



February 20, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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

We write to you today in support of H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act. As veterans, we are uniquely aware of the threat firearms pose to civilians. As Americans, the threat gun violence poses to a community could not be clearer. After a year of horrific mass shootings—Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, Parkland, Thousand Oaks—and daily gun violence spreading across our country, when it comes to making Americans safer, it is clear we have no time to waste.

Under current federal law, a background check is only required on a gun sold by a licensed firearms dealer, leaving individuals unable to pass a background check easy access to firearms through other means. A prohibited person with dangerous intent can easily buy a gun over the internet or in a parking lot with no questions asked. For those of us with extensive firearms training, who have seen the damage inflicted by a powerful weapon in the wrong hands, this is simply unfathomable.

It is also unfathomable to the American people. [97% of Americans across the country, including 97% of gun owners, support universal background checks.](#) Now it is time for the leaders of our nation to step up. Nearly 40,000 Americans died from gun violence in 2017—the highest level in nearly 40 years. The Bipartisan Background Checks Act is a critical first step towards saving lives from gun violence by closing the most dangerous gap in federal firearms law.

Each of us has, at some point in our lives, made the choice to risk our lives for our fellow citizens and place ourselves in harm's way. We were trained, we were coached, and we were prepared for the dangers that we chose to face. This is not the case for most Americans, yet they continue to face danger on the sidewalk, in their homes, at school, and at work. It is in the

same spirit that led us to serve in the armed forces that we ask you, our elected leaders, to help protect the American people from gun violence here at home. We urge you to support this legislation.

Sincerely,

General Peter W. Chiarelli, USA (Ret.)
General Wesley Clark, USA (Ret.)
General Stanley A. McChrystal, USA (Ret.)
General Michael Hayden, USAF (Ret.)
Admiral Thad Allen, USCG (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Mark Hertling, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Russel L. Honoré, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Claudia Kennedy, USA (Ret.)
Lieutenant General Norman R. Seip, USAF (Ret.)
Rear Admiral James Barnett, Jr., USN (Ret.)
Brigadier General Stephen A. Cheney, USMC (Ret.)
Commander Carlos Del Toro, USN (Ret.)
Captain Terron Sims, II, USA (Ret.)