

ONE HUNDRED FIFTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

February 16, 2018

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health
Committee on Energy and Commerce
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden and Chairman Burgess:

We are writing to request that you hold a hearing as soon as possible on the adequacy of the federal investment in gun violence prevention research, as gun violence is a public health crisis that is claiming thousands of lives every year.

On Wednesday, 17 lives were lost in a horrific school shooting in Parkland, Florida. Unfortunately, this isn't the only instance of this uniquely American tragedy. Wednesday's attack in Florida is one of multiple school shootings to have occurred in the first 45 days of the year.¹ According to a recent New York Times article, since 2012 "there have been at least 239 school shootings nationwide. In those incidents, 438 people were shot, 138 of whom were killed."² Unfortunately, this scene has become all too familiar to Americans, and is yet another tragic reminder that Congress desperately needs to address gun violence.

¹ Aiello, Chloe. *18 School Shootings in 45 days – Florida massacre is one of many tragedies in 2018*. CNBC. (Feb 14, 2018) (<https://www.cnbc.com/2018/02/14/florida-school-shooting-brings-yearly-tally-to-18-in-2018.html>)

² Patel, Jugal K. *After Sandy Hook, More Than 400 People Have Been Shot in Over 200 School Shootings*. The New York Times. (Feb 15, 2018)

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In the U.S., 315 people are shot with a firearm every day. Of those injured, 93 people die, leading to more than 30,000 deaths per year.³ We often associate gun violence with mass-shootings or criminal activity that leads to nightly news coverage; but that is only part of how gun violence affects individuals, families, and communities. Sadly, 62 percent of gun-related deaths are suicides. Many other firearm related injuries are unintentional, related to interpersonal and domestic violence, or legal intervention. The cost of gun violence is high. Although the toll on human life and suffering is unmeasurable, it is estimated that the gun violence epidemic costs American taxpayers almost \$13 million a day due to gun-related deaths and injuries.⁴

Gun violence must be addressed and handled for what it is: a public health crisis. However, the harmful “Dickey Amendment” and its chilling effect on federally-supported gun violence prevention research has stymied our ability to address gun violence. The ban on using Department of Health and Human Services funding “to advocate or promote gun control” and Congress’ failure to appropriate adequate funding has resulted in a dearth of gun violence research findings that could help protect millions of Americans, and keep our families, communities, and children safe.

Last October we held a Democratic Forum, *Exploring Public Health Solutions to Gun Violence in America*, in order to hear firsthand from public health and gun violence prevention experts to explore public health solutions to gun violence and to discuss the urgent need for increased federal action to respond to this pressing public health challenge. While our Democratic Forum was an important start, raising awareness for the need for increased gun violence prevention research can only be accomplished in a bipartisan fashion. It is long past time for Republicans, who have remained silent on this issue, to join us in sounding the alarm and work towards bipartisan solutions to gun violence.

³ Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. *Key Gun Violence Statistics* (2016) (<https://www.bradiycampaign.org/key-gun-violence-statistics>).

⁴ Follman, et al. *The True Cost of Gun Violence in American*. Mother Jones. (Apr. 15, 2015) (<https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2015/04/true-cost-of-gun-violence-in-america/>).

We urge you to hold a hearing as soon as possible on the need for increased funding for gun violence prevention research in order to protect the American public, including our school children, from the tragic consequences that result from gun violence.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member



Bobby L. Rush
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Health



Diana DeGette
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Oversight
and Investigations



Mike Doyle
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Communications
and Technology



Jan Schakowsky
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Digital Commerce
and Consumer Protection



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Vice Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce




John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress




Paul D. Tonko
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Environment




Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress