

On MLK Day, the Richmond Peace Education Center calls on all Virginians to honor the spirit of Dr. King's vision - an inclusive, non-violent community

For the Peace Center, the holiday honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. has long been one of [supporting youth in demonstrating against gun violence](#) and lobbying representatives of the Virginia General Assembly for violence prevention through common-sense gun control legislation. Despite a deserved focus and concern about potential chaos and incitement by gun control opponents and white supremacist militias on Monday, our position on guns and gun violence remain firm. We support:

- **Universal background checks**
- **A ban on assault weapons including suppressors and bump stocks**
- **Reinstating the “one-gun-a-month” law**
- **Child access prevention programs**
- **A requirement for individuals to report lost or stolen firearms**
- **Allow localities to ban guns from municipal buildings and parks**
- **Red flag laws**

We also urge the public to take time to learn more about the impact of gun violence on youth and teens. Included in the [linked report](#) from Everytown for Gun Safety are the following facts:

- **Firearms are the second leading cause of death in the U.S. for children and teens.**
- **there have been at least 405 incidents of gunfire on school grounds from 2013 to 2018.**

With thousands of gun control opponents expected on Monday, [reports](#) of potential incitements to violence by white supremacist militias and [a state of emergency](#) declared by the Governor this weekend, the Peace Center shares the [concerns of many](#) that the Capitol may not be safe for in-person advocacy and action and will not be convening any actions there. In light of these still-emerging developments and our core work of building just, inclusive and non-violent communities, the Peace Center:

- **Calls on all those engaged in protests this coming Monday, but especially those who arm themselves with lethal weapons, to remain peaceful.**
- **Encourage our members and the greater Richmond community**
 - **to stand together in our diversity,**
 - **to look out for our neighbors Monday and to stay safe,**
 - **to celebrate the increased diversity of representation within the General Assembly as more Muslims and people of color are elected to seats and**
 - **to support legislative opportunities for common-sense gun control and the option of removing monuments to leaders of the Confederacy that will lead to a more just and non-violent commonwealth.**



For those seeking alternatives to in-person lobbying as a way to take action, please consider the following:

- **Call or email your representatives to support the gun control measures for which [many of you rallied this past summer](#) during the Governor's special session. You can use the ['Who's my Legislator Tool'](#) to find your Senator and or Delegates office line and contact information.**
- **[Check here](#) for a quick review of what bills have already moved forward from committee. We also commend to you the voice of the [Virginia Center for Public Safety's](#), whose leadership includes Andy Goddard and Lori Haas, honored for their tireless advocacy as the [Peace Center's 2012 Peacemakers of the Year](#).**

In doing these things, we can occupy the spirit of Dr. King's vision of a "beloved community," even as physical presence at the Capitol this MLK day may feel unsafe for many within our community.

