

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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Contact: Greta Johnson
Director of Communications & Assistant Chief of Staff
Office of Executive Shapiro
gjohnson@summitoh.net
330-643-2656

County Executive Shapiro and Council recognize Gun Violence Awareness Day

SUMMIT COUNTY, OHIO—Summit County Executive Ilene Shapiro and County Council passed a resolution recognizing June 3 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day and called on residents to honor and remember victims and survivors of gun violence. To commemorate the day and call for action, Executive Shapiro encouraged residents to wear orange in solidarity with those impacted by gun violence locally and nationally.

The [Wear Orange](#) initiative was started by the friends of Hadiya Pendleton, a 15-year-old shot and killed in Chicago in 2013. Her friends launched a national campaign in her memory to honor her and other victims and to prevent future gun violence. The color orange is worn by hunters to protect themselves and others. Wearing orange is a nod to this tradition and emphasizes that all people deserve to feel safe from gun violence.

Nearly ten years later, gun violence continues to plague our communities. In 2020, 19,384 people were killed by gun violence in the United States [according to the CDC](#), a 43% increase from the decade prior. This number does not include the 24,292 people that died by suicide using a firearm. According to Summit County Public Health, 775 people died by suicide, homicide, or an accident due to firearms in the last decade in our County. From 2011-2021, gun deaths have increased by 38% in Summit County, mirroring the national trend. And mere days ago, a 15-year-old boy was shot and killed in Akron.

On May 14, 2022, we were reminded that gun violence does not exist in a vacuum. Emboldened by racist rhetoric, a white supremacist equipped with a rifle and tactical gear traveled 200 miles to a grocery store in Buffalo, New York and shot 13 people, killing 10 people. 11 of the 13 victims were Black. Aaron Salter, Ruth Whitfield, Katherine Massey, Pearly Young, Heyward Patterson, Celestine Chaney, Roberta Drury, Margus Morrison, Andre Mackneil, and Geraldine Talley were murdered.

Ten days later, on May 24, a man shot his grandmother and drove to Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas and shot 19 students and 2 teachers before being killed by law enforcement. Eva Mireles, Irma Garcia, Uziyah Garcia, Xavier Lopez, Amerie Jo Garza, Jose Manuel Flores Jr., Alithia Ramirez, Annabell Guadalupe Rodriguez, Eliahana A. Torres, Eliahna "Ellie" Amyah Garcia, Rojelio Torres, Jackie Cazares, Jailah Nicole Silguero, Jayce Carmelo Luevanos, Alexandria Aniyah Rubio, Tess Marie Mata, Makenna Lee Elrod, Layla Salazar, Navaeh Bravo, Maite Yuleana Rodriguez, and Maranda Mathis were murdered.

“It is heartbreaking to watch the headlines report the casualties of gun violence, day after day,” said Executive Shapiro. “We know that there is work that can be done to help prevent this from happening to another family. We can strike balance between common sense gun laws and responsible gun ownership, and we cannot wait any longer.”

Education about responsible gun ownership, opposing systemic racism, and our legislative process at the local, state and federal levels are critical to understanding how to contribute to curbing gun violence in our communities. Studies from both [Harvard](#) and [Stanford](#) indicate access to guns increases the risk of homicide and suicide, respectively. Wear orange on June 3, 2022 and tell your lawmakers to support simple safety measures to keep our teachers, our kids, and all of our loved ones safe.



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