15 p.m. - gather on the edge of Saint Mary's campus by 933, every first Friday of the month, to walk or sit with signs. Those with full time jobs, might dedicate your lunch break for this important witness;
2. Gather at same space and time every Friday of the month;
3. The Inn at Saint Mary's has given us permission to park in their back lot which means few steps to our beginning area. If you prefer we also have an okay to park in the Bertrand Parking Lot, the lot nearest Church of Loretto (a longer walk);
4. Continue to witness together in quiet reflection.

Sadly, on the day of our walk and since there have been more mass shootings and more children killed. And, way too many unnecessary gun deaths in general. It's important that we not become discouraged and passive. I'm recalling a description of HOPE which motivates me: "Hope is not the certainty that things will turn out right, but the conviction that something is worth doing no matter how things turn out" (Vaclav). So, HOPE is a state of mind, of spirit, a disposition, yes, a virtue not based on outcomes but on VISION AND VALUES.

Let's act together as a People of Hope!