

The Honorable Ted Deutch
2447 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Deutch,

I am writing to you to plead with you to ensure that other mothers and fathers do not have to endure the gut-wrenching pain. The senseless and unnecessary loss of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness for my family. My name is Patricia Oliver. My beautiful son, Joaquin, was one of the 17 who lost their life at Marjorie Stoneman Douglass High School last year. Words cannot express the devastation wrought on the families of the victims. The shattering of the worlds of families, friends and those who survived.

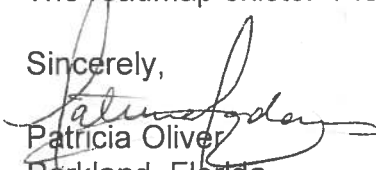
After the avoidable mass shooting, many said we were in their thoughts and prayers. How many of you in this chamber uttered just those words? I thank you for your prayers. But are you actually thinking? About your constituents? About those you have sworn an oath to serve. About those you know and love. If you were thinking you would **do** something. It is in your power to enact common sense gun laws. Common sense mental health support. Appropriate support and guidance to law enforcement. If we have the courage to stand up and do this, then never again will thoughts and prayers be needed in the aftermath of a mass shooting.

This country is at a crossroads. We need your leadership. We need your love. Your compassion. We need your serious thought, unmarred by lobbyists. I implore you to think about the kids. Think about how **you** would feel if it was **your** son. Your daughter. Your granddaughter. Your grandson. Because it could be. Had we – had the members of this body - learned the lessons of Columbine, of Sandy Hook, Joaquin would still be here. The lives of hundreds would not have been ripped to pieces. This was preventable.

Something you can do and urge your colleagues to do right this moment is support the recently introduced Universal Background Checks bill.

It is now my mission in life to do whatever I can to ensure that no mother, no father, has to endure the pain I have. That no shining beacon of light and hope and love like my Joaquin is snuffed out too soon in a preventable mass shooting. We know that he didn't have to die. If our leaders had done enough. Other countries have solved this problem. The roadmap exists. Please. Follow it.

Sincerely,


Patricia Oliver
Parkland, Florida