



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

ama-assn.org
t (312) 464-5000

December 5, 2017

The Honorable John Cornyn
United States Senate
517 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Christopher Murphy
United States Senate
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn and Murphy:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am pleased to offer our support for S. 2135, the “Fix NICS Act of 2017,” which would expand enforcement mechanisms to promote and ensure federal agency and state reporting of relevant criminal records for entry into the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

The AMA and its members were shocked and saddened by last month’s gun violence tragedy in Sutherland Springs, Texas. Particularly disquieting were reports that the perpetrator obtained the weapons used in the assault, passing the instant criminal background check despite a previous court martial for domestic violence. If duly entered into NICS, this information would have triggered a denial at the point of sale, potentially averting the attack. Under existing law, federal departments and agencies must submit, on at least a quarterly basis, any records that would disqualify an individual from firearm purchase to the U.S. Attorney General for inclusion into NICS. Yet these provisions do not contain a sufficient means of ensuring and enforcing compliance.

The “Fix NICS Act of 2017” would address this problem by requiring federal agencies to develop a multi-year implementation plan for maximizing coordination and automated reporting of relevant records to NICS, and provide semi-annual written certification of reporting compliance. It also establishes penalties for agencies found to be in breach of these new requirements. In addition, it creates incentives for state reporting of such records, with a particular emphasis on records that relate to felony convictions and domestic violence. The AMA strongly supports efforts to more strictly enforce and strengthen the existing background check system. We applaud you for your leadership on this important issue, and urge Congress to pass S. 2135.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD