



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
For science. For action. For health.

March 8, 2021

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 2021 and urge your support when the bill comes to the House floor for a vote this week. We strongly support this common sense legislation that would expand the current firearm background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales.

Gun violence is one of the leading preventable causes of death in the nation. In 2019, 39,707 individuals died as a result of gun violence and many more suffered nonfatal gun injuries. 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.

We have waited far too long to act on this common sense legislation to protect everyone in our nation from the threat of gun violence. We stand ready to work with you and your colleagues to pass this and other critical legislation to reduce gun violence in the United States.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD
Executive Director