



JAMES L. MADARA, MD
EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, CEO

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

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The Honorable Mike Thompson
U.S. House of Representatives
231 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Peter King
U.S. House of Representatives
339 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Thompson and King:

On behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), I am writing to express our support for H.R. 4240, the “Public Safety and Second Amendment Rights Protection Act of 2017,” which would expand the existing background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales, including those at gun shows, over the internet, or in classified ads while providing reasonable exceptions for family and friend transfers. This bill would also help strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System by incentivizing states to improve reporting of prohibited individuals and direct grant funding to states and tribal territories to improve their record-sharing systems.

As one of the major causes of injury-related deaths, the AMA recognizes that firearm-related violence is a serious public health crisis in the United States. The AMA has an extensive policy on firearm safety and prevention of gun violence, including supporting a waiting period and background check for all firearm purchasers. The federal background check system is effective at preventing certain prohibited purchasers, such as convicted felons and domestic abusers, from accessing guns. However, this system could be more effective with improved and more complete databases. In addition, about one in five guns are sold by unlicensed dealers or private sellers, who are not required to access the database. By closing these loopholes and providing incentives to states and tribal governments to improve their reporting and record-sharing systems, H.R. 4240 is an important step forward in helping to prevent future deaths and injuries due to firearms.

The AMA applauds your leadership in sponsoring H.R. 4240, and looks forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

Sincerely,

James L. Madara, MD