Op-ed template

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I am a sister/associate/employee of (religious organization).

In light of my Catholic faith, I am supporting a new campaign led by Cincinnati-area Catholic religious congregations featuring a billboard on I-75 that says “Put the Guns Down! Nobody is Winning. Let Peace Begin with Me.” We realize, however, that a billboard is not enough, we must take concrete steps to end gun violence in our communities.

The toll gun violence takes on our communities is staggering with **120 firearm deaths and 200 more wounded** per day.[1] Death by suicide, homicide, and mass shootings ravage our communities at rates **26 times higher than other high-income nations**.[2] Troublingly, the **leading cause of death of children and teens in the United States is now firearms**.[3] Inaction in the face of this epidemic is unacceptable and we must take decisive action to prevent these deaths from occurring.

[Add a personal note about your own experience/feelings here].

I am also gravely concerned with the state of gun violence in Ohio and legislation that expands access to guns rather than puts limits on them. In particular, I am concerned about **House Bill 51** and its desire to forgo complying with any federal gun legislation as well as **Senate Bill 148** which would prevent the government from keeping a list of those who own firearms and prevent financial institutions from distinguishing firearms purchases from general merchandise purchases.

Consistently polls show that **90% of Ohioans and 86%-87% of gun owners support universal background checks.**

Our state legislature continues to be out of touch and even counter what Ohioans actually want to see in their communities by protecting the gun lobby over the common good and the lives of our children and citizens.

For these reasons and more, I am urging lawmakers to vote no on legislation that won’t make our communities safer and to support legislation like Senate Bill 164, the Suicide Self-Defense Act. We must prevent more tragedies from occurring and create a world where all people, especially our children, are safe and free.

Respectfully

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[1] Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023,<https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

[2] Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023,<https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

[3] “Statistics,” Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Accessed 11 January 2024,<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>.

[4] Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023,<https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

[5] Everytown Research & Policy, “Gun Violence in America,” Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, 13 February 2023,<https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/>.

[6] “Statistics,” Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, Accessed 11 January 2024,<https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>.

[7] “Poll says 90% of Ohioans support gun background checks,” WYKC Staff, accessed 7 February 2024,<https://www.wkyc.com/article/news/poll-says-90-of-ohioans-support-gun-background-checks/95-ea935860-d94f-4682-90a5-89bf9fb80b88>.

[8] “Ohio Poll Results Show Overwhelming Support for Lifesaving Gun Violence Prevention Policies,” Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, accessed 7 February 2024, <https://giffords.org/press-release/2020/11/ohio-poll-overwhelming-support-for-gun-violence-prevention/>.