

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Everytown Taps New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Communications Director To Lead Public Affairs Division

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Mahen Gunaratna To Bring His State Government, Electoral, and Capitol Hill Experience to Nation's Largest Gun Safety Organization

NEW YORK — Everytown for Gun Safety and its grassroots networks, Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action, today announced that New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Communications Director, Mahen Gunaratna, will join the staff on June 1 as Chief Public Affairs Officer and Senior Vice President. Mahen will implement the organization's strategic approach to marketing and branded campaigns through a combination of traditional communications, digital media, and grassroots marketing.

"With his deep experience at every level of government, Mahen is the right person to help Everytown spread the word about our work to pass lifesaving laws, create a culture of gun safety, and hold the gun industry accountable, both in the court of public opinion and the court of law," said **John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety**. "I'm excited to work with Mahen, who joins Everytown on the heels of spearheading the communications around two landmark gun safety bill packages in New Jersey, which were passed with help from our grassroots army of volunteers."

"From my first day in office, Mahen has served as one of my closest advisors," said **New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy**. "From conveying vital public health information during a once-in-a-century pandemic to accelerating the growth of our digital and social media engagement, Mahen has brought vision and drive to our work."

"Although I'm sad to see him leave the Governor's Office, I'm thrilled that he's taking on a new role as a senior executive at Everytown for Gun Safety," continued **Governor Murphy**. "From closing background check loopholes to strengthening anti-gun trafficking laws to fighting the proliferation of ghost guns, Everytown has been a tremendous partner in our mission of promoting commonsense gun safety. I know Mahen will bring the same energy and sense of purpose that he brought to our team as he takes on this new challenge to reduce gun violence nationwide."

"I'm honored and humbled to lead public affairs for Everytown for Gun Safety, the nation's largest and most effective gun violence prevention organization," said **Mahen Gunaratna, incoming Chief Public Affairs Officer and Senior Vice President at Everytown for Gun Safety**. "For too long, the gun lobby blocked even the most basic safety measures, but thanks to the work of over eight million supporters nationwide, the gun safety movement has made unprecedented progress. Through victories at town halls and school boards, in statehouses, in corporate America, in the courts, and at the ballot box, Everytown has helped change how Americans think of this public health threat. I look forward to leveraging my experience and skills to continue building on these victories and reduce the scourge of gun violence across our nation."

"When I entered Congress over a decade ago, I hired Mahen Gunaratna as my Communications Director during my first year in office," said **Congresswoman Frederica Wilson (FL-24)**. "From the beginning, it was clear that Mahen understood our community and knew how to communicate with our constituents with empathy and care. Organizations like Everytown for Gun Safety play a critical role in supporting community-driven violence intervention efforts and youth mentorship programs, like the 5000 Role Models of Excellence Project, in districts like mine. Black men are tragically thirteen times more likely than white men to die by gun homicide and Miami-Dade County has long struggled with a disproportionate rate of shootings, so this issue is very personal to me. I look forward to working with Mahen in his new role at Everytown and have full confidence that he's the right person to help communities across our nation tackle the problem of gun violence from the ground up."

Mahen has advised federal, state, and local candidates and elected officials on communications strategy for nearly 14 years. He currently serves as Communications Director to New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy, serving as the senior-most communications advisor to the Governor and leading long-term strategy and planning. While working for Governor Murphy, he led communications efforts on two landmark gun safety bill packages that were signed into law, as well as a third pending legislative package on gun safety. Prior to his current role, Mahen served as Florida Communications Director for Hillary for America. He also served in a number of roles for former New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio and on both of President Obama's presidential campaigns. Mahen got his start in politics working for two members of the Congressional Black Caucus: Congressman Kendrick Meek, in both his congressional office and on his U.S. Senate campaign, and his successor, Congresswoman Frederica Wilson, for whom he served as Communications Director during her freshman year in office. On Monday, Everytown and Moms Demand Action celebrated a major win ([https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7exzxcg/fd1rrbm/nf8s1v_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!NxbBTeEZsiHcS6f7H-bP5lvGTjrtHPT0EeKyPhiTxyheYhV8JkPbEm2ld16nbSbMrO8hZV2D2Gv343nZkxuPzsdpkGk\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/_https://t.e2ma.net/click/7exzxcg/fd1rrbm/nf8s1v_!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtba!NxbBTeEZsiHcS6f7H-bP5lvGTjrtHPT0EeKyPhiTxyheYhV8JkPbEm2ld16nbSbMrO8hZV2D2Gv343nZkxuPzsdpkGk$)) for gun violence prevention as the Biden-Harris Administration finalized a rule that will require ghost guns to be treated like the deadly weapons they are. The final rule will update the definitions of "firearm" and "frame or receiver" to cover kits and components easily assembled into untraceable ghost guns. Additionally, President Biden announced that he is nominating former U.S. Attorney Steve Dettelbach to become the next director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

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[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

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[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl/\)](#)

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[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](#)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](#)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](#)

News & Events

[Press Releases \(/governor/news/news/562020/governor-contact-arch.shtml\)](#)

[Photos \(https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy\)](#)

[Public Addresses \(/governor/news/addresses\)](#)

[Executive Orders \(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](#)

[Administrative Orders \(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](#)

[Direct Appointments \(/governor/news/appointments\)](#)

[Advice and Consent](#)

[Appointments \(/governor/news/acappointments\)](#)

[Statements on](#)

[Legislation \(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](#)

[Administration Reports \(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](#)

[Transition Reports \(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](#)

[Press Kits \(/governor/news/press\)](#)

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