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Everytown's Students Demand Action Campaign Is Getting Students Involved In Gun Reform

BY [LILLI PETERSEN](#) | FEB 27 2018 | [f](#)



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In the less than two weeks since the tragic shooting at Marjory Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, thousands of people around the country are wondering what they can do



launched a new [campaign for students to take on gun control reform](#). So if you were wondering how to take action and get involved, this campaign may help.

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On Friday Feb. 16, only two days after the shooting in Florida that left 17 people dead, Everytown, together with its partner organization Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, launched their new campaign for students, [Students Demand Action: End Gun Violence in America](#), to help high school and college students get involved in the push for gun control reform. It's one of [multiple student-led gun reform campaigns](#) that have



The new Students Demand Action campaign is notable in who it's backed by. The nationwide campaign will see Everytown for Gun Safety, a major national gun reform nonprofit of more than 4 million advocates, policymakers, and gun violence survivors, working with students to give them the tools to craft real change on gun issues. The campaign aims to empower students talk to local legislators and hold them accountable for gun issues, elect legislators who will take action on gun control, and work within their communities to promote their own idea of what a safe community looks like. Students can text STUDENT to 644-33 to get involved.

But despite the national group's involvement, the campaign will take the shape that students activists want – and Everytown will just be there to help.





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“One of the really interesting things about Students Demand Action, to me, is that it will be what the students want it to be,” says Taylor Maxwell, the deputy communications director for Everytown. She tells me in an interview for Elite Daily that the real work will be done by students on the ground, who, with Everytown’s help and guidance, will shape their own approach to gun issues and start chapters of the campaign wherever they are. “Our goal is to give them the resources they need and the information we have on how to work on this issue and empower them to take it on in their own way,” Maxwell says, “and they will have ideas that are different than how we currently run grassroots programs.”

SINCE THE SHOOTING IN PARKLAND, STUDENTS AROUND THE COUNTRY HAVE BEEN ACTIVELY ADVOCATING FOR MORE AND BETTER DISCOURSE ON GUN CONTROL IN AMERICA.

Most notably, survivors of the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School themselves have been leading the charge. At a town hall aired by CNN on Feb. 21, [student survivors challenged legislators](#) and NRA lobbyists about what they planned to do to keep schools safe. Student activists are also planning various marches to demand better action from leaders and legislators, most notably the [March For Our Lives](#), on Washington D.C., organized by survivors of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas shooting themselves.



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ABC News
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Survivors of the school shooting in Florida are calling for a march on Washington to demand action on gun control. "People are saying that it's not time to talk about gun control, and we can respect that. Here's a time: March 24, in every single city."

abcn.ws/2Go17mD

♡ 32.1K 2:16 PM - Feb 18, 2018

💬 14.6K people are talking about this



Their activism has been an inspiration for students who are fed up with active shooter drills, weapons in schools, and the threat of violence. Beyond the March For Our Lives, other activist groups are **organizing events around the country**, such as a nationwide school walkout scheduled for March 14 organized by EMPOWER, the youth branch of the Women's March, and an April 20 (the 19th anniversary of the 1999 Columbine shooting) walkout that has over 77,000 pledges to participate. "For too long, we've waited on adults



IT'S THAT ANGER AND HUNGER FOR SOMETHING TO DO THAT PROMPTED EVERYTOWN TO CREATE THE NEW CAMPAIGN.

Maxwell says that in the days immediately following the shooting in Parkland, Everytown was “deluged” by requests from students to have the gun safety group start a movement specifically for them. Maxwell doesn’t have a specific count, but she says there are “thousands” of students who reached out to join in just a few days, contacting the group through a number of different platforms to ask if they had an organization that was specifically for students. “And we felt like it was time to answer that with a yes,” Maxwell says.

