

I was once one of you. It was the youth of my generation who played an enormous role in ending that horrific war in Viet Nam, and who spoke up loudly against the sin of racism and the desperate need to address issues of civil rights. You are joining a long and illustrious history of student protest and I am honored to be here in solidarity with you to say, "Enough."

My young brothers and sisters: Now is your time.

Now is your time because adults have failed you. In their complacency our elected representatives have made your lives a political issue.

They have made it a political issue because of money and votes and power.

They have made your safety, your very lives, a political issue.

*How dare they!*

Demanding a reasonable conversation about the safety of our children is a *moral* issue, not a political issue. And because it is a moral issue I am compelled by my faith and my position to speak. I am compelled because my so-called adult brothers and sisters have not behaved like adults: They have abandoned their responsibility to protect you. They have failed, and the blood of children is on their hands. And those of us who have not spoken up have failed you: we, too, are complicit.

But we must not be silent any longer.

Enough is enough.

Over and over and over *ad nauseam*, in the days following Columbine, Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, and Parkland, Florida, we have heard our illustrious leaders intone, "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and their families."

Over and over and over *ad nauseam*, in the weeks following Columbine, Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, and, now, Parkland, Florida, we have witnessed our illustrious leaders doing absolutely nothing.

In their inaction, the hands of our Congressional representatives, our executive branch, our governor and our state legislature are covered with the blood of innocent people. They are complicit in the horror of mass murder.

*Why are our legislators and executives so cowardly, so disgracefully craven, so greedy for campaign contributions and votes that they are willing to lay down the lives of innocent children in a blood sacrifice?*

Thoughts and prayers. Thoughts and prayers.

It makes me sick.

So here we are today, saying, "Enough." If our elected officials continue to ignore the voices of today we will vote them out.

Congressman Moolenaar, if you're paying attention: I appreciate your helping protect our Great Lakes but what about protecting our great kids? You received over Ten Thousand Dollars from the NRA – can you really be bought so cheap?

Michigan Attorney General Schuette, if you're paying attention: You say that our focus needs to be on mental health and mental illness – and I agree that these should be priorities. But the problem is, first of all, guns in the hands of the mentally ill are dangerous primarily to themselves; second of all, it is the availability of firearms that is the issue. Please do not demean the dignity of people with mental illness by blaming them for gun violence.

C'mon. Act like adults.

I also want to address for a moment white privilege.

People of color suffer enormously from gun violence; black students are three times as likely as white students to experience gun violence at school. But the tragedy of gun violence in black and brown communities is somehow not on the radar of state and federal legislators except that it means throwing more black and brown people into prison. It has taken the deaths of white children in Florida to raise their awareness – and I applaud the white young people who have acknowledged that their white privilege must be used to speak for those who have less power, for those whose voices have for too long not been heard.

And it all comes back to guns. It all comes back to the politicization of a moral issue. And it all comes back to the abuse of power by those *in* power.

Politicians who receive millions of blood dollars are terrified that they might lose their jobs if they speak up for reasonable firearm legislation.

Well, I'll tell you what: I will do all I can to *help* them lose their jobs if they continue to sacrifice our children to the immoral worship of guns and the appalling disregard for human life.

Enough.

My young brothers and sisters: Your time is now.

My adult brothers and sisters: I beg you to support them and to use your voice, your dollars, and your vote to show them that you do, indeed, care whether they live or die.

Let's do it. Let's be adults. And let's stay out of the kids' way.

Because their time is now.