



Committed to Care
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January 29, 2019

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

Dear Representative Thompson:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and our more than 43,000 members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019. This important legislation will ensure that all legal firearms sales in the United States are supported by a background check on purchasers.

As you know, gun violence in the United States has reached epidemic levels. Nearly 90 Americans are killed by guns every day, with another 200 suffering non-lethal injuries. The FBI reports that in 2011, 68 percent of murders, 41 percent of robberies and 21 percent of aggravated assaults nationwide were committed using a firearm. In 2014, more than 81,000 Americans were treated in hospital emergency departments for nonfatal gun shot wounds. As emergency nurses, our members are on the front lines of this epidemic and witness firsthand the devastating effects gun violence has on victims and their families. Your commonsense legislation will help keep firearms out of the hands of violent criminals and prevent some of the bloodshed and horrific injuries that emergency nurses across the country witness every day.

Current federal law requires holders of a Federal Firearms License (FFL) to conduct a background check through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) for the potential buyer of any firearm. However, it does not require the same background check when the seller is not an FFL-licensed individual. Only 18 states and the District of Columbia currently have laws that go beyond these current requirements. Moreover, only eight of those states require background checks for every transaction involving firearms. Without stronger federal laws, the unrestricted, unregulated sale of firearms between individuals will continue as it has, with inconsistent protections afforded citizens across the country.

The Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 will ensure that all legal firearms sales in the United States are supported by a NICS background check that confirms the buyer's legal right to purchase that firearm. We believe your bill will help keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals and those who are dangers to themselves or others. As such, it will be an important step in reducing the level of injuries and fatalities caused by firearms.

As professionals on the frontlines of our nation's health care system, emergency nurses are critical to providing lifesaving emergency care, including to victims of gun violence. We would like to thank you for introducing this legislation and your leadership on this critical issue. If you have any questions, please contact ENA's Chief Government Relations Officer, Richard Mereu, at 202-741-9373.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Patricia Kunz Howard'. The signature is written in a cursive style.

Patricia Kunz Howard, PhD, RN, CEN, CPEN, TCRN, NE-BC, FAEN, FAAN
2019 ENA President
cc: Honorable Peter King, U.S. House of Representatives