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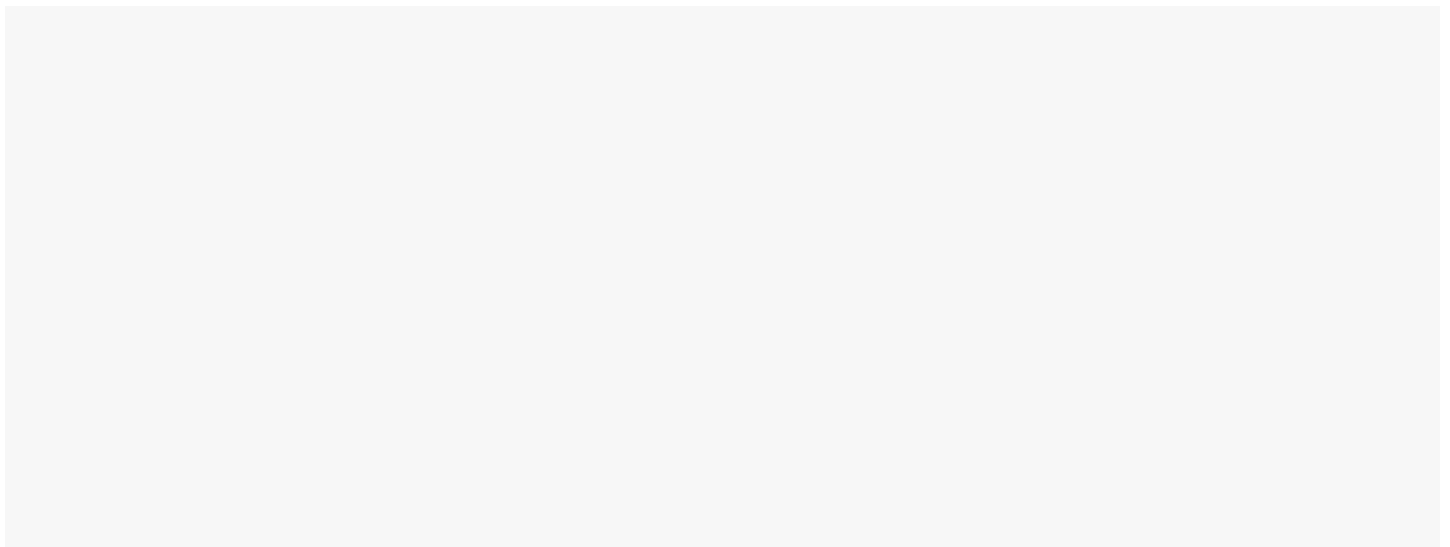
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students inspired her. “They were being so vocal and they were being so eloquent with how they felt, and they were demanding to be heard,” she says. She reached out to Everytown because she had heard of their work and felt it was time for students to be involved and take initiative to feel safe in schools.



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"It's so real for us to be practicing lockdown drills and all of that preparation that goes into it," she says. "We grew up with seeing school shootings in the news. And I thought that *we are ready, and we have the drive to really start advocating for ourselves.*"



THE FIGHT IS NOT OVER, IT'S REALLY JUST STARTING FOR US.
WE HAVE A VOICE, AND IT'S OK THAT WE DEMAND ACTION.

Herrmann calls getting legislation for common-sense gun reform, whether on the state or federal level, the number one priority. "The midterm elections are less than nine months away, and I think that we need to make it clear that gun control needs to be a topic that



gun reform.

Everytown has a sister campaign that may help with that. The [Throw Them Out campaign](#), launched the same day as the new Students Demand Action campaign, aims to push out elected officials who won't take action on gun safety and replace them with legislators who will. The campaign also encourages people who are passionate about gun reform to run for office themselves, with Everytown providing help and guidance.

And for those who are nervous or unsure about getting involved, Herrmann has a message. She wants students and young people to know that they have a voice, and to not be afraid to exercise it – whether it's on Twitter, in a march, or getting involved with a campaign. "The fight is not over, it's really just starting for us," she says. "We have a voice, and it's OK that we demand action."



