



#NEVERAGAIN

THE PARKLAND MANIFESTO

David Hogg & Lauren Hogg

Before February 14, we thought we had plenty of time.

We wanted to do something that would make the world a better place, to fight for justice as lawyers or activists or crusading journalists, to be responsible citizens and raise good-hearted children. But first we had to finish high school.

After February 14, we knew how fast time could stop.

We learned so much at Marjory Stoneman Douglas. We studied Supreme Court decisions, read Shakespeare, and explored the mysteries of black holes. We spent a huge amount of time on contemporary issues like poverty and the environment. In our psychology classes, we talked about death and grief and mental illness. We debated gun control and the NRA. We spent a whole week studying school shootings. But it all seemed a little bit distant, a little bit like a dream. Either it happened before we were born, or it was happening somewhere else.

When it happened to us, we woke up. We knew we couldn't wait until we got out of college and settled into jobs. We had to make the world a better place *now*. It was literally a matter of life and death.





So we stood up and tried to make our voices heard. We're really proud of what we have accomplished so far, and are so grateful to all the people who have joined our cause. They gave us strength. They gave us hope. You give us hope.

But let's face it—it's not enough. And the merchants of chaos keep peddling their wares.

Sixteen days after we woke up, a man in Detroit who had just gotten out of a hospital where he was being treated for hallucinations shot and killed his daughter, her mother, his cousin, and two people who just happened to be there. Anyone who knows about history knows that the founders did not intend for anyone with an illness or a grievance to be able to take out their rage on the world with weapons that they could not have begun to imagine. This is madness.

It's almost summer now, and the death count continues to rise in America. Without a radical change in America's priorities and in our gun laws, our protests will have been in vain. Power and cynicism don't give way easily. But we have no intention of stopping.

We knew we couldn't wait until we got out of college and settled into jobs. We had to make the world a better place now. It was literally a matter of life and death.

After you spend a few hours hiding in a classroom while your friends and teachers are slaughtered, you can't stop thinking about how insane this is and how to change it. Volunteer in political campaigns? Try to fix the mental health system? Fight the gun lobbyists? Push for comprehensive background checks?

We think you should. We hope you do. There is a whole world to change.

You probably don't know who Tyra Hemans is. She was at Parkland that day and she had friends die. She was with us in Tallahassee when we asked our state legislators to do something. She was with us at the march on Washington. She's a great speaker and a loving person. But we got famous and she didn't.

What about Zion Kelly? In September 2017, Zion's twin brother, Zaire, was murdered in Northeast Washington, D.C., by a kid with a gun. Zaire—a standout student and athlete at Thurgood Marshall Academy—was just sixteen years old. To honor his brother's memory and find meaning in his loss, Zion, who is as shy as Zaire was outgoing, has nonetheless made it his mission to stand up, speak out, and change the world. We were honored that he joined us on stage in Washington. But we got famous, and he didn't.

Or what about the protests at Liberty City in Miami? Four kids were shot there in April, and two of them died. One of them was about to get inducted into the National Honor Society. Hundreds of students turned out to protest. Only *one* newspaper went to cover the protest, only one reporter actually bothered to interview them. The TV coverage was shot from a helicopter, and made the Liberty City protest look like a riot. We got headlines, they didn't.

Those kids tried to make their voices heard just like we did. They lived through the exact same thing we lived through. But they don't live in a gated community. They are from a lower socioeconomic status and they are a different color. Instead of riding their bikes to school

listening to NPR on their iPhones without even thinking someone might shoot them, they had to worry about it every day. In raw statistics, their odds of getting shot are twice as high as ours, and a lot of American kids just like them live in places where they have a higher death rate than soldiers in Afghanistan.

We're super glad people are listening to us, but we're not the story. We shouldn't be the "stars" of the school-shooting generation, which is a horrifying thought on so many levels. If people only listen when privileged white kids get killed—and even then, only when the number of dead kids is high enough to make the news—we're never going to fix this problem.

So what would fix it?

Once you start to think about that, you see how much bigger the problem is. At Stoneman Douglas last year, we spent a month debating the pros and cons of hiring more school resource officers. It would probably make the schools safer, but school officers call regular police officers to handle black students at a much higher rate than white students. Which means that students of color are much more likely to go into the "school-to-prison pipeline," too, which means they'll get something on their records, which means they'll have a harder time getting a job. And the chance that the prisons will do anything to rehabilitate them is slim to none or worse, especially if they go to one of the private prisons—which our governor enthusiastically supports, by the way. So it really should be called the "school-to-prison-to-life-of-crime pipeline." It's insane. We're actually making the problem worse. It's like we're living in a dystopia.

