This a look back at our policy fights from July 2021! Each month you will find the latest on the gun violence prevention movement, including bills to watch and how you can support policies to end gun violence in communities of color. Much of our efforts in July were devoted to securing funding for gun violence prevention at the federal, state, and local levels.

JOIN US ON FACEBOOK!

We are so excited to announce the launch of our Community Justice Action Fund Facebook Group! We hope this group will broaden our community of leaders, activists, and survivors. We’ll share updates on our work and opportunities to get involved. We want you to join! Click here.

GREG JACKSON
Advocacy Director
Community Justice Action Fund
Email: greg@cjactionfund.org

IRINA ALEJANDRO
Organizing Associate
Community Justice Action Fund
Email: irina@cjactionfund.org
ICYMI

BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE ACT

In June, Senator Cory Booker and Representative Steven Horsford introduced groundbreaking legislation called the Break the Cycle of Violence Act. The bill would invest $625 million dollars a year until 2029 to establish several programs centered on uplifting and funding community violence prevention organizations nationwide. The bill would also:

- Establish a federal Office of Violence Prevention through the Department of Health
- Create a $5 billion dollar grant program for eligible community violence prevention organizations
- Invest in research into violence prevention strategies, including establishing a national Community Violence Research Advisory Council
- Award $1.5 billion to the Department of Labor to support youth employment programs, especially those in communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence, who conduct job training and workforce programs

This act is the largest proposed investment in federal history and we need your help calling on Congress to pass the Break the Cycle of Violence Act. Join our fight here!

RECOVERING FROM GUN VIOLENCE WITH THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN:

The Department of Education and the Department of Treasury released guidance recommending states and localities allocating American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding to support community violence intervention programs. Over the last couple of months, we have seen several cities nationwide set funding aside and invest in solutions that end gun violence.
We organized a robust coalition of national advocacy groups to push for federal funding to address gun violence. Since it’s beginning, we’ve played a role in historic actions including:

- President Biden’s remarks on June 24th on Gun Crime Prevention Strategy with Attorney General Garland where they declared gun violence an epidemic and committed relief funds for local community intervention and youth employment programs.
- An explicit discretionary request by President Biden in the FY2022 Appropriations Bill for $200 million to support new Community Violence Intervention initiatives to implement evidence-based community violence interventions locally.
- Commitments to funding by local, county, and state governments from the American Rescue Plan with over $900 million in commitments nationwide.
- The Break the Cycle of Violence Act introduced by Senator Booker and Representative Horford in June has now garnered 50 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives and over 17 co-sponsors in the Senate.

States and cities across the country have also begun committing funds to gun violence prevention through ARP funding, including New York and California, where the governors have made public commitments to funding their community-based efforts. Commitments through ARP funding have also been made in Milwaukee, Mobile, Philadelphia, Memphis, New Jersey, Illinois, Milwaukee, Connecticut, Georgia and more. ARPA - American Rescue Plan. We will continue to push for the use of ARP funding to support community violence intervention work across the state, county, and local governments!
OTHER POLICY UPDATES

JUSTICE CAMP 2.0:
In mid July, we partnered with Cities United to host our second 3-day virtual learning lab, Justice Camp 2.0: Advocating for Peace, Justice, and Investment. Sessions included power mapping, building political power, and more, with experts and activists spreading their knowledge on reducing gun violence nationwide.

FUND PEACE SUMMITS:
Community Justice Action Fund continues to work with partners to hold Fund Peace Summits across the country that bring together local leaders, activists, and survivors from Black and brown communities. In July, we gathered at Fund Peace summits in Chicago, L.A., Minneapolis/St.Paul, and St. Louis. You can find a recording of our L.A. summit here. The last Fund Peace summit will be in Baltimore the second week of August. To attend, please email fundpeacenow@gmail.com. You can learn more about this campaign at www.fundpeacenow.com.
CALIFORNIA
Governor Gavin Newsom proposed a **$200 million investment** in the CalVIP program, which was created through legislation he signed in 2019 to support evidence-based local initiatives designed to break the cycle of violence in disproportionately impacted communities, among other public safety investments by the Governor.

COLORADO
Colorado passed **half a dozen laws** meant to curb gun violence in the state. Some of the new laws include HB21-1255, Protection Order Issues Against Domestic Abusers, meant to restrict people who have had a protection order issued against them from keeping their guns. They also include HB21-1106 and SB21-078, concerning safe storage and stolen or missing firearms, respectively. The new Colorado laws also close the “Charleston loophole”, which allows a gun seller to hand over a gun prior to a completed background check if the background check takes more than three days.

NEW YORK
Governor Cuomo declared gun violence a statewide **“disaster emergency,”** the first of its kind in the nation, allowing the state to allocate money and resources to areas of New York where gun violence is rampant. The declaration came with the signing of several gun violence prevention bills, including SB 7196, which makes it easier to hold gun manufacturers accountable if they sell or market firearms in a way that endangers safety and SB5000, which prohibits anyone with an outstanding warrant to purchase a firearm in New York.
LOUISIANA
SB 118, Louisiana’s “Permitless Carry” bill passed both chambers of the legislature, which would amend the state's concealed gun permit law, making the background checks and nine-hour firearm training course optional. A veto session is planned for July 20th.

TENNESSEE
In Tennessee, SB 765, the state’s “Permitless Carry” bill took effect on July 1st. The law allows adults 21 and older or some of the military 18 and older to carry a handgun without a permit, as well as increases penalties for certain gun crimes.

NEVADA
SB 452 failed to become law after a tense battle in the state legislature. The legislation would have made casinos gun-free zones similar to schools, libraries, government buildings, etc. The bill would have allowed resort operators to call the police immediately when coming across suspected violators.

MISSOURI
The city of St. Louis filed a lawsuit on June 21st attempting to block HB 85, a new law that would subject law enforcement agencies with officers who knowingly enforce federal gun laws to a fine of $50,000 per officer, and states that any federal laws or executive orders would be void in Missouri. HCR 13, another bill that would have created a tax incentive and financial support for growers converting vacant lots into gardens, also failed. The measure comes after a new grassroots ecosystem of urban growers, farmers markets, community leaders who are attempting to curb gun violence by targeting food insecurity.
RHODE ISLAND
Governor Daniel McKee signed two gun safety bills into effect that would ban “straw purchases” of firearms and prohibit bringing a gun onto school property. H 5386 ban prohibits the purchase, transfer or sale of a firearm to someone who is legally prohibited from possessing one. The second bill, S 0073, bans anyone from bringing a gun onto school property except in certain cases, including if they’re with school security or retired from law enforcement.

HAWAI’I
Governor David Ige signed into law two gun violence prevention bills on July 1st, including HB31 and HB1366. HB31 raises the maximum age of minors for which safe storage of firearms is required in the home from 16 to 18 years. HB1366 amends the felony offense for manufacturing, purchasing, or obtaining firearms with no serial number to also prohibit possession of those firearm parts. Both laws will go into effect on January 1, 2022.
RESEARCH REPORTS TO CHECK OUT

- The Violence Policy Center: Hispanic Victims of Lethal Firearms Violence in the United States
- The Violence Project: Mass Shooter Database’s Key Findings

THANKS FOR TUNING INTO OUR JULY POLICY DIGEST!

We’re halfway through Summer 2021, and the gun violence epidemic continues to worsen. Join us and take action as we fight for safer communities all across the nation. Get plugged in HERE.
FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:
HELLO@CJACTIONFUND.ORG

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: @CJACTIONFUND

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: CJAF SUPPORT GROUP

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