



DELTA SIGMA THETA SORORITY, INCORPORATED

A Service Sorority Founded in 1913

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Delta Sigma Theta Sorority Releases Statement Re: Tennessee Shootings, Senseless Loss of Life and Continued Calls for Gun Reform Policies

The National President of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Beverly E. Smith, released a statement today on behalf of the service organization as members express their heartfelt sympathies to the victims and their families of Sunday's shooting in Antioch outside of Nashville, Tennessee. The members also mourn the loss of one of its members who was also fatally shot in the incident and demand gun reform policies that protect innocent children from violence:

"Our heartfelt prayers and condolences go out to the victims and their families killed or injured during the mass shooting at the Waffle House outside of Nashville, Tennessee early Sunday morning. It is with sadness that we have confirmed two of the victims of this senseless act of violence were members of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated.

Soror De'Ebony Groves, initiated into Sorority through the Tau Nu Chapter at Belmont University in Spring of 2016, lost her life this morning from gunshot wounds. Soror Groves, age 21, was set to graduate this year. Soror Sharita Henderson, a member of Nashville Alumnae Chapter initiated through the Iota Tau Chapter at Middle Tennessee State University, is currently in critical condition at a local area hospital. We find ourselves here again in the midst of another tragedy that has taken innocent lives. This incident is even more painful for Delta as we must now prepare to lay to rest one of our most precious gifts - a collegiate member, who represents the future of our Sorority and the future of a generation of leaders of our country.

Gun violence and the availability of automatic assault weapons continue to plague American society. Delta Sigma Theta has long held the position that we can save thousands of lives with common sense measures such as universal background checks, waiting periods for gun purchase and raising the gun purchase age to 21 years old. The dialogue of the gun control debate must shift from the refusal to challenge the 2nd Amendment right to bear arms, to action by placing conditions such as a ban on civilian ownership of assault/military type weapons. There are conditions placed on the 1st Amendment right to freedom of speech; and Delta believes this is no different.

It is time to demand action on gun control and we call on Congress and organizations like the National Rifle Association to consider their role in supporting common sense gun policies that will protect the lives of our citizens. We have the power to make a difference to yield the results we are seeking in this country to put an end to mass shootings. Delta vows to hold elected officials accountable and will stand on our principles for common sense gun control.

Sorors, we will honor those who have lost their lives or who have been affected by gun violence by raising our voices, casting our votes and standing on the side of justice in our communities. We mourn this loss today, but we will not let this act of violence silence our will to do what is right."

In Service and In Love,

Beverly E. Smith

Beverly E. Smith
National President & CEO