

March 12, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

On behalf of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to urge you to take immediate action on common sense solutions to reduce the epidemic of gun violence in America. The U.S. House of Representatives plans to vote on the STOP School Violence Act of 2018, H.R. 4909, this week, a bill that reauthorizes a Department of Justice program created in 2001 to prevent threats to schools. While this is an important program, the AMA believes that taking action on this bill alone is not enough. Gun violence in America today is clearly a public health crisis that needs comprehensive, multi-faceted public health solutions.

It has been over five years since the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. After Sandy Hook, a commonly expressed sentiment was “never again,” and many stakeholders strongly urged Congress to take action to prevent similar events. Since then, there have been at least 1,607 mass shootings (e.g., 4 or more people shot), with at least 1,846 people killed and 6,459 wounded in communities across the country, including recent ones in Parkland and Las Vegas, not to mention the daily toll of suicides and homicides due to firearms. Last month’s massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida was the 30th mass shooting of 2018. With the addition of Parkland, three of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in modern U.S. history have occurred in the past six months. The frequency of mass shootings has tripled since 2011. As physicians, we see first-hand the devastating consequences of gun violence to victims and their families and friends. In addition to the direct impact of gun violence on individuals and their families and friends, gun-related violence has broader societal and economic impacts on medical and mental health care systems, communities, workplaces, schools, police, and the criminal justice system.

The AMA believes that Congress must take action now to reduce the threat of injury or death from firearms. We urge you to consider the following common-sense proposals.

- Provide specific funding for gun violence research within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, including epidemiological research studying the causes of gun

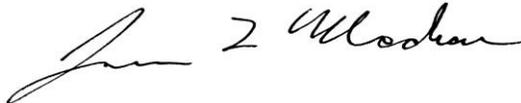
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violence, the risk factors associated with gun violence, and interventions that might work. Determining the root causes—through federally-funded research—of this epidemic is critical to solving it. The AMA believes a specific funding allocation for federal gun violence research, including for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a necessary first step to reversing the course on gun violence.

- Improve the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) for firearms by passing the bipartisan Fix NICS Act of 2017, H.R. 4477/S. 2135, which the AMA supports.
- Expand background checks and waiting periods to all commercial firearm sales, including purchases at gun shows and over the Internet, by passing the bipartisan Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2017, H.R. 4240.
- Reinstate a ban on military-style assault weapons, including a ban on high-capacity magazines.

The AMA stands ready to work with Congress to make progress in protecting our communities, especially our children, from this epidemic of violence. We must make a real and lasting commitment to work together on meaningful solutions to prevent future tragedies, and we implore you to act now.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Madara, MD