

NEWS RELEASE

Ilene Shapiro – Summit County Executive
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



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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 Friday, June 7 as National Gun Violence Awareness Day and called on residents to honor and remember victims and survivors of gun violence. To commemorate the day, Executive Shapiro encourages residents to wear orange in solidarity with those impacted by gun violence and to take the day to learn actionable safety measures to protect your loved ones. In light of the recent mass shooting in Akron, this call is more relevant for our community than ever before.

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 practice and emphasizes that all people deserve to feel safe from gun violence.

In the early morning hours of Sunday, June 2, a mass shooting occurred at a birthday party in East Akron. In total, 27 people were injured, 1 man was killed, and 2 victims remain in critical condition. This senseless violence has negatively impacted the victims, their families, and the entire community. No one should have to fear for their lives while celebrating with friends and loved ones.

“More than ever, our community is directly feeling the effects of the gun violence epidemic,” said Executive Shapiro. “This does not have to be our reality. We must call on our state and national lawmakers to finally say enough is enough. On an individual level, we must also have the tough conversations with our kids to educate them about guns and gun safety.”

Gun violence is the leading cause of death among children and teens in the United States. While we are currently 154 days into 2024, there have been 225 mass shootings resulting in 318 deaths and 836 injured. Only 7 days into June, there have been over 15 mass shootings this month so far, two of which occurred in the State of Ohio.

Gun violence does not only affect victims of gun-related violent crimes and their families, but also to those at risk of dying by suicide. According to Pew Research Center, suicides have long accounted for the majority of gun deaths in the United States. In 2021, the most recent year for which complete data is available, 54% of gun fatalities were caused by suicide, accounting for 26,328 lives lost in a single year. If you or a loved one is experiencing a crisis, please call or text 988 or chat 988lifeline.org/chat to be connected to a trained counselor 24 hours a day, all year round.

Due to the near omnipresence of guns in our community, it is imperative that gun owners and their families practice safe storage and handling of guns. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) recommends 6 actions to handle and store firearms safely in the home:

1. Treat every firearm as if it were loaded.
2. Always keep the muzzle of the firearm pointed in a safe direction.
3. Always keep your finger off the trigger and outside the trigger guard unless you intend to fire the weapon.
4. Wear appropriate ear and eye protection when discharging the firearm.
5. Use child safety locks or other commercially available locking mechanisms on your firearms and/or keep your firearms locked in a secure location accessible to adults only. Keep your ammunition locked in a secure location away from the firearms.
6. Familiarize yourself with and obey all Federal, State, and local laws regarding the purchase, possession, carrying, use, storage, and disposition/sale of firearms.

Free gun locks are available to anyone at both the Ohio Building, 175 S Main St., Akron, and the Russell M. Pry Building, 1180 S Main St., Akron. Residents are encouraged to stop by any weekday from 8:00am-4:00pm to pick one up.

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