So what would fix *that*?

Well, prison sentences are strongly associated with poverty, and a good education is the best way out of poverty. So maybe we should try harder to keep poor people in school. And give them better schools. Education for women is the best way to reduce the teen pregnancy rate,

which is one of the best ways to reduce poverty, so we should make a special effort to overcome the economic and cultural obstacles they face, too. But where's the money going to come from? A rational government would take it out of our military budget, which sucks up more than half our tax dollars because it's bigger than the five other largest countries' defense budgets combined, but that means that you have to close military bases in states that fought hard to get them because they bring in money and reduce poverty. And do something about the arms manufacturers lobbies that push politicians to buy fantastically expensive weapons systems we don't need and don't use.

Sounds overwhelming, right? Probably impossible. When poverty and prison and getting shot in school are just some things you see on TV, and you don't think you could do anything about them even if you wanted to, you tend to tune them out. We know the feeling. It's called "learned helplessness." We were studying it in AP Psych a couple of days before the shooting. When you're in a horrible situation and you don't think you can do anything about it, you just give up. It's terrible that kids have to get slaughtered in schools, but what are you going to do about it?

If people only listen when privileged white kids get killed—and even then, only when the number of dead kids is high enough to make the news—we're never going to fix this problem.

We asked some local politicians about the school-to-prison pipeline problem back when we were debating an increase in school resource officers. They had no answer. They literally looked at each other like “Oh my god, I didn’t even think about that.” That’s why we feel like saying “This is about kids’ lives. This is about the future of America. This is blood being spilled. *You’re letting kids die.*”

But the truth is, we didn’t want to think about this stuff, either. We were forced to think about it because we couldn’t accept the unacceptable. It would have destroyed us. And when you’re forced to think about it and follow all the threads and see how it’s all connected, you realize that people in power aren’t any different. They’re just bigger versions of those local politicians, who must have known about the school-to-prison pipeline. They just can’t admit they feel helpless, too.

That’s why we always say this isn’t about Republicans and Democrats. The whole point is that we’re all connected. We just have to find a way to make it bring us together as Americans instead of pulling us apart.

And to work against that helplessness, it’s important to start working on a *piece* of the problem first, so you won’t get overwhelmed by a problem so big that it seems unsolvable. It was a weapon of war that devastated our community, so the piece we are dedicated to working on is the gun piece. Don’t get us wrong: It is the worldview that teaches you that problems can’t be solved just because that’s the way it’s always been—but keep sending those thoughts and prayers—*that’s* what we are rebelling against. But in our town, we are standing our ground against the lax or nonexistent gun laws that allow kids to keep getting killed.

And so we are dedicating ourselves to common-sense gun measures that respect our fellow citizens’ right to own guns and, at the same time, respect their right to live as well.

Here's our ten-point strategy:

1. Funding for gun violence research.

It is one of the main roles of government to ensure the safety of the public. Just as we do on any other serious public health threats, we need data on gun violence so that we can make good policy.

2. Digitalization of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives records.

It is 2018, why on earth do we still keep these records on paper like it's 1918? So that they will be harder to share, that's why. The ATF's job is to protect the public, and powerful interests have made it their job to make the ATF's job as hard as possible.

3. Universal background checks.

These work and will save lives—period. And the overwhelming majority of Americans support them. If your congressmen or congresswomen or senators don't stop dragging their feet on this popular and sensible measure, vote them out.

4. Ban high-capacity magazines.

It's not an infringement on your Second Amendment rights if you have to stop and reload. This will save lives.

5. Assault weapon ban.

They are not only used in mass shootings, they are also disproportionately used in other violent crimes, too. Weapons of war don't belong on our streets and in our schools. The Founders would agree.

6. Funding for intervention programs.

Attacking the gun problem at the source is only part of the solution. We must also empower community stakeholders, and fund successful models at reducing violence, such as Group Violence Intervention, Cure Violence, and Hospital-based Violence Intervention.

7. Red flag laws (extreme risk protection orders).

“Risk warrants” work. Since Connecticut’s ERPO law was passed after Sandy Hook, according to the *Christian Science Monitor*, “in 99 percent of cases where a risk warrant was issued, police officers found at least one gun and removed an average of seven guns per individual.”

8. Blocking people with a history of domestic violence.

There is a federal law that prevents some convicted domestic abusers from buying guns, but that only applies to those convicted of abusing a spouse or former spouse, and not someone they are dating. Or stalking.

