Annotated Agenda

**Gun Violence Prevention Issue Training Module**

**TIME ALLOTTED: 1 hour**

**PRESENTER(S): Varies by Training**

**MATERIALS NEEDED:**

* Projector and PPT
* Flipchart
* Markers

**GOALS FOR THIS SECTION:**

* Articulate why gun violence is a problem in the U.S.
* Clearly communicate the President’s plan
* Understand where in the path to victory we are on GVP
* Determine what next steps are needed to win

**AGENDA**

**0:00 – 0:04 Introduction & Goals**

0:00 – 0:04 Gun Violence Prevention Intro

* **[Slide 1]** [Trainer should introduce himself of herself, share 60 second personal story, and share why the Gun Violence Prevention campaign is relevant / personal to them.]
* **[Slide 2]** By the end of this session, you will be able to…
  1. **[Animation Cue]** Articulate why gun violence is a problem in our country
  2. **[Animation Cue]** Clearly communicate the president’s plan
  3. **[Animation Cue]** Understand where we are in the path to victory on GVP
  4. **[Animation Cue]** Determine what the next steps are needed to win
* **[Slide 3]** And so, to meet these goals, let’s review today’s agenda for this briefing on the Gun Violence Prevention Campaign. We will:
  + Discuss the Gun Violence Prevention Problem in our Country and how it affects all of us in this room.
  + Discuss the President’s Plan to reduce gun violence and current legislation making its way through Congress
  + Then, we’re going to really dive deep into what needs to happen next to win and OFA’s strategy to get this bill passed and discuss as a group some of the creative tactics we can employ to advance the issue in this area.
  + Debrief and discuss key takeaways from this section

**0:04 – 0:09 Discuss the Gun Violence Prevention Problem**

0:04 – 0:10 The Problem

* **[Slide 4]** We’re going to spend some time talking about why Gun Violence is a problem in the United States. How many people here know somebody who has been affected by gun violence in their family, community, or network? [Allow audience members to share stories about how they have been impacted, directly or indirectly.]
* As the president said, “We’ve suffered too much pain and care too much about our children to allow this to continue. We’re not going ot just wait for the next Newtown or the next Aurora before we act.”
* One of the biggest problems with gun violence is that it’s almost impossible to predict where the next instance of gun violence will occur and who the next victim will be. It has become a national epidemic.
* Whether or not you have someone in your life who has been affected by incidences of gun violence, we should all feel confident talking about why this is important. Everyone here walked into this Camp OFA training because this issue is too important to them to let it pass unsettled because of the powerful gun lobby.
* So, everyone take 1 minutes to reflect on why the issue of gun violence prevention matters to you. Write down your top points on a sheet of paper.
* [After 1 minute, regain the attention of the group. Best practice for regaining group’s attention: “If you can hear me clap once! If you can hear me clap twice!” Increase the number of claps until you have the full attention of the group.]
* **[Slide 5]** Now, let’s do an exercise that we like to call “Speed dating.” [Facilitator should line participants up in two parallel lines around the outside of the room, or wherever there is ample space for movement. Instruct participants to take 30 seconds to share why this issue matters to them, and then switch and have the other partner share back why this issue is important to them. Give 30-second warnings and then have either the inside or outside line of participants shift to the right so they have a new partner. Repeat the exercise for 3 total times – for total of 3 minutes]
* [Regain attention of the group]

0:10 – 0:12 Brief History of Gun Violence in America

* **[Slide 6]** Since the last time major gun violence prevention legislation was before Congress in 1994, there have been 43 mass shootings. **[Animation Cue]** 7 of them took place in 2012.
* This problem demands immediate action to prevent senseless deaths and, as the President said, we can’t wait for the next preventable mass shooting to act.
* **[Slide 7]** Since 2012, there were national outpourings of support in response to the mass shootings in Tucson, Aurora, Oak Creek and Newtown. After Newtown, the president called on Congress to act to prevent further gun violence. He stated, “If there is even one step we can take to save another child or another parent, or another town from the grief that has visited Tucson, and Aurora, and Oak Creek and Newtown, and communities from Columbine to Blacksburg before that—then surely, we have an obligation to try.”
* His call to action inspired millions of Americans across the country to get involved in the Gun Violence Prevention movement, and began OFA’s campaign to stop Gun Violence.

