

1 **A Resolution Regarding Handgun Violence**

2 Submitted by Methodist Federation for Social Action (MFSA)

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4 WHEREAS, United Methodists have called the Church “to affirm its faith through vigorous efforts to
5 curb and eliminate gun violence” [Resolution 251, Book of Resolutions 2004, readopted 2008] and the
6 Eastern Pennsylvania Conference has consistently adopted resolutions condemning gun violence; and

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8 WHEREAS, the illegal trade in handguns and the “straw purchasing” of handguns in bulk by technically
9 eligible individuals who actually are stand-ins for prohibited felons is assisted by Pennsylvania’s lenient
10 handgun purchase laws and the General Assembly has been recalcitrant in refusing to adopt “One
11 Handgun A Month” legislation which would limit the legal purchase of handguns to one per month per
12 buyer; and

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14 WHEREAS, *Heeding God’s Call: A Peace Gathering* has resulted in an historic beginning to a direct
15 action, faith-based initiative bringing together committed people of faith determined to protest the illegal
16 trafficking of handguns by directly confronting Pennsylvania’s handgun retailers to act responsibly,
17 morally, and voluntarily; and

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19 WHEREAS, several Eastern Pennsylvania Conference churches have been instrumental in organizing
20 events related to *Heeding God’s Call* and two elders were arrested while engaging in civil disobedience
21 protesting straw-purchasing; and

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23 WHEREAS, Colosimo’s Gun Center, 9th and Spring Garden Streets, Philadelphia, is listed among the top
24 five worst gun dealers in the United States by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, is a known
25 source of illegal straw purchasing, and continues to be the focus of this historic faith-based *Heeding
26 God’s Call* initiative; and

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28 WHEREAS, despite faith-community led negotiations, Mr. James Colosimo refuses to voluntarily agree
29 to a 10-point Code of Conduct designed by the Mayors Coalition Against Gun Violence and adopted by
30 Wal-Mart, the largest retailer of guns and ammunition in the United States;

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32 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference unwaveringly and
33 conscientiously condemns the practice of straw purchasing and calls upon James Colosimo and every
34 handgun retailer within its bounds to agree to the 10-point voluntary code, “*Responsible Firearms
35 Retailer Partnership*,” and

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37 BE IT RESOLVED, that each congregation within the Conference is encouraged to study the issue and
38 consider how it can directly challenge gun retailers located in our communities to voluntarily adopt the
39 Code; and

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41 BE IT RESOLVED, that the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference supports the continued action of *Heeding
42 God’s Call* and its successor organizations and expresses its ongoing support for actions leading to the
43 stemming of handgun violence in Pennsylvania including the end of straw purchasing and the legislative
44 limitation to “One Handgun A Month” as indicated in currently proposed legislation; and

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46 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be mailed by the Conference Secretary (a)
47 to Mr. Colosimo and, (b) to elected members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly representing the
48 communities of our churches, and (c) the *Heeding God’s Call* Interim Coordinating Committee.

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50 Persons responsible for presenting the Resolution: James F. McIntire and David R. Tatgenhorst