



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

Office of Communications and Planning

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ARCHBISHOP CARLSON, OTHER FAITH LEADERS UNITE AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

Missouri Faith Leaders oppose proposed change to state law allowing concealed weapons in houses of worship

WHAT: Press conference to address state legislation related to gun violence

WHERE: Catholic Charities of St. Louis (4445 Lindell Blvd. St. Louis, MO 63108)

WHEN: 11:15 AM, Wednesday, April 11, 2018

WHO: Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis; Rev. Bob Farr, Bishop of the United Methodist Church in Missouri; Rev. Charles Norris, Vice-President St. Louis Metropolitan Clergy Coalition; Rabbi Brigitte Rosenberg, St. Louis Rabbinical Association; Rt. Rev. George Wayne Smith, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Missouri; Leaders representing other communities of faith.

ST. LOUIS – Most Reverend Robert J. Carlson, Archbishop of St. Louis, will join other faith leaders at a press conference on Wednesday, April 11, to address gun violence and related legislation in the Missouri Capitol. The faith leaders will echo a joint statement released last week by the Catholic bishops of Missouri, including Archbishop Carlson. The press conference will address the following points:

As religious leaders in Missouri:

- 1) We are troubled by the epidemic of gun violence affecting our community. We mourn with those who are affected by recent heavily publicized shootings, and we witness that gun violence disproportionately affects many of our most vulnerable communities, including communities of color.
- 2) We wish to acknowledge that many faithful people of good will are gun owners, including several of the bishops and faith leaders standing together to make this statement. There is a role for responsible gun ownership in our society.
- 3) We oppose the current proposal before the Missouri House to amend our conceal carry law. Our pastors, rabbis, and leaders should not have to place signage in our sacred spaces to prevent weapons from entering. We stand together and object to this proposal. Such a change would be a violation of our First Amendment rights. Additionally the proposal could threaten the public safety of our religious school campuses and day care centers as "conceal carry zones" are extended into these places. We urge the leadership of the Missouri Legislature not to enact this proposal.
- 4) We urge the Missouri House to consider new legislative priorities such as banning "bump stocks," limiting high capacity magazines, better access and resources for mental health care, and strengthening background checks.
- 5) We hope and pray that the political leaders of our State will overcome partisan divisions for the sake of safety. As leaders of differing faith traditions, we are united in the belief that life is a gift from God. We lament the polarization of the "gun issue." In our public work to end violence, we must work together.

Archbishop Carlson and the other faith leaders encourage all people of faith to contact Missouri House Speaker Todd Richardson to voice their opposition to this proposed change in law, and to encourage a more sensible conversation around gun safety. The Speaker can be reached at (573) 751-4039 or todd.richardson@house.mo.gov.

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