**0:09 – 0:15 Legislative History**

0:09 – 0:11 Previous Legislation

* **[Slide 8]** To provide some background before we dive into this campaign’s strategy for winning the legislative battle, let’s just briefly cover some of the recent history of gun violence prevention legislation in the United States.
* In 1994, the Brady Act, or the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act was passed by the House and the Senate and signed by President Clinton. This bill implemented the current system that is still in place for background checks. In other words, The Brady Act required that background checks be conducted on individuals before a firearm may be purchased from a federally licensed dealer, manufacturer or importer.
* Of course, the Brady Bill made exceptions for some purchases that ultimately were not subject to background checks, and the gunshow loophole was created.
* Since this time, no legislation has passed the Senate and the House and has been enacted to prevent or reduce gun violence in this country.

0:11– 0:15 How Legislation is crafted

* **[Slide 9]** In seeking to reduce gun violence, OFA and other gun violence prevention advocates are seeking to change laws that revolve around the following four criteria: Hardware, Ammunition, Procurement, and Reporting.
  1. What kind of safeguards might exist in the realm of “Hardware?”: When we think of hardware safeguards, we ask ourselves, “what kind of gun is available for purchase?” Handguns, rifles, shotguns, assault weapons?
  2. How about Ammunition? So with this, crafters of legislation are thinking of things like, “what kind and how many bullets can be dispelled from the gun?” Why do you all think this matters? [Best practice, wait at least 5 seconds after asking a question before clarifying or rephrasing the question]
  3. What about procurement? [Allow 5 seconds for participants to raise hands] That’s right, so where and how can the firearm be purchased?
  4. The fourth is reporting. This refers to when a gun is purchased, how that purchase is recorded by the gun manufacturer, the state, or the federal government.
* On the contrary, in evaluating any kind of legislation relating to gun violence prevention, opponents cite the constitutional argument that any kind of restrictions on gun sales are in direct violation to their 2nd Amendment rights, enumerated in the Constitution. How might we respond to mischaracterizations like this?
* That’s right – legislation like this and the existing proposal in no way violate 2nd amendment rights. As we’ll talk about, the current proposal is designed to apply the background checks that we already have to the rest of gun sales and strengthen the background check system so that we can keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals.

**0:15 – 0:25 President Obama’s Plan & Current Legislation**

0:15 – 0:20 The Plan

* **[Slide 10]** Now that we have talked about the problem we’re all here to solve, and breezed through a bit of history on how we arrived here, let’s look at the path the President’s plan has taken thus far. Then we’re going to spend the bulk of today discussing the game plan for passing this thing.
* **[Slide 11]** On January 11th, The President laid out his plan to reduce gun violence in America. In crafting this plan, there were four major provisions that we all know will reduce gun violence. They are:
  1. Closing Background Check Loopholes. So in instances like at gun shows where purchasers can easily bypass the background check, this provision would end this loophole so dangerous criminals can’t just go to the palce where they can avoid background checks.
  2. The second piece was to renew the assault weapons ban to take military-style assault rifles off the market.
  3. Third, the President proposed a series of steps that we can take in schools to make them safer.
  4. And lastly, to institute a ban on high-capacity magazines, like the ones used by many of the ciminals who carried out mass shootings.
* **[Animation Cue]** At OFA, our legislative focus has been on closing the background check loophole for several reasons:
  1. **[ANIMATION]** First, there is and has always been bipartisan support: Expanded background checks have been supported in the past by Democrats and Republicans alike, and members of both parties have come together to work to pass this specific legislation as well.
  2. **[ANIMATION]** Second, this is a commonsense measure. Expanding background checks to close the gun show loophole makes sense. Guns are procured by dangerous people who game the system by purchasing and then trafficking guns from gun shows that are then used in crimes and murders. This legislation closes that loophole and eliminates this dangerous problem.
  3. **[ANIMATION]** We enjoy a 90% level of support on this piece. 90% of Americans support expanded background checks – in fact, most Americans assume this already exists! With such overwhelming support across the country, including the majority of gun owners and NRA members, Congress should stand up for the will of their constituents.
  4. **[ANIMATION]** Lastly, it will have immediate impact on deaths from gun violence. Once passed and enacted, expanded background checks would have an immediate impact in keeping guns out of dangerous hands, which would immediately result in fewer unnecessary deaths.

