



**To: Interested Parties**  
**Fr: Charlie Kelly, Senior Political Advisor**  
**Da: June 24, 2020**  
**Re: Gun Sense Majority: North Carolina**

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In January, Everytown for Gun Safety Victory Fund and Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund (together “Everytown”) announced plans to spend **\$60 million on the 2020 elections** — double what we spent during the 2018 midterms — in order to elect gun sense champions in states across the country.

With a fast-growing and increasingly diverse population, and competitive races, North Carolina is a pivotal battleground state that could decide who wins the presidency, who leads the U.S. Senate, and whether or not common-sense gun safety legislation moves forward at both the federal and state levels. With changing demographics across the state, driven by dynamic economies in and around the Research Triangle and Charlotte, and the political realignment of the suburbs giving rise to an extraordinary level of grassroots activism to reduce gun violence in North Carolina, we believe there are opportunities to elect gun sense candidates up and down the ballot and across the state. Given its electoral importance and the strength of its gun safety movement, **we are launching a new initiative, dubbed “Gun Sense Majority: North Carolina,” and investing at least \$5 million in the state to elect gun sense candidates who will prioritize gun safety.**

The electoral program will build on our recent election successes:

- In 2019, Everytown spent \$2.5 million and mobilized our grassroots army in Virginia to flip both of Virginia’s legislative chambers to a gun sense majority for the first time in more than two decades. Investing in smart strategies across a broad paid media landscape, with our grassroots volunteer networks Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action knocking tens of thousands of doors and making more than 100,000 phone calls, we were the largest outside investor and grassroots effort in Virginia’s 2019 elections — outthrusting and significantly outspending the NRA.
- We spent \$30 million during the 2018 midterms, successfully electing a gun sense majority in the U.S. House of Representatives — where candidates ran unabashedly on a platform of reducing gun violence — several gun sense Governors and Attorneys General, and gun sense majorities in key state legislatures such as Colorado, Minnesota, and Nevada.



“Gun Sense Majority: North Carolina” represents our largest ever investment in North Carolina — in order to ensure that the overwhelming majority of North Carolinians who agree with common-sense gun safety laws are represented by elected officials who will advance gun safety measures in Raleigh and Washington, D.C. To that end, we will work to win North Carolina’s 15 presidential electoral votes for Joe Biden; elect Cal Cunningham to the U.S. Senate and defeat Sen. Thom Tillis, one of the gun lobby’s favorite senators; re-elect Roy Cooper as Governor and Josh Stein as Attorney General, elect Yvonne Lewis Holley as Lt. Governor; and elect gun sense majorities in both chambers of the state legislature.

## **GUN SENSE MAJORITY: NORTH CAROLINA**

Polling we conducted [earlier this year](#) demonstrates clearly that North Carolinians want action on gun safety, and that gun safety will be a winning issue in the November elections. In polling conducted in January, voters across party lines supported stronger versus weaker gun laws, with crucial swing groups overwhelmingly supporting “red flag” laws, background checks for all gun sales, and blocking domestic abusers from owning guns. Moreover, 79% of voters said a candidate’s position on guns was “very important” to their vote and there is significant intensity on the side of gun violence prevention advocates.

- Voters support stronger gun laws by a 6:1 margin;
- Voters broadly agree that it is possible to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them while also protecting the rights of gun owners by a near 2:1 margin (65% possible/35% not possible).
- 91% of voters support background checks on all gun sales, including 95% of suburban women, while 84% overall support red flags laws, including 91% of suburban women.
- 64% of voters say they would never vote for a candidate who doesn’t support background checks on all gun sales, and it was the TOP issue among independents by a two-point margin.

These results and those from other polls show that public opinion is solidly in favor of stronger gun laws, yet some political leaders in North Carolina have ignored the will of the people and continue to do the bidding of the gun lobby. The lack of action to keep North Carolina communities safe, especially in the wake of the tragic shooting at UNC Charlotte, daily gun violence across North Carolina, and other mass shootings across the country, have only intensified our efforts to elect gun safety champions up and down the ballot. This year, we’ll use our resources to:

### **Win North Carolina for Joe Biden**



North Carolina will be a top-tier battleground state in the presidential race. With 15 electoral votes up for grabs, it is one of the biggest electoral prizes out of the four traditional battleground states in the South — Florida, North Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia. In 2008, then presidential candidate Barack Obama won North Carolina and came within 2.04 percentage points of winning again in 2012 —the second closest margin of any state after Florida that year. This year, we will work to ensure Vice President Biden wins the state, and with it, the White House.

