



February 8, 2019

Speaker Nancy Pelosi
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McCarthy, Leader McConnell, and Leader Schumer:

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) would like to express our strong support for **H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019**. NASSP is the leading organization and voice for school principals, assistant principals, and school leaders from across the United States. Founded in 1916, our vision is great leaders in every school committed to the success of each student. NASSP also promotes the intellectual growth, academic achievement, character and leadership development, and physical well-being of youth. We are proud to have founded and continue to administer the National Honor Societies and National Student Council.

Every day, students across our nation endure acts of violence ranging from bullying to homicide and suicide. Many of these acts of violence could be prevented. We know that youth often display a series of signs and signals before harming themselves or others. Research shows that youth often display warning signs and signals before taking any action, with 80% of school shooters telling someone of their plans (69% telling more than one person), and 70% of those who complete suicide tell someone of their plans or give another warning sign. When individuals already prohibited by law attempt to purchase a gun, it only makes sense that we do everything we can to prevent those illegal purchases from taking place.

H.R. 8 is bipartisan legislation that will close the dangerous gap in federal law that makes it possible for individuals who are prohibited from gun possession, like domestic abusers and persons with violent criminal histories, to have easy access to firearms. This is a moderate, common sense piece of legislation that would have a significant impact on reducing gun violence and saving lives. Under current federal law, only licensed gun dealers are required to conduct a background check before completing a gun sale. However, individuals who are not licensed dealers are free to sell guns under federal law without conducting a background check and with no questions asked. This is a significant gap in the law that allows individuals who are prohibited from gun possession to evade that law and buy guns through these private sales transactions at gun shows, online, or through other avenues.

NASSP is committed to doing everything possible to prevent violence in schools, and H.R. 8 is a common-sense measure that will help save lives. This policy is supported by 97 percent of Americans, including both Democrats and Republicans, law enforcement officials, and educators. We applaud members of Congress for their bipartisan work on this legislation to fill the gap in school violence prevention.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "JoAnn D. Bartoletti". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

JoAnn D. Bartoletti
Executive Director, NASSP