

EMBARGOED UNTIL 12:00 PM ON [DATE]

Scarborough, Maine
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Maine Faith Leaders Pray at Cabela's to End Assault Rifle Sales

Over 50 Maine faith leaders gather for an interfaith prayer circle at Cabela's in Scarborough, ME, to protest the sale of AR-15-style assault rifles, high-capacity magazine clips, and firearm sales to people as young as 18. Some in the group are preparing to risk arrest.

Driven by religious conviction, the faith leaders call upon Cabela's to take the following actions:

1. Cease the sale of AR-15-style assault rifles.
2. Discontinue the sale of high-capacity (over 10 rounds) magazine clips.
3. Raise the minimum age for all firearms sales from 18 to 21.

Clergy and lay leaders from over a dozen congregations across Maine gather in response to last month's mass shooting in Lewiston, ME, which was the deadliest in the U.S. this year. The U.S. is projected to suffer a record-breaking 700+ mass shootings in 2023.

After previous mass shootings, Cabela's competitors Dick's Sporting Goods, Wal-Mart, and Kroger ceased the sale of AR-15-style assault rifles. "But Cabela's and its parent company Bass Pro Shops keep right on going," says Christopher Pyzik of Congregation Bet Ha'am in South Portland. "We appeal to the humanity of Johnny Morris, CEO of Bass Pro Shops, and its entire board, to consider the cost in human blood of sending these weapons out into the world."

Nancy Bouffard of Trinity Episcopal Church in Lewiston feels less safe since the mass shooting in her city. "Without a change in our trajectory, there will be another shooting before long," she says. "The fact that folks run out and buy more weapons after such incidents points to the absurdity of profiting from fear, and I'd like to be part of the change in the conversation."

"Yes, laws have to change," says interfaith chaplain Jake Fahey of South Portland. "But Bass Pro Shops and other gun stores can save thousands of lives without the passage of a single law by following in the footsteps of other firearms retailers and enacting sensible restrictions of military weapons and sales to young adults."

"We're not condemning guns in general or hunting," notes The Reverend Holly Reid of The Neighborhood United Church of Christ in Bath. "We're specifically demanding that Cabela's stop selling fully automatic assault rifles and high-capacity magazine clips. These are weapons of war."

The religious leaders call themselves Thoughts and Prayers in Action (TPA). After this gathering, TPA plans to continue advocacy efforts against the sale of AR 15-style assault rifles in Maine.

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Contact name
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