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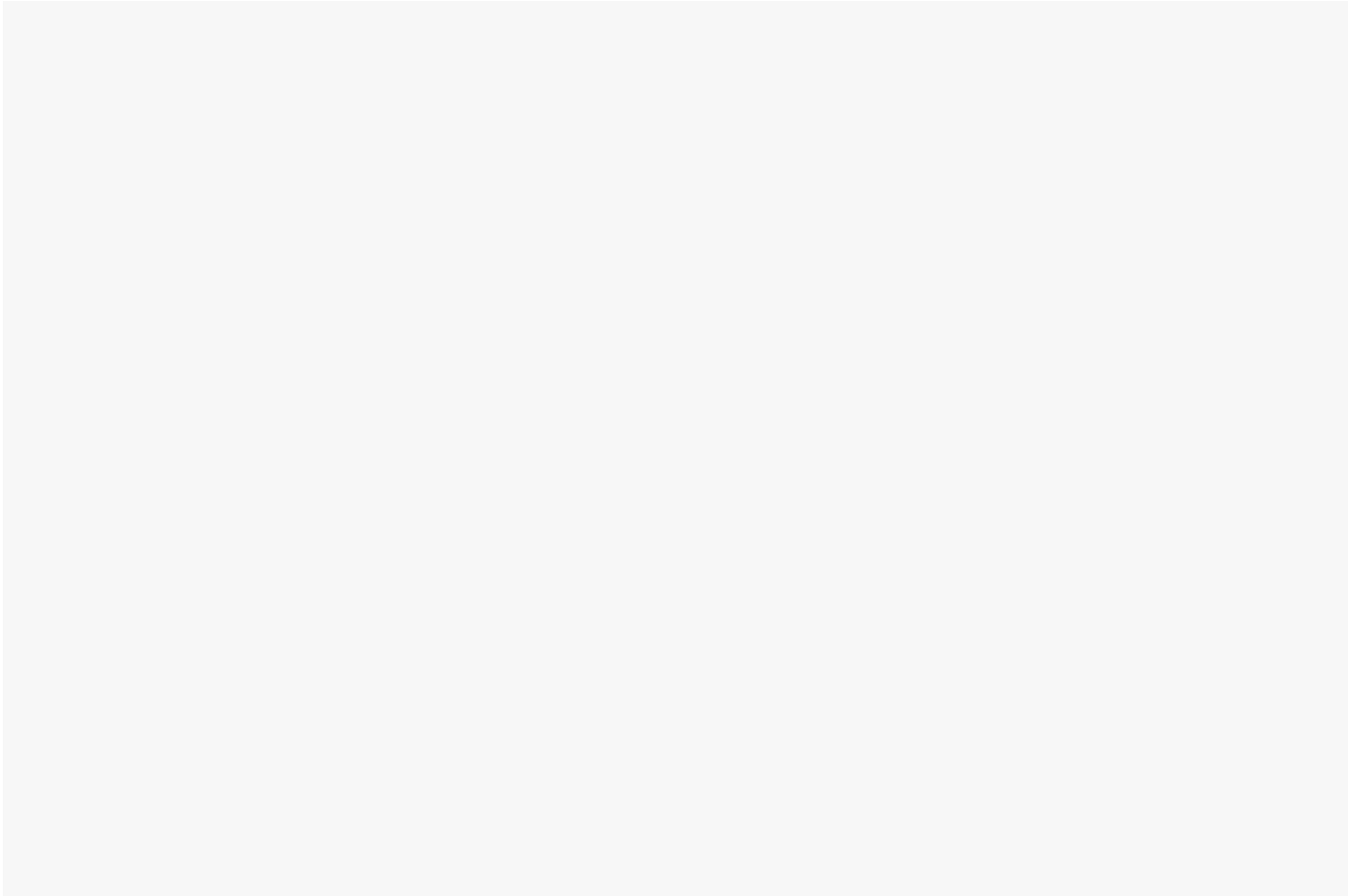
BY [DANIELLA BONDAR](#) | 2 WEEKS AGO |

