

# FLORIDA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

201 WEST PARK AVENUE  
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MICHAEL B. SHEEDY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February 26, 2018

The Honorable Joe Negron  
President of the Florida Senate  
305 Senate Office Building  
404 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1100

***RE: School Safety – Excellent, Wide-ranging Initial Response; Further Consideration Needed***

Dear Mr. President:

The response of the legislature to the shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglass (MSD) High School has been rapid and wide-ranging. You, your colleagues and the other stakeholders with whom you have collaborated on this plan are to be highly commended. By further limiting access to weapons based on age, verified mental health and safety concerns, as well as strengthening public schools with resources of \$400-500M, you have responded to the cries of MSD students to ensure that such a disaster “never again” befall their school.

As the legislature considers this plan, two items remain of concern to us:

***1. Resources are needed to harden and strengthen non-public schools.***

There are over 2,500 non-public schools in Florida, over 200 of which are Catholic. Most of the students in these schools come from families that pay both taxes and tuition; others receive scholarships. While the current plan protects public school students comprehensively, it fails to allocate resources to non-public schools.

***2. Limits on gun access are a strong improvement; support ban on automatic weapons***

Banning bump stocks that make guns automatic, raising the minimum age to purchase weapons and limiting access to weapons to those who pose a threat to themselves or others are significant policy changes that must be commended. We also support a ban on automatic weapons. To concerns about the Second Amendment, it is the role of the legislature to craft appropriate limits on those freedoms. Outside of military or law enforcement use, it is hard to imagine a need for automatic weapons.

We look forward to speaking with you and Senate Leadership about these interests, especially about strengthening every school community in Florida. By your good work and the commitment of our residents, may God grant that such a disaster never again occur in any Florida school.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Michael B. Sheedy". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Honorable Bill Galvano  
The Honorable Lizbeth Benacquisto  
Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President  
James B. Herzog, Associate Director of Education

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



February 26, 2018

The Honorable Richard Corcoran  
Speaker of the Florida House  
420 The Capitol  
402 S. Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

***RE: School Safety – Excellent, Wide-ranging Initial Response; Further Consideration Needed***

Dear Mr. Speaker:

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Michael B. Sheedy

cc: The Honorable Jose Oliva  
The Honorable Ray Rodrigues  
The Honorable Chris Sprowls  
Most Rev. Thomas G. Wenski, Archbishop of Miami and FCCB President  
James B. Herzog, Associate Director of Education