



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

*For science. For action. For health.*

February 25, 2019

U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champions the health of all people and communities, I write in strong support of H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019. This commonsense bipartisan legislation would expand the current firearm background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales and we urge you to support the bill when it comes to the floor for a vote later this week.

Gun violence is one of the leading preventable causes of death in the nation. In 2017, more than 39,000 individuals died as a result of gun violence. After years of delay, it is time for Congress to act and take a comprehensive public health approach to addressing this growing crisis. Our nation has waited far too long to take on this devastating problem in our communities and we can wait no longer.

Current law, which only requires background checks for guns purchased from federally licensed dealers, is inadequate and contains significant gaps that provide easy access to weapons for felons, domestic abusers, the seriously mentally ill and others prohibited from owning firearms. We strongly support this legislation which would close these senseless loopholes by requiring the same background check for all commercial gun sales including those at gun shows, on the internet and through classified ads, with limited exceptions.

Thank you again for your attention to our position on this important legislation. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact this and other legislation to reduce gun violence in our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD  
Executive Director