

Survivors Empowered Presents The Gun Violence State of the Union

Event spotlights gun deaths as the #1 killer of teens and kids in the US; First-ever "Badge of Dishonor" recipient to be announced

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Underscoring gun deaths as the number one killer of our kids, Survivors Empowered will host a national press conference entitled "Survivors Empowered Presents The Gun Violence State of the Union" at 1 PM PST on Saturday, March 9 at the Performing Arts Center & Multi-Purpose Room at Valencia Park/Malcolm X Library, 5148 Market St., San Diego, CA 92114. Join remotely via Zoom or [YouTube](#).



The event will address the importance of "speaking the whole truth about gun violence" in assessing the current state of federal gun laws and policies that impact gun violence survivors and charting a way forward to help children and teens—as well as adults—live.

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We must apply to firearms the same careful and strict attitudes we have toward alcohol use, tobacco use, cannabis use, and gambling.”

Penny Okamoto

Truth-telling Topics to be addressed as part of Survivors Empowered Presents The Gun Violence State of the Union include: Speaking the whole truth about the deadly impact of gun violence on US children, teens, adults, and gun violence survivors; Speaking the whole truth about ways to bring justice to gun violence survivors by repealing The Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA); and Speaking the whole truth about the staggering financial costs of gun violence--\$557 billion annually in gun violence-related costs borne in large part by US taxpayers.

Survivors Empowered is a nationally prominent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that supports and educates gun violence survivors.

Presenters include Survivors Empowered Founders Sandy and Lonnie Phillips, whose daughter, Jessi Redfield Ghawi, was killed in the 2012 Aurora, CO theater shootings; Giffords Guns & Democracy Attorney Fellow Jessica Ojeda; Survivors Empowered Executive Director Penny Okamoto; Survivors Empowered Board Member Max Coston, Founder at Safer California PAC and Principal at SP Strategies; Kristin Song, President at The Ethan Miller Song Foundation, and Devin Hughes, President and Founder of GVPedia.

Sandy Phillips notes, “We must take effective steps to educate the public about the truth of the impact of guns in our society. We must speak the whole truth about legislation, regulation, the financial burden on the US taxpayer, and, not least of all, the burden placed on a society that must consider every school day that some of our children might be fatally shot during a school shooting. To save lives, reduce crime, and create a society that can once again enjoy the freedoms of democracy, we must demand an end to the financial power that enables arms dealers and manufacturers to metaphorically pistol-whip legislatures into trading donations and votes for the lives of our children.”

Statistics about child and teen gun-related deaths are appalling and growing, especially around suicide. Numerous reports in the New York Times, US News & World Report, CNN, NBC, ABC, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have cited 2020-2021 studies showing gun violence as the number one killer of US children and teens. Even more startling than those years, 2023 data continue to show increases in firearm-related deaths that spiked in part because of COVID. For example, GunViolenceArchive.org reveals that suicide by firearm, a major killer of children and teens, went up from 23,941 in 2019 to 27,038 in 2022 (the last year for which data is available).

Resources to further study the devastating impact of gun violence and how gun violence survivors can reclaim their lives include:

- Giffords’ Annual [Gun Law Scorecard](#)
- Survivors Empowered (gun violence survivorship and recovery)
- Gun Violence Archive (overall rates of death and injury, rates broken down by demographics and types--homicide, police shootings, unintentional, suicide, school shootings, mass shootings, domestic violence-related shootings, hospital shootings)
- GVPedia’s Database and DataViz (research to arm policymakers, advocates, and the public with incontrovertible facts to create effective policies to reduce gun violence)
- Denver Accord (comprehensive plan to reduce gun violence)

For more information, contact Penny Okamoto: penny@survivorsempowered.org; 503-984-4152 cell/text; www.survivorsempowered.org. [Event information](#) is available at: survivorsempowered.org/gvsotu2024

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About Survivors Empowered

Tragically, the 2012 Aurora, CO theater shooting death of Jessi Redfield Ghawi, daughter of Survivors Empowered founders Sandy and Lonnie Phillips, became the catalyst for the organization's existence. Survivors Empowered has become a nationally prominent 501(c)(3) non-profit organization directly supporting and educating gun violence survivors. For more information, to get help, and to donate or buy books/merchandise, visit:

www.survivorsempowered.org.

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