Did you wake up this morning wondering what Karen Pence was up to? Neither did I, but apparently, she's been busy. In 2019, our second lady has decided to head back into the workforce, taking a job at a Virginia school. But it's neither as wholesome nor as uncontroversial as it seems at first glance, because [Karen Pence's new job explicitly bans LGBTQ students](#) for "moral" reasons. The choice brings up a bit of déjà vu for those who've been following the Pence family's history with LGBTQ-related issues. Elite Daily reached out to the White House for further comment on Pence's new role, but did not immediately hear back.

Per *The Washington Post*, Pence has accepted a [part-time job teaching art](#) at the Immanuel Christian School (ICS) in Northern Virginia. While spreading the gift of art education to children is great on its own, the choice of school has come into question because it isn't exactly accepting of all students or staff. According to the school's [parent agreement](#), which is available online and was reported on by the *Post*, parents of ICS students must affirm that their lifestyle is on par with the "moral principles" of the school. According to the agreement, those principles condemn "participating in, supporting, or



out to ICS for confirmation of and further comment on the guidelines of its parent agreement, but did not immediately hear back.



Christopher Jue/Getty Images News/Getty Images

In addition to the parent agreement, the school's 2018 [employment agreement](#) requires incoming teachers and support staff to make a pledge of their own to a "life of moral purity." The agreement includes a laundry list of boxes that incoming staff must agree to. Number eight reportedly says the staff must affirm that marriage is between "one man and one woman," and must pledge to maintain a lifestyle that's in line with the school code of "moral conduct" – which bans behaviors like "homosexual or lesbian sexual activity, polygamy," and "transgender identity." Elite Daily reached out to ICS for comment on



