March 25, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy Chairman Committee on Appropriations U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray Chair Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510 The Honorable Richard Shelby Vice Chairman Committee on Appropriations U.S. Senate Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt Ranking Member Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies U.S. Senate Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair Murray, and Ranking Member Blunt:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, the undersigned 202 national, state, and local medical, public health, and research organizations write to ask you to provide \$50 million in funding shared evenly between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention.

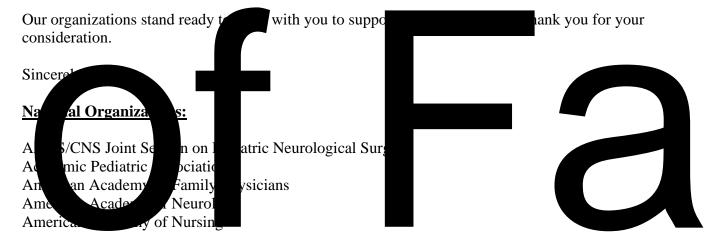
In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, communities across the U.S. continue to suffer from the public health crisis of firearm-related injuries and deaths. In 2019, the most recent year for which we have data, firearm-related injuries led to 39,707 fatalities.<sup>i</sup> A public health approach to firearm violence prevention is urgently needed to promote health equity and address the disproportionate burden of this epidemic on communities of color. The foundation of this approach is rigorous research that can accurately quantify and describe the facets of an issue and identify opportunities for reducing its related morbidity and mortality.

We would like to thank Congress for providing \$25 million for this public health research to the CDC and NIH in FY20 and for continuing this funding in the *Consolidated Appropriations Act* for FY 2021. This initial investment was a crucial step toward applying a public health approach to increasing gun safety and reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths, and we are excited to see these funds contributing to important research projects that are now underway. The CDC has made 18 awards for two- and three-year projects to improve scientific understanding of firearm-related violence and to rigorously evaluate the effectiveness of prevention strategies.<sup>ii</sup> The NIH is funding research on the determinants of firearm injury, the identification of those at risk, and the evaluation of innovative interventions.<sup>iii</sup> These projects will advance our knowledge of how to keep communities safe, with some researchers focusing on particular groups such as U.S. Army soldiers and veterans, children, and residents of rural and urban areas.

This initial investment is important, but increased funding is still needed to overcome the decades-long lack of federal funding that set back our nation's response to the public health issue of firearm-related morbidity and mortality. Over time, additional funding can generate research into important issues such as

measures that can best prevent the next shooting at a school or public place; and numerous other vital public health questions. Continued and expanded investments are essential to the success of this important work.

Our groups strongly urge the Senate to increase funding to the CDC and NIH for firearm morbidity and mortality prevention research to a total of \$50 million as part of FY 2022 appropriations. Continued and expanded funding could support the creation of additional, large, multi-year studies and accelerate the rebuilding of a research community that shrank in the decades before Congress restored this federal funding. Robust and sustained research on motor vehicle crashes and subsequent legislation has helped save hundreds of thousands of lives through public health interventions, including seat belts and other safety features. The same approach can help reduce firearm-related injuries in our communities, including ensuring that the CDC and NIH are able to adequately fund non-biased, evidence-based research into this public health priority.



American Psychoanalytic Association American Psychological Association American Public Health Association American School Counselor Association American Society for Clinical Pathology American Society of Pediatric Nephrology American Society of Pediatric Neurosurgeons American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology American Sociological Association American Thoracic Society American Trauma Society Association for Psychological Science Association of American Medical Colleges Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) Association of Departments of Family Medicine Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs Association of Pediatric Program Directors Association of Population Centers Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health Association of State and Territorial Health Officials **Big Cites Health Coalition** Brain Injury Association of America Catholic Health Association of the United States Center for American Progress Child Injury Prevention Alliance Children's Defense Fund Children's Hospital Association Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health

National Association of School Nurses National Association of School Psychologists National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials American Academy of Pediatrics - Hawaii Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics New York Chapter 2 American Academy of Pediatrics New York Chapter 3 American Academy of Pediatrics Puerto Rico Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, Maine Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics, Utah Chapter Arizona Public Health Association Brain Injury Association of America-Kentucky Chapter Brain Injury Association of Kansas and Greater Kansas City Brain Injury Association of Louisiana Brain Injury Association of Massachusetts Brain Injury Association of Michigan Brain Injury Association of New Hampshire Children's Hospital of Philadelphia Children's Wisconsin Colorado Public Health Association DC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association Delaware Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Florida Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics Georgia Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Hawaii Public Health Association Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Idaho Public Health Association Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Illinois Public Health Association Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Kansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Louisiana Public Health Association Maine Association of Psychiatric Physicians Maine Public Health Association Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics The Maryland Psychiatric Society, Inc. Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Michigan Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Mississippi Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse NC Public Health Association Nebraska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Nevada Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics Nevada Public Health Association

New Hampshire Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics New Hampshire Psychiatric Society New Jersey Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics New Jersey Gun Violence Research Center - Rutgers School of Public Health New Jersey Public Health Association New Jersey School Counselor Association, Inc. New Mexico Pediatric Society