0:20 – 0:25 What Happened in the Senate: Current Legislation

* Now that we know how the gun violence prevention bill came about, let’s discuss the lead-up to where we are now and how we plan to finish what we started.
* **[Slide 12]** On Feb. 12th, the President delivered the State of the Union Speech. He closed his speech with an impassioned call to action for the Senate and the House to act on passing gun violence legislation. His core message was threefold:
  1. First, that 90% of Americans agree that we need to get this done.
  2. Second, we demand action. We know Congress won’t just act because it’s the right thing to do. We have to actively demand this change because without some pressure, Congress will let this moment slip by.
  3. Lastly, this will save lives and protect communities and we have a duty to see it through. There is no reason not to act on legislation that would save even a single innocent life.
* **[Slide 13]** Following the SOTU, on March 13th, the Senate Bill was introduced. Among the many provisions cited in the bill, it called for:
  1. Background Checks
  2. School Safety Measures
  3. Anti-trafficking provisions
* Amendments were also included with the bill package, including the Toomey-Manchin amendment which was the bipartisan compromise crafted by Pat Toomey, the Republican Senator from PA and Joe Manchin, a Democratic Senator from West Virginia. The two of them hammered out this compromise that addressed the concerns from both sides of the aisle about what was featured in the original legislation. The result called for expanded background checks that effectively closed the gun show loophole, but made minor exceptions for things like private sales between family members, etc.
* Other amendments that were offered included the Assault Weapons Ban and the High Capacity Magazine Ban that were called for in the President’s plan.
* **[Slide 14]** Then, on April 17th, the Senate voted on Toomey-Manchin, as well as most of the other Amendments that were offered in conjunction with this bill. Toomey-Manchin, and all of the other Amendments, failed to get past the 60 vote threshold for Cloture, and as a result, all of them failed to make their way into the current version of the bill.
* **[Animation Cue]:** 48 Democrats, 2 Independents and 4 Republicans voted in favor of Toomey-Manchin.
* **[Animation Cue]:** 41 Republicans and 5 Democrats voted against the bill, including Harry Reid who did so for procedural reasons so that he would be able to bring the bill back up for consideration in the future. Without making that procedural vote, the bill would have died after it failed to pass.
* **[Animation Cue]:** The final vote was 54-46, not enough to satisfy the threshold for cloture.
* **[Animation Cue]:** The Toomey-Manchin compromise was not adopted.
* **[Slide 15]** Despite the fact that we didn’t win on April 17th, there were notable victories for our side coming out of the Senate Vote:
  1. All of the GOP-offered Amendments failed to pass, most notably the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Amendment, which failed by a margin on 43-57
  2. 5 Key Swing Senators voted in the affirmative
* **[Slide 16]** The President’s Response: “We are going to get this right. This is just Round One.” Here’s where all of us come in. The reason we’re here today is to strategize to win round two.

**0:30 – 0:47 What Needs to Happen Next**

0:30 – 0:33 Strategy

* **[Slide 17]** Here’s the most important part of this session: our strategy for how we take this bill from something that recently failed to pass in the Senate to the law of the land.
* **[Slide 18]** Because of the demands of the legislative process, we need to get the bill I just outlined through both the Democratic-led Senate and the Republican-led House of Representatives. This bill is moving through both, but the path to victory is going different in each body. In the Senate, we need to force another vote to happen, and before it does, we need to be able to flip 5 Senators who voted No to vote Yes the next time around.
* In the House in order to ultimately bring this bill to a vote and to pass it, we need to reach a threshold of 218 bipartisan supporters. So strategically, OFA’s first step is to start gaining cosponsors – with the ultimate goal of getting 218 cosponsors on the bill in the House. Cosponsoring a bill is a legislative process where member of either body want to symbolically and literally co-sign their name indicating their support to help pass the measure.
* **[Slide 19]** Across the country, our strategy differs too. Some states are priorities for Senate votes, others have priority House districts, and we will utilize border states and sister states to help build capacity to influence members across the country.
* **[Slide 20]** Our end goal is to hold Congress accountable. Every day that they don’t act on gun violence prevention is another day that innocent victims are dying due to senseless and preventable gun violence.
* **[Slide 21]** CUSTOMIZE BASED ON TARGETS IN STATE [Facilitator should ask audience to come up with who and how they would target their efforts toward if they wanted to sway members of the Senate and House to pass the bill.]

0:33– 0:37 How do we do that?