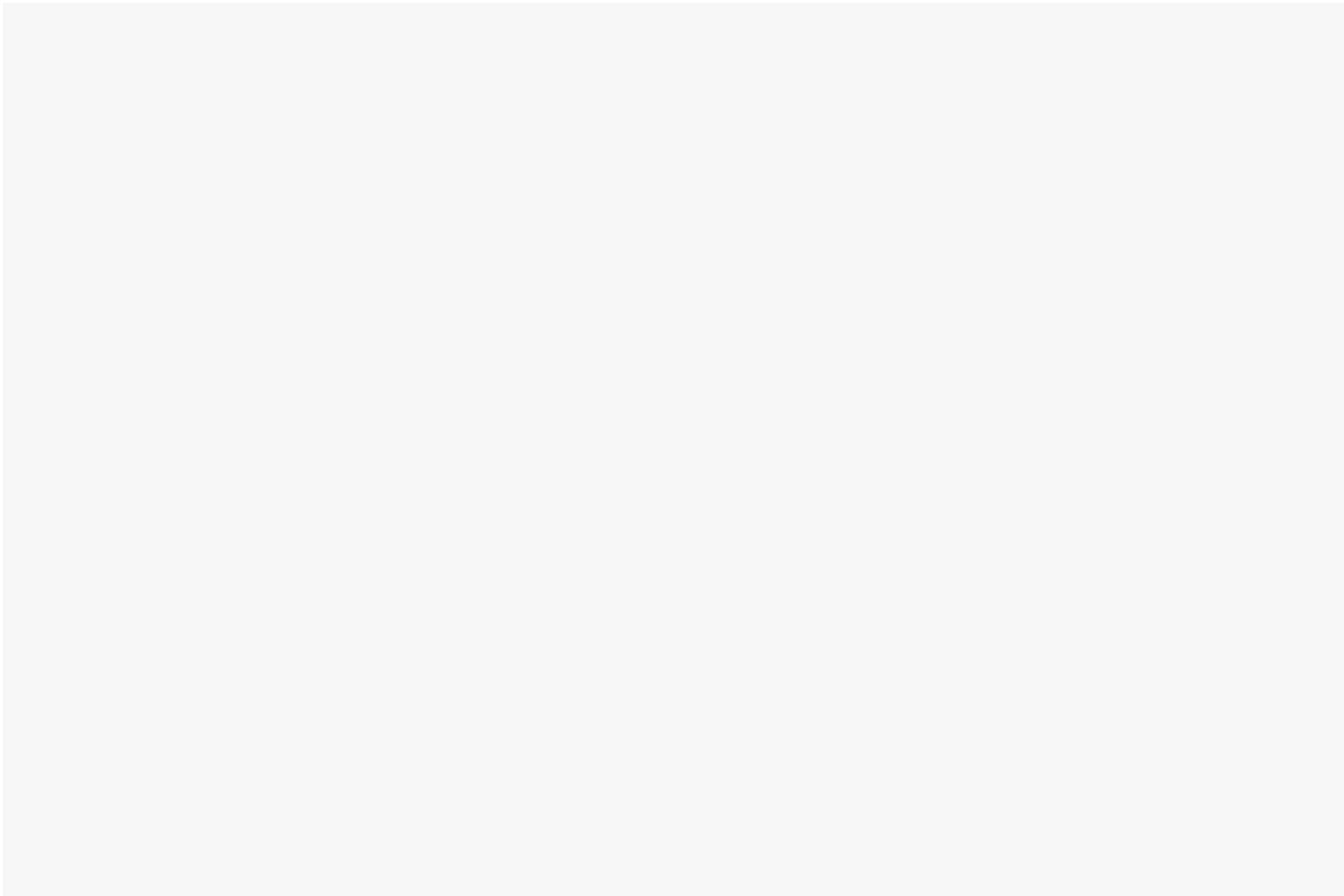
I will maintain a lifestyle based on biblical standards of moral conduct. Moral misconduct which violates the bona fide occupational qualifications for employees includes, but is not limited to, such behaviors as the following: heterosexual activity outside of marriage (e.g., premarital sex, cohabitation, extramarital sex), homosexual or lesbian sexual activity, polygamy, transgender identity, any other violation of the unique roles of male and female, sexual harassment, use or viewing of pornographic material or websites, and sexual abuse or improprieties toward minors as defined by Scripture and federal or state law.

LGBTQ+ activists have already [called the second lady out](#) on her choice of school. In a Jan. 15 statement to HuffPost, JoDee Winterhof, senior vice president for policy and political affairs at the Human Rights Campaign, asked, "Why not teach at a school that welcomes everyone, instead of choosing one that won't serve LGBTQ kids, kids of LGBTQ parents?"

Pence's decision to reclaim her post at ICS — she [previously worked there](#) for 12 years while her husband Vice President Mike Pence was in Congress — isn't the only time the Pences have been in the spotlight for seemingly controversial opinions surrounding the LGBTQ+ community. According to HuffPost, in a 2006 speech on the House floor in support of a constitutional amendment to define marriage as between a man and a woman, Vice President Pence, then a congressperson, said [gay couples signal a "societal collapse."](#) Then in 2007, Vice President Pence [voted against the Employment Non-Discrimination Act](#)



TIME. The White House did not immediately respond to Elite Daily's request for comment on the subject. More recently, in 2010, then-Representative Pence was **against** the Obama administration rolling back the **Don't Ask, Don't Tell** (DADT) policy, which barred LGBTQ+ members of the military from openly discussing their orientation or engaging in sexual activity, leaving them at risk of being discharged if their sexual or gender orientation was discovered. **DADT was eventually repealed** by President Barack Obama in 2011.



Ore Huiying/Getty Images News/Getty Images

The Pence family hasn't always been the most open when it comes to accepting and appreciating the LGBTQ+ community, and the ICS choice probably won't do much to help the situation.