

March 03, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy,

We write to you in support of H.R. 8 / [\[S.B. #\]](#) the Bipartisan Background Checks Act. As physicians, we believe that gun violence and its associated traumas are a public health crisis, and that Congress must enact meaningful legislation to help reduce gun violence in our communities. In 2019, [39,707](#) people died from gun violence. Tragically, the pandemic and resulting economic fallout may further exacerbate this public health crisis. Experts have suggested that the pandemic may drive increases in [suicides](#), [domestic violence](#), and community violence in the coming years. Several loopholes in federal law – and the background check system in particular – are not sufficient to prevent individuals who are ineligible to own a firearm from purchasing one. The Bipartisan Background Checks Act would enact universal background checks, closing these dangerous loopholes by ensuring that a background check happens on every firearms sale.

**The American Medical Women’s Association has been the voice and vision of women in medicine since 1915.** Time and time again, AMWA, as an organization, stands to decrease the burden of gun related fatalities and violence. AMWA acknowledges gun violence for what it really is: a deadly epidemic resulting in substantial morbidity and mortality for our patients.

Since 1993, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has conducted firearm background checks on gun purchasers. Federally licensed dealers must run a check through NICS to determine whether a potential buyer is prohibited from purchasing firearms. If information in NICS shows that a person is indeed prohibited, the dealer must deny the sale.

However, no background check is required for sales at gun shows, through online marketplaces, or between private individuals. Individuals who would otherwise be prohibited from purchasing or possessing a gun can easily buy guns through such unregulated sales. And the frequency of these unregulated sales is concerning: recent studies indicate that approximately [22 percent of firearms are purchased without a background check](#), up to 80% of firearms used in crimes are obtained without a background check.

H.R.8 / S.B.[\[Insert #\]](#) the Bipartisan Background Checks Act / Background Check Expansion Act would require a background check on every sale, ensuring that people prohibited from purchasing firearms cannot exploit loopholes and purchase guns through an unregulated sale at a gun show, online, or from an unlicensed seller. In addition, individuals would no longer be able to cross state lines solely to purchase a firearm in a state with less stringent background checks.

Too often, our patients and our communities bear witness to the terrible tragedies that occur when people use guns to harm themselves or others. Gun violence is a complex public health issue that will require a comprehensive solution; enacting universal background checks is an important first step. Our support for universal background checks comes from our desire to save lives and protect our patients.

We urge you to pass H.R.8 / S.B.[Insert #] the Bipartisan Background Checks Act / Background Check Expansion Act, as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

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