* Tactically, we break our strategy up in to two major buckets that all of us are involved in. They are grassroots action – and by that I mean action on the ground, having face to face conversations and hosting events in the field, and amplifying the story of our movement and the support on the ground.
* **[Slide 22]** Grassroots Action: Our grassroots army in states across the country have effectively carried out many key Days of Action around important milestones in the legislative process. As you can see, they often closely align with major milemarkers in the legislative calendar and process. Take a look at a few examples, and then we’re going to start brainstorming together on some of the things we can do in-state, given the targets we have.
  + Feb 22nd: “We Demand a Vote” events in anticipation of the bill’s release from Committee
  + March 28th: “We Demand Action” Day of Action, following the bill’s release to the Senate
  + April 13th: “We Haven’t Forgotten” Community Vigils during the Senate’s floor debate
  + April 20th: “We Will Be Heard” Rapid Response events after the Senate Vote
  + **[Slide 23]** Since the Senate voted, our grassroots volunteers have worked to keep up the drumbeat on gun violence prevention, carrying the President’s message that this is Round 1 to Senators and House Members across the country:
  + April 27th : Senate Hometown Day of Action
  + May 9th: Delivered 1.4 million petitions leaders in Washington
  + May 23rd: “Not Backing Down” In-State Petition Deliveries
  + June 14th: 6 Month Anniversary of Newtown National Day of Action
* **[Slide 24]** Taking Action: Digitally
* We can also members of Congress online, with strategic twitter campaigns and shareable graphics on Facebook, as well as blog posts on BarackObama.com featuring the work of our volunteers across the country. Pair that with the events in the field earning press and we’ve got a well-rounded strategy for making these targeted members feel the heat right here at home. It affects the way those members vote, similar to the way our conversations at doors helped us get votes in the 2012 election.

0:37 – 0:39 Next Steps

* **[Slide 25]** We have a strategic path to victory in both Houses that will require different tactics but will both get us to the end goal of passing GVP legislation through both Houses.
* In the Senate, our goals are:
  1. First, keep pressure on the Senate to take the bill back up
  2. Flip No Votes into Yes votes. We only need 5 to overcome an inevitable filibuster. As a reminder, those are procedural hurdles that require the Senate bill’s supporters to garner at least 60 votes (whereas 51 or more constitutes a majority) to move the bill into the next step in the process.
  3. Drive home the narrative that “This is Round 1” and we are #NotBackingDown
* In the House of Representatives, we need to:
  1. Recruit Bipartisan support for HR 1565
  2. Focus on key Congressional Districts and swing voters to move the bill forward

0:39 – 0:47 Off-the-wall tactic brainstorm

* **[Slide 26]** We’ve discussed in-depth how we’ve been strategic up until this point, but right now we need to add some creativity into our tactics. In some places, reporters have told us they aren’t covering any more press conferences. The question is now, “how do we make our work press worthy?”
* And I think we can all agree that some less generic events are going to help get press while also getting in the heads of our targeted members here.
* What we’re going to do for the next 7 or so minutes is brainstorm as a group some of the weird/interesting things we can do to get inside the head of our targeted Representatives and Senators. One example was one our national grassroots organizing director thought of – “blizzarding,” where we use our snowflakes in states to flyer targeted neighborhoods and targeted constituency groups, then take pictures and tweet them at our Senator or Representative to let them know what we’re saying and to whom. It’s kind of off the wall, but it’s what we’re looking for. Can I get a volunteer to write these down on a sheet of butcher paper? [If none of the participants volunteer, facilitator should pick someone who has not stepped up to participate as much as others during the session] Great, who wants to start us off? [If tepid or low participation, facilitator should adjust to whip-style call-outs, where everyone participates.]

**0:47 – 1:00 Q&A and Debrief**

0:47 – 0:57 Key Takeaways Debrief

* **[Slide 27]** Let’s take these next few minutes to review what we learned today.
* Take a moment to write down your key takeaways from the overview of the gun violence prevention campaign. I’ll leave the agenda up for another minute to help get your memory juices flowing.
* **[Slide 28]** We’ll do the next exercise as a group. Can someone summarize their key takeaway for the session on what needs to happen next? [Best Practice: wait at least 5 seconds after asking the question to give participants time to think about their responses and volunteer to answer your question.]

0:57 – 1:00 Questions & Answers

* **[Slide 29]** [Take Questions from attendees. For the questions that you are unable to answer, put them in a parking lot for follow-up by your State Coordinator.]
* We have a couple minutes left for questions. I’ll answer as many as I can. Otherwise, please write them down so you can follow up with your OFA mentor about them or write them down on your evaluation at the end of the day.