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January 11, 2019

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

The Honorable Peter King
U.S. House of Representatives
302 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. 8, the “Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019.” This bill would expand the existing background check system to cover all firearm sales, including those at gun shows, over the internet and through classified ads, while providing reasonable exceptions for law enforcement and family and friend transfers.

As one of the major causes of injury related deaths, the AMA recognizes that firearm violence is a serious public health crisis in the United States. The AMA has 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 if unlicensed dealers or private sellers were required to conduct background checks. By closing these loopholes, H.R. 8 can be an important tool in keeping guns out of the hands of those who are prohibited from having them.

The AMA applauds your leadership in sponsoring H.R. 8, and looks forward to working with you to advance this important legislation.

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