

## TALKING POINTS

### For a U.S. Department of Peacebuilding (H.R. 1111)

#### War and Peace -

After years of nonviolent protest, the American colonies went to war for independence from Britain. Born of war, the United States has continued to be at war for most of its history. Definitions of what counts as a war vary, but as of 2018 different counts reveal that the U.S. has been at war during 93% of its history, or at least 225 of the 242 years of its existence. <http://www.informationclearinghouse.info/article41086.htm>

The U.S. government operates 14 military colleges plus ROTC and a military medical school. We need a U.S. Peace Academy to train peacebuilders who can help prevent wars and aid our military in establishing peace.

Some say the U.S. State Department is our “Peace Department.” The State Department is only active in the international arena. In addition, State Department diplomacy often involves “carrots and sticks” or rewards and punishments. Some rewards are weapons that at times have been used against our own troops or citizens of the very nation they were given to. Nonviolent peacebuilding diplomacy would seek agreement through connecting on common interests.

#### Peace at Home and Peace in the World

The Global Peace Index is comprised of 23 indicators grouped into three broad themes: the level of safety and security in a society, the number of international and domestic conflicts, and the degree of militarization. In the US case, the deterioration of its score is attributable to an increasing [homicide rate](#) and the number of [terrorist attacks](#) and [mass shootings](#) last year. The United States experienced the greatest decline in the index since last year, slipping 11 places to rank 114<sup>th</sup>, directly following Armenia and Rwanda and preceding El Salvador and China. Both the Global Peace Index and the U.S. Department of Peacebuilding legislation address root causes of violence at home and abroad.

<https://knoema.com/infographics/qnlwwie/the-2017-global-peace-index>

#### Community Peacebuilding

Like the proverbial frog in a pot of slowly warming water, we are getting used to increasing gun violence and mass shootings in our nation. Data compiled by the [Gun Violence Archive](#) reveals a shocking human toll: there is a mass shooting – defined as four or more people shot in one incident, not including the shooter – every nine out of 10 days on average. In contrast, Australia enacted strict gun laws after a mass shooting there, and there has never been another since. <http://www.gunviolencearchive.org/mass-shooting> , <http://www.gunviolencearchive.org/past-tolls>, [http://www.slate.com/blogs/crime/2012/12/16/gun\\_control\\_after\\_connecticut\\_shooting\\_could\\_australia\\_s\\_laws\\_provide\\_a.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/crime/2012/12/16/gun_control_after_connecticut_shooting_could_australia_s_laws_provide_a.html)

*For more information, see next page.*

## Restorative Justice in Schools and Prisons

As an increasing number of schools worldwide adopt restorative practices as a means of dealing with discipline and improving school culture, school leaders are beginning to analyze the impact of restorative methods. The numbers tell a powerful story: Schools implementing restorative methods have seen a drop in disciplinary problems, decreased reliance on detention and suspension, and an improvement in student attitudes. <https://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/4366-restorative-practices-in-schools-research-reveals-power-of-restorative-approach-part-ii>

There is strong evidence that restorative justice in the criminal justice system reduces recidivism. ([Campbell-Strang 2013](#), Latimer 2005, [Sherman 2015](#), [Sherman 2007](#))

## Poverty and Homelessness as Root Causes of Violence

A U.S. Department of Peacebuilding would research root causes of violence and best practice solutions to assist other governmental departments or agencies and local communities in finding solutions. This section includes examples of the kind of information and solutions that could be found and made available.

Homelessness is on the rise, while federal budgeting for low income housing assistance decreases. Eviction is a cause, not just a condition, of poverty. Eviction's fallout can lead to loss of a home and possessions, loss of employment, being stamped with an eviction record and being denied government housing assistance, relocation to housing in poor and dangerous neighborhoods, increased material hardship, homelessness, depression, and illness. <https://www.citylab.com/equity/2017/12/homelessness-in-high-cost-cities-is-driving-a-nationwide-increase/547763/>, and "*Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*" by Matthew Desmond

At the same time, successful programs for ending homelessness are being adopted around the country: <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/tiny-house-villages-for-the-homeless-an-affordable-solution-catches-on>, [http://www.willcoxrangeneews.com/national/news/article\\_29264505-cd56-5efa-855d-a659e41bd6e9.html](http://www.willcoxrangeneews.com/national/news/article_29264505-cd56-5efa-855d-a659e41bd6e9.html)

Housing for the homeless saves lives and costs. For example, some hospitals have been successful in limiting unnecessary ER visits and reducing wasteful health care spending for homeless patients by investing \$75 to \$100 million into housing for those patients. <https://www.npr.org/2018/01/30/581778796/er-use-goes-down-as-hospital-program-pays-homeless-peoples-rent>

Philip Mangano, former homelessness policy czar under President George W. Bush said: "*We learned that you could either sustain people in homelessness for \$35,000 to \$150,000 a year (spent on courts, security, clean up, treatment, etc.), or you could literally end their homelessness for \$13,000 to \$25,000 a year.*"

**For more talking points within the bill, see [www.Congress.gov](http://www.Congress.gov) and search for H.R. 1111.**