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Parkland, Pulse Nightclub Advocates Call on Gubernatorial Candidates to Support Assault Weapons Ban

May 26, 2022 (Miami, Fla) – Following the recent Uvalde and Buffalo mass shootings in which AR-15's were used to slaughter 31 people, Florida gun safety advocates are renewing calls for a statewide ban on military-grade, high-capacity assault weapons.

Gail Schwartz, head of Ban Assault Weapons Now (BAWN), a common-sense gun safety group, released the results of that organization's poll of Florida's 2022 gubernatorial candidates on a proposed statewide ban on assault weapons.

"Our question to the candidates for Florida Governor is a simple one: If elected, will you support a ban on assault weapons?" said Schwartz.

Which candidates for Governor signed the pledge to ban assault weapons?

Candidate	Result
Charlie Crist	SIGNED THE PLEDGE to ban assault weapons
Annette Taddeo	SIGNED THE PLEDGE to ban assault weapons
Ron DeSantis	DID NOT SIGN THE PLEDGE to ban assault weapons
Nikki Fried	DID NOT SIGN THE PLEDGE to ban assault weapons

Read more at www.bawnfl.org

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Schwartz, whose 14 year old nephew was killed by an assault rifle in the Parkland shooting, stated that Governor Crist and Senator Taddeo signed the pledge to support an assault weapons ban if elected, but that Democratic candidate and current Commissioner of Agriculture Nikki Fried refused to sign the pledge. Governor Ron Desantis has stated his opposition to such a ban, and did not sign the BAWN pledge either.

According to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit organization, the mass shooting at Uvalde, Texas was the 213th mass shooting in 2022, coming on the heels of nearly 700 mass shootings in 2021. Schwartz said that candidates running for office in 2022 have no excuse for opposing an assault weapons ban.

"While grateful for everything Commissioner Fried has done to enhance our state's concealed weapons licensing program, we feel there is no wiggle room on the issue of banning assault weapons. Floridians want a leader who emphatically declares the desire and urgency to help prevent mass shootings in our communities by halting the proliferation of killing machines like the AR-15 and AK-47," said Schwartz.

Ricardo Negron-Almodovar, a survivor of the Pulse Nightclub shooting, called on every candidate to take the pledge to ban assault weapons. "I was there on June 12, 2016 when a killer armed with a Sig Sauer MCX and hundreds of rounds of ammunition went on a shooting rampage, killing 49 innocent Floridians. After experiencing firsthand the bloodshed and carnage left behind by these killing machines, I find it extremely disappointing when a candidate doesn't support a ban on assault weapons," said Negron-Almodovar.

"After Pulse, Parkland, Newtown, Buffalo, Uvalde and countless other mass shootings, we need to be able to agree that these weapons are simply too dangerous. If you are a candidate for governor wanting to lead the third largest state in the nation, where so many have been directly impacted and harmed by mass shootings, the least you could do is make the commitment to honor their lives by fighting for policies that ban access to these types of weapons. I hope Commissioner Fried will join the rest of her Democratic colleagues and sign this pledge," he continued.

Schwartz also responded to the unwillingness of Governor Desantis and the Republican legislature to address mass shootings..

"Their pathetic and cowardly inaction is the reason countless Floridians will continue to suffer the same fate as my nephew. They are the reason why I worry every day that our loved ones will come home in body bags." said Schwartz.

In addition, BAWN released the list of Florida's 2022 "Gun Safety Champions" who cosponsored SB214 and HB199 legislation to ban the sale of assault weapons and large capacity magazines. That list includes 41 Democratic members of both the Florida House and Senate. Not a single Republican legislator signed the pledge in support of banning assault weapons.

Florida Senate Champions include:

Gary Farmer
Lorrane Ausley
Lori Berman
Lauren Book

Randolph Bracy
Janet Cruz
Audrey Gibson
Shevrin Jones
Tina Polsky

Bobby Powell
Linda Stewart
Annette Tadeo
Victor Torres

Florida House Champions include:

Carlos Guillermo Smith
Kristen Arrington
Robin Bartleman
Christopher Benjamin
Kamia Brown
Joe Casello
Dan Daley

Tracie Davis
Ben Diamond
Fentrice Driskell
Bobby DuBose
Anna V. Eskamani
Joseph Geller
Joy Goff-Marcil

Yvonne Hinson
Christine Hunschofsky
Dotie Joseph
Andrew Learned
Travaris McCurdy
Daisy Morales
Angela Nixon

Michele Rayner
Kelly Skidmore
Emily Slosberg-King
Allison Tant
Geraldine Thompson
Susan Valdés
Marie Woodson

For more information about BAWN, visit www.bawnfl.org

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