



AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION

For science. For action. For health.

January 9, 2019

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

The Honorable Mike Thompson
Chair, Gun Violence Prevention Task Force
406 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Representative Thompson:

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 to thank you and all of the bipartisan original cosponsors for your introduction of H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019. 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 2017, more than 39,000 individuals died as a result of gun violence and nearly 90,000 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 your 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.

Thank you again for your continued efforts to improve the health and safety of our communities through this common sense measure to protect our school children, teachers, families and neighbors from gun violence. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to pass this and other critical legislation to reduce gun violence in our nation.

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

Cc: The Honorable Peter King
The Honorable Jerrold Nadler

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
The Honorable Sheila Jackson Lee
The Honorable Brian Mast
The Honorable Robin Kelly
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Lucy McBath
The Honorable Christopher Smith