### **Elect Cal Cunningham to the U.S. Senate**

This year’s U.S. Senate race in North Carolina will be one of the most competitive in the country. Everytown has endorsed Army vet Cal Cunningham because he understands that gun safety and responsible gun ownership are one and the same and has worked to keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn’t have them. Cunningham serves as a stark contrast to Sen. Tillis who has been a consistent roadblock to common-sense gun safety while raking in millions of dollars of support from the gun lobby — more than almost any other member of Congress. The path to a gun sense majority in the U.S. Senate runs through North Carolina, and we will work to defeat Thom Tillis and send a real gun safety champion to Washington.

### **Elect a Gun Sense Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Attorney General**

All of North Carolina’s elected state executive offices are on the ballot this year. North Carolina has three Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidates running in the races for governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. Democrats Roy Cooper and Josh Stein won their races for governor and attorney general respectively in 2016, despite Donald Trump’s more than three-and-a-half-point victory in the state. This year we will work to reelect Governor Cooper and Attorney General Stein so they can continue their work to keep North Carolina communities safe from gun violence. And given the lieutenant governor’s importance in determining the balance of power in the state Senate, we will also work to elect state Representative Yvonne Holley Lewis and defeat gun rights extremist Mark Robinson in the race for lieutenant governor.

### **Elect a Gun Sense Majority in the North Carolina State House and Senate**

In 2018, gun sense candidates helped break a Republican “supermajority” in the state House and the state Senate. Now, there are just six seats needed to flip the House and five seats needed to flip the Senate, putting both chambers within striking distance of a gun sense majority. We will aggressively contest state legislative races with the goal of electing a gun sense majority in the North Carolina General Assembly. To do so, we will defend gun sense champions in competitive races, and aim to flip key seats in many of the fastest growing and diversifying counties in the state. We’ll consider engagement in at least 15 House district races, and five Senate district races, including:

OFFENSIVE STATE HOUSE TARGETS: HD-01; HD-09; HD-12; HD-20; HD-22; HD-45; HD-46; HD-51; HD-59; HD-63; HD-64; HD-74; HD-82; HD-83; HD-113



OFFENSIVE STATE SENATE TARGETS: SD-18; SD-24; SD-39; SD-01; SD-07

## HOW WE'LL DO IT

To elect gun sense candidates across North Carolina, Everytown will make unprecedented targeted investments in races up and down the ballot while harnessing the power of our grassroots army on the ground.

### **Digital, TV and Mail**

Everytown will focus our investments on persuasion and mobilization, and will leverage all the tools at our disposal, including cutting edge creative content for TV and direct mail, and a sophisticated digital program designed to reach voters where they are, especially given concerns around the COVID-19 pandemic. We'll design ads to target suburban voters (particularly women), young people, and other key constituencies. These efforts will include digital creative specific to Black voters and ads targeting the fast-growing communities in and around the Research Triangle and Charlotte.

### **Grassroots Field Program**

With nearly 200,000 supporters in North Carolina, Everytown's grassroots networks of Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action will take on an unprecedented role in our political programming. Volunteers in North Carolina have already been engaging with candidates as part of our Moms Demand Action Gun Sense Candidate program, which recognizes candidates who demonstrate they will govern with gun safety in mind.

The COVID-19 pandemic has upended the way we live our lives with no exception for political campaigns. But Moms Demand Action was born out of the digital space, and so we have been on the cutting edge of campaigning in this new reality. Our innovative work to leverage digital tools to effectively organize online has [made national news](#), and in April we launched a [virtual Students Demand Action field office](#) in North Carolina, where we will work to register thousands of voters, work to get out the vote, and engage young people in gun violence prevention campaigns.

Using innovative strategies and harnessing the power of the grassroots, "Gun Sense Majority: North Carolina" will be one of our signature efforts for the 2020 election cycle. It will also serve as the largest investment in North Carolina ever for Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund and Victory Fund.