



Contact Hector Mendez
Director of Communications
udemstx@gmail.com
www.udemstx.com

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Statement on the Shooting in El Paso, Texas

Austin, Texas - On August 3rd, 2019 in the city of El Paso, Texas, people in the Walmart and nearby mall were going about their everyday lives when suddenly a gunman opened fire inside. In the time of this statement being released, the casualty rate stands at least 20 dead and 26 injured.

The following is a statement written by Native El Pasoan University Democrat officers:

“Yesterday seemed like a normal day in the “Sun City” with temperatures reaching a sweltering high of 104 degrees. Borderland locals from both El Paso and its sister city Ciudad Juárez came out to shop at Walmart, situated within the Cielo Vista Neighborhood and less than a block away from a local High School and Middle School, in preparation for the start of school the following week. Yesterday marked the two hundred and fiftieth shooting that has occurred this year within the United States. El Paso, consistently ranked as one of the safest cities in the country, was the newest scene of what has now become a normalized act of violence. At least 20 have been reported dead and another 26 injured.

The shooting in El Paso because of its location and the current political climate comes at a crucial intersection of time and space. The hateful, racist rhetoric spread by President Donald Trump against immigrants to fuel his campaign for a border wall has led to a reemergence of white supremacy on the political scene. The shooter was not a resident of El Paso but of Allen, Texas—a ten-hour drive away. El Paso, a border city home to a majority Hispanic population, was a target. The beliefs expressed in the shooter's manifesto and his readiness to act on them are direct repercussions of President Trump's anti-immigrant platform.

Now is not the time to remain complacent, it is not the time to remain silent or shy away from the truth. We need to hold lawmakers accountable for the failure of passing adequate gun legislation. Yesterday in a press conference Governor Greg Abbott spoke of his thoughts and prayers for the community but did not once speak about comprehensive gun reform as a solution, instead, Abbott mentioned mental health as if it was the key reason behind the horrific events of yesterday. We can no longer be complicit in this distorted view of gun violence held by so many Republican lawmakers. This shooting was a product of inefficient gun control. Its motivation lies not behind the often racially colored facade of mental illness

but behind hate. This was a hate crime, one that was enabled by the rhetoric of our President and every single politician who continues to remain silent.

Born and raised in El Paso, Texas, it is incredibly heartbreaking to see our community suffering. El Paso is a diverse place, home to a mix of cultures, a community that thrives on the differences of its residents and yet it was attacked because of this diversity. The El Paso Borderland community consists of individuals who on a daily basis stand together— Mexican and American— in opposition to all who try to divide us. We are accustomed to persevering and that's not ending anytime soon.”

“University Democrats offers condolences on behalf of all its members to the residents of El Paso. We grieve with you over this senseless act of violence and furthermore pledge to focus our efforts on ending gun violence and more immediately fixing broken gun legislation in Texas.”

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