

'Put Gun Control on the Ballot'

CONTINUED FROM FRONT

mit database, and would prohibit magazines of more than 10 rounds.

Rabbi Michael Cahana, also a chief petitioner, raised his voice in anguish over the great toll of mass shootings.

"How long, oh Lord, how long do we have to endure? How long do we have to gather together after another mass murder? Of children, of people in the grocery store, people going about their ordinary lives, wiped out at the hands of a murderer using weapons of war," he said. "How long? Dr. King told us not long."

Cahana said we must not treat these killings as normal and said we must make changes to make a difference.

"Thoughts and prayers are not enough," he said. "Action is what is needed right now and we are going to act."

Gun control laws work, Cahana said, and are effective not only against mass murder, but also against murders and suicides that happen every day.



PHOTO BY BEVERLY CORBELL/THE PORTLAND OBSERVER
Black activist and musician Marilyn Keller, one of the three chief petitioners seeking a gun control measure on the November 2022 general election ballot, shares her disgust with gun deaths during a rally for Lift Every Voice Oregon at Augustana Lutheran Church in northeast Portland.

"Guns and gun violence is an everyday occurrence and these laws have been proven to make a difference, to make sure that the people who shouldn't have guns to not have access to those guns," he said. "To help responsible gun owners use their guns effectively. We can't just stand idly by and

watch our children be murdered. We have to act."

Rev. Mark Knutson, the third chief petitioner, moderated the press conference and opened it by saying that love is active, not passive.

"We are here because we have been mourning and weeping, and we cannot imagine what the fam-

ilies are going through. But as parents we know how we would feel," he said.

Another speaker, Rev. Andrea Cano, interim president of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon, said she can't count the times "we have gathered together like this, imploring our elected officials and imploring one another to take steps for gun control."

But the fact that the petition could be on the ballot is inspiring other states, and has received many emails from other ecumenical executives, Cano said.

"They are curious and hoping that we will succeed with what we're doing. They're in that fight with us today."

Cano said she was wearing purple, the color of mourning, and at times speaking in Spanish, noted that most of the children killed in Uvalde, Texas had Hispanic surnames.

"Uvalde is our Sandy Hook," she said. "So I ask, I implore not only the Latino community, but all our communities to sign these petitions as soon as possible, to help fund this process, to be involved in this process, from one

end of the state to the other.

"My prayer is that we no longer continue to be contradictory and complicit," she continued. "If we don't sign those signatures, we are complicit."

Speaker after speaker spoke with raw emotion about the mass murders and the need to take action, and Knutson called for the Augustana Peace Bell to toll 21 times for all the lives lost in Texas.

"Our nation is in jeopardy today," said Rev. Linda Jaramillo, past chair of Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon. "Weapons of war do not belong in our homes, on our streets, in our communities and in this state. We must lift every voice and say no more. The soul of this nation depends on it."

And Rev. Cecil Prescod of Ainsworth United Church of Christ had strong words for legislators.

"It's blasphemy for using prayers to hide while you won't pass laws to keep our kids from dying," he said. "We will offer our thoughts and prayers, but we expect you to legislate, to make policy and to change. How much more can we bear, oh Lord, how much more can we endure?"

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