9. A federal solution to stop interstate gun trafficking.

Weak gun laws in some states make it very easy to traffic guns into states with stronger laws. It’s a huge problem, and only Washington can solve it.

10. Safe storage/mandatory theft reporting.

Safe storage laws would help reduce child access, prevent gun theft, and save lives.

This isn’t about Republicans and Democrats.
The whole point is that we’re all connected.

Okay, make that an eleven-point strategy, and this one might be the most important one of all:

11. Register. Vote.

These are just a start. We are still learning, and we welcome your input. We have been inspired by the stories we've heard from kids all over the country, and amazing ideas have been pouring in. Of course, we have made mistakes, and will make more. But if we are not always right, we know that our goals are. When our group came together after the shootings, we thought we were teaming up to take action and make the world a better place. We probably never would have hung out normally, but we found out we all had different specialties and talents. After the March for Our Lives, we separated our group into committees, to maximize those talents and organize for the long haul.

Cameron is our power source. He talks fast and gets things done faster than anyone thought they ever could be done, and he's always pushing us to be the best that we can be. Ryan is a master procrastinator, the biggest procrastinator I've ever seen in my life. But when the last minute comes, he does amazing things. He uses comedy as a combat strategy, so he's the one who slashes our attackers into submission with a thousand sick burns. Delaney's one of the school fashionistas, but she's also very analytical and one of the best directors we've ever had in TV Production. Jackie's the president of the junior class and has mad skills at organizing and coordinating—if you need to get four buses and sixty or seventy people across the state to a march, she'll get it done. And Emma's the misfit among misfits because she's so not a misfit. She's the only non-type A personality in the group, totally unflappable and eloquent and the most loving person you'll ever meet. She's our Buddha, the peaceful radiance at the center of all the spinning wheels.

We had no idea what we were doing at the beginning, but we ended up working so much and pushing ourselves so hard, we started to fuse. It was like we were all different metals



and we melted under the heat and became the strongest alloy in the natural world. We formed a bond so strong, it's unbelievable. We love each other from the bottoms of our hearts.

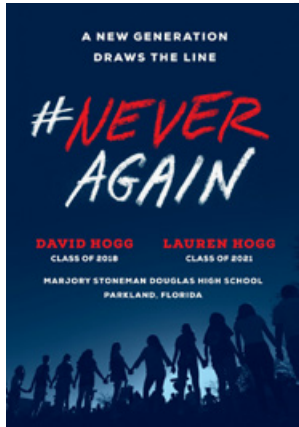
So what we finally realized is that, even though we didn't plan it consciously, we put ourselves through a strange kind of high-intensity do-it-yourself group therapy. We came together to try to heal the world and found out that was the best way to heal ourselves.

So that was what we learned when our lives became unbearable. We found out that everything was connected and then we formed a connection that was so beautiful, we became a family. This is how we boil it down: We learned to love people for what they are instead of hating them for what they're not. And like the namesake of our high school—Marjory Stoneman Douglas, who changed her world by a full-on engagement with it, every day, as a journalist, a suffragette, and conservationist—we are learning to change the world by presuming that we *can*.

So that's our answer to the impossible problems we have to solve. We have to come together to fight the chaos because division is what causes it. Join us. Check out Local Action on the [March for our Lives](#) website to get involved where you live. Refuse to accept the unacceptable. Don't let bullies intimidate you, and don't let the cynics kill your hope. **Love each other as much as you can, hate each other as little as you can, and never, ever stop pointing at the naked emperor.** 🇺🇸



Info



Ready to dig deeper into this idea? Buy a copy of [#NeverAgain](#).

Want copies for your organization or for an event?

We can help: customerservice@800ceoread.com 800-236-7323

About the authors

David Hogg (Class of 2018) and Lauren Hogg (Class of 2021) attend Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. They are both members of March for Our Lives. Follow David on Twitter at [@davidhogg111](#) and Lauren at [@lauren_hoggs](#).



Powered by the love and tender care of 800-CEO-READ, ChangeThis is a

vehicle for big ideas to spread. Keep up with the latest developments in business books and ideas at 800ceoread.com

This document was created on July 11, 2018 and is based on the best information available at that time.

Excerpted from *#NeverAgain: A New Generation Draws the Line* by David Hogg and Lauren Hogg.

The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs License. To view a copy of this license, visit Creative Commons.

Share this

Pass along a copy of this manifesto to others.



Subscribe

Sign up for e-news to learn when our latest manifestos are available.

