

March 25, 2021

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

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice 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 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.ⁱ 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.ⁱⁱ The NIH is funding research on the determinants of firearm injury, the identification of those at risk, and the evaluation of innovative interventions.ⁱⁱⁱ 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.

Our organizations stand ready to work with you to support this effort. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

- American Society of Pediatric Neurological Surgeons
- Academic Pediatric Association
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American Academy of Neurology
- American Society of Nursing

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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 Cities 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