

I am reflecting on my shock, anger and horror at the mass shootings that took place over the weekend in El Paso and Dayton. The media has reported that the El Paso shooter, in his White Supremacist manifesto against immigrants from Mexico, released shortly before the shooting, used similar language as President Trump has used in speeches and tweets. It is my understanding that assault weapons were used in both mass shootings. As of August 4, the United States has had 250 mass shootings this year, including one in Southaven, MS. No other industrialized country in the world experiences this level of domestic terrorism.

Beyond the expression of our feelings and the prayers for those in recovery and those who lost family members, what can we do? I would like to make a few suggestions.

First you can contact United States Senators Roger Wicker at 601-965-4664, fax 601-965-4007 or email on his website <https://wicker.senate.gov> and Cindy Hyde-Smith at 601-965-4459, fax 601-965-4919 or her website email <https://hydesmith.senate.gov> and ask them to immediately pass S. 43, the Background Check Expansion Act of 2019, S. 506 (Red Flag legislation) and an assault weapons ban. You can also ask your Congresspersons to immediately pass an assault weapons ban and the House version of the Red Flag legislation, HR 1236: Congressmen Trent Kelly, 662.327.0748 or <https://trentkelly.house.gov>, Michael Guest 769.241.6120 or <https://guest.house.gov>, Bennie Thompson 601.946.9003 or <https://benniethompson.house.gov>, and Steven Palazzo 228.863.7670 or <https://palazzo.house.gov>. If you don't know who your Congressperson is, go to this website, <https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative>.

Secondly support efforts in your local community, the State of Mississippi, and nationally to fight hate. There are numerous ways to do so. On a local level it could be as simple as making a contribution to an agency supporting the Latino, Muslim, African-American, Hmong, Jewish, Native American or other minority group, or attending a religious service or a community event of a group different than you. It could be joining an interreligious or interracial group. On a state level, probably the largest group fighting for immigrants' rights is Mississippi Immigrant's Rights Alliance in Jackson, MS, website www.yourmira.org or you can call 601-354-9355. On a national level such groups as the Southern Poverty Law Center (<https://www.splcenter.org>), the ACLU (<https://www.aclu.org>) and the Anti-Defamation League (<https://www.adl.org>) fight discrimination and hate. You could join, get involved with or make a contribution to one of these state or national groups.

Finally get involved in the 2020 national elections and work to register voters in underserved communities. We need to elect a President and Congresspersons who will use their voice and moral authority to fight hate and promote acceptance of people from all religions, racial and ethnic backgrounds, nationalities, sexual orientations and gender identities.

Let's use these multiple tragedies to redouble our efforts to fight hate and gun violence in our country.

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