How to Develop a CFCU Rapid Response Network in Your Congregation

Introduction:

The Advocacy Strategic Focus Area (SFA) is gearing up for the upcoming CO legislative session. We envision each congregation developing its own list of interested congregants who would be willing to respond to notifications about imminent votes on relevant gun legislation. This document will help you to develop and use that list. As legislation is heard in House or Senate committees or comes to the floor for a vote, the Advocacy SFA will contact the two voting members of your congregation to the CFCU who would in turn forward the email to their congregation’s Rapid Response Network.

Developing your Rapid Response Network:

December is the perfect time to develop a list of interested congregants. You could advertise the project in your church bulletin, from the pulpit, at a table at coffee hour, or using existing congregation wide email lists.

Sample wording for your blurb could be something like this (feel free to change to meet your congregation’s needs):

A Simple Action You Can Take to Help End Gun Violence In Colorado: Join our Rapid Response Network

Thanks to those of you involved in supporting five common sense gun safety bills passed in the 2013 CO state legislative session. However, we cannot rest on those accomplishments.

With a new State House of Representatives and a new State Senate preparing to convene for the 2017 session in early January, we are developing a list of congregants interested in being part of our Congregation’s Rapid Response Network. This network would be activated each time a bill is introduced that relates to guns. The ask will be brief and simple. Talking points will be provided and you will be asked to contact your legislator(s) or members of the committee hearing the bill.

We hope you will consider joining our network and being part of our witness on this important public health issue. We suspect we will need the help of every single one of you in the coming year.

(This list will be maintained and used solely by our congregation’s Gun Violence Reduction Group and is not shared with any other groups or
individuals.)

The sign up should include the congregant’s name, phone number, email and street address with zip code (address will allow you to identify House and Senate districts which may provide useful information if we want to focus on certain House or Senate districts for some legislation).

Using the Rapid Response Network:

Once the legislative session starts in early January, the members of the Advocacy SFA (with the help of Colorado Ceasefire, who monitors all gun legislation) will decide which bills are relevant to CFCU’s mission. As each bill comes up in committee or on the floor for a vote, you will receive an email from the Advocacy SFA which you will forward to your Rapid Response Network. The email will summarize the bill, have talking points, instructions on whom to contact (depending on the situation, sometimes it will be committee members and sometimes it will be the individual’s own legislators) along with contact information and links on how to find their legislators. These emails will require quick turn-around. We may only have a few days notice on some bills.

If you prefer to delegate the task of sending the emails to another member of your congregation, just let the Advocacy SFA know (julie.meyers.md@gmail.com).

The Advocacy SFA hopes that each congregation will participate in this venture. With the power of numbers (members of our many congregations) we can influence legislation to make our state a safer place to live. Please contact us if you have any questions (julie.meyers.md@gmail.com)