

Survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooting marched with other high-school and college students on Feb. 21.



FIGHTING THE NRA
 “We’re trying to make sure those elected officials that are being supported by the NRA are not elected in the upcoming mid-term elections,” gun law reform activist Emma González tells WHO.



Fred and Jennifer Guttenberg with children Jesse and Jaime. Jaime died in the Florida school shooting.



Student Cameron Kasky asked Senator Rubio if he will continue to accept money from the NRA during a meeting on Feb. 21 in Florida.

NO EASY ANSWER

After Tasmania’s Port Arthur massacre in 1996, in which 35 people were killed, then prime minister John Howard overhauled Australia’s gun-control laws, restricting the ownership of high-powered weapons. Since then, “Australia hasn’t had another mass shooting, and the risk of dying by gunshot has fallen by more than half,” says Adjunct Associate Professor at the University of Sydney’s School of Public Health Philip Alpers.

Still, Samara McPhedran, a senior research fellow at Griffith University, points out that because mass shootings have been such rare events in Australia, it is hard “to conduct rigorous statistical analysis,” she tells WHO. “Both Australian and international evidence suggests that one of the most effective ways to reduce firearm misuse is to have a robust licensing system that emphasises principles such as background checks, education and training, and waiting periods, and which disqualifies people who are not ‘fit and proper’ from having legal firearm access.”

VOICES OF ANGER

A grieving dad and a school student lead the way in demanding an end to mass shootings



Hundreds took part in a candlelight vigil in Parkland, Florida, on Feb. 15.

A hush fell over the packed auditorium in Sunrise, Florida, on Feb. 21 as a grieving father stood up to ask US Senator Marco Rubio a question. Real-estate agent Fred Guttenberg lost his 14-year-old daughter, Jaime, at the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, and in its wake both Rubio and US President Donald Trump attributed blame for the massacre on poor background checks on the 19-year-old killer, Nikolas Cruz. “Your comments this week and those of our president have been pathetically weak,”

“What is unfathomable is Jaime took a bullet”

—Fred Guttenberg

Guttenberg told the Florida senator at a CNN-hosted “town hall” meeting on gun control. “Guns were the factor in the hunting of our kids in this school. Look at me and tell me you accept it and you will work with us to do something about guns.”

He didn’t. Despite a groundswell of support for gun-law reform after the murder of 17 students at the Parkland high school on Feb. 14, there is little sign that US politicians will budge on the controversial issue of gun control.

In a country where owning a gun is claimed as a right under the constitution, the National Rifle

Association, the powerful lobby group that backed both Trump and Rubio in the 2016 election, has also stated it will not back “any ban” of guns. “What my belief is,” Rubio told the auditorium, “is we instead should make sure that dangerous criminals, people that are deranged cannot buy any guns of any kind.”

It’s not enough for activists such as Emma González, a student at Marjory Stoneman Douglas. After giving an 11-minute speech at an anti-gun rally in Fort Lauderdale, the 18-year-old has become one of the most visible and vocal gun violence prevention activists in a nation that saw 345 mass shootings last year. “Our motivation is each other,” she tells WHO of the widespread

movement that has prompted rallies throughout the US. “Each and every person is putting together a brilliant argument one at a time. We’re taking care of business the only way that we know how.”

To that end, she is helping to organise the March for Our Lives on March 24 in Washington, DC, and other US cities. The march has collected more than \$US2 million in donations, including \$500,000 from George and Amal Clooney and \$500,000 from Oprah Winfrey. González is expecting more than 500,000 people to attend in Washington. “We are going to be the kids you read about in textbooks,” she said. “Not because we’re going to

be another statistic about mass shooting in America, but because ... we are going to be the last mass shooting.”

That hope is shared by Fred Guttenberg, whose son Jesse was also at the high school that day and survived. “I sent [Jaime] to school yesterday,” he wrote on Facebook the day after the massacre. “She was supposed to be safe. What is unfathomable is Jaime took a bullet and is dead. I don’t know what I do next.” By Feb. 21, he had a mission. “My fight for the safety of our kids begins today,” he said. “Do not let the debate end this time until we all have meaningful gun reforms.”

■ By Michael Crooks, with bureau reports

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: GETTY IMAGES (2); FACEBOOK; AAP IMAGE; GETTY IMAGES