A Letter to the Tufts University Administration and Board of Trustees

The recent mass shooting at a high school in Florida, following a trend that has taken the lives of over 1,000 people including 176 children and teenagers, has caused public outrage that may have reached a tipping point. Elected officials have made no effort to put an end to the easy access to assault weapons under the false pretense of a constitutional right.

Young people are beginning to understand that adult society has failed to protect them. This has become a moral crisis comparable to legalized segregation in the United States, atmospheric testing of nuclear weapons, and Apartheid in South Africa. Universities have taken action in the past when the government failed to act.

We the undersigned implore the Tufts Administration and Board of Trustees to take a moral stand in support of the following proposition:

- Whereas, gun manufacturers produce and sell assault weapons to non-military and non-police citizenry from which they accrue profits while ignoring the social consequences of their product;

- Whereas, the stock holders and investors in these companies are complicit in the deaths resulting from the manufacture, distribution, and sales of these weapons;

- Whereas, the financial success of gun manufacturers depends on willing purchasers, lack of effective legislation, power of the National Rifle Association in electing public officials and lobbying against legislation, gun dealers, and an investment community that sustains the stock value and loans to these companies;

- Whereas, research demonstrates that the presence of assault weapons is associated with greater violence. Furthermore, countries with more guns have more mass shootings, states with more guns have more gun deaths, and states with stronger gun control measures have fewer fatalities.

Therefore, we at Tufts University have decided to divest any part of our endowment invested in any gun-manufacturing company or any corporate entity in which such a company is embedded until they cease to produce, distribute and sell military style weapons to the public.

We understand that university investment decisions rest with the Board of Trustees and its designees. Selective disinvestment on moral and public health grounds should not be made lightly. But these are not ordinary times. The massacre of innocent children and adults by individuals who have access to military-style weapons, can no longer be tolerated for any reason.
We also request that Tufts University issue a public statement that it will no longer allow its investments to be part of the gun-manufacturing industry as long as it continues to produce and sell assault weapons and high-capacity magazine semi-automatic handguns to the public.

Signatories:

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