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April 12, 2013

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Reid:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to applaud your efforts to bring to the Senate floor a debate and vote on proposals to address gun violence and gun safety. In the wake of recent tragic shootings, including those at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and the movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, Americans across the country have engaged in spirited debates about how to prevent gun violence—including the daily violence that afflicts many of our nation's cities, as well as mass shootings—while at the same time protecting individual constitutional rights granted under the Second Amendment. The loss of human life to acts of violence should concern us as a nation, and should provoke a national response.

A thoughtful debate in Congress on this important national issue is long overdue. As individual physicians, our members see first-hand the devastating consequences of gun violence to victims and their families. As a professional community, we must do everything we can, not only to treat the victims and their families, but also to reduce the epidemic of gun violence in our nation, much of which is preventable. Through our policy-making House of Delegates, over the past three decades the AMA has adopted extensive policy related to preventing firearm violence, including reinstating and strengthening the ban on assault-type weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines. In addition, we support expanding background checks. The relatively easy access to the increased firepower of assault weapons, semi-automatic firearms, high-capacity magazines, and hollow-point ammunition heightens the risk of multiple gunshot wounds and severe penetrating trauma, resulting in more critical injuries and deaths. Even for those who manage to survive gun violence involving these weapons, the severity and lasting impact of their wounds, disabilities, and treatment leads to devastating consequences for families and society, and contributes to high medical costs for treatment and recovery.

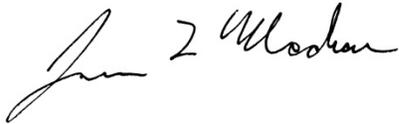
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Thank you for your leadership on bringing this important issue to the Senate floor. The gun safety proposals deserve a debate and an up-or-down vote. We look forward to working with you on meaningful, reasonable solutions to prevent firearm-related violence and protect our communities, especially our children, from this epidemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim L Madara". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

James L. Madara, MD

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein