



The Honorable Richard Durbin
Chairman
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
711 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on the Judiciary
135 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

March 22, 2021

Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

Founded in 1974, Brady works across Congress, courts, and communities, uniting gun owners and non-gun owners alike, to take action, not sides, and end America's gun violence epidemic. Our organization today carries the name of Jim and Sarah Brady. As you know, Jim was shot and severely injured in the assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan. As victims of gun violence and life-long gun owners, Jim and Sarah dedicated the rest of their lives to passing federal legislation requiring background checks for gun sales. Brady continues to uphold Jim and Sarah's legacy by uniting Americans from coast to coast, red and blue, young and old, liberal and conservative, to combat the epidemic of gun violence.

Gun violence is a preventable and uniquely American tragedy that claims more than 100 lives each day, inflicting immeasurable trauma on not only survivors, but their families, friends, and communities as well. The devastating reality of gun violence injures over 100,000 Americans every year, damages communities economically, makes education and the enjoyment of social activities difficult, and infringes on our fundamental right to live. The issue of American gun violence is complex and multifaceted, but there are common sense and lifesaving policies that can help address this epidemic. For example, the Brady background check system, implemented with bipartisan support, has blocked approximately 4 million prohibited firearm transactions since it was enacted in 1994.¹ Common sense gun laws do not target law-abiding citizens or infringe on their rights. Rather, they make it less likely that they will need to exercise those rights in self-defense.

¹ "Background Checks for Firearm Transfers," Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2021, https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/bcft1617_sum.pdf.

Brady is grateful to the Committee for holding a hearing on common sense and constitutional policies to prevent gun violence and save lives. Common sense gun laws have overwhelming support from the public and play a crucial role in preventing gun violence. The efficacy of such measures is clear, states that have strengthened their gun laws beyond federal levels enjoy the lowest rates of gun violence in the country,² and the overwhelming share of guns used in those states in crime are trafficked from states with weak gun laws.³

The Supreme Court's decision in *Heller* recognized that the right conferred by the Second Amendment is "not unlimited," and upheld the longstanding jurisprudence recognizing that strong gun laws are constitutional, effective, and necessary.⁴ As explained by Justice Scalia, it is "not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose."⁵ Federal and state courts throughout our nation have likewise upheld common sense gun laws that provide protections for public safety.⁶

Brady hopes that Congress will fulfill its responsibility to protect Americans and their communities by passing widely supported, common sense gun laws, and we look forward to this hearing.

Sincerely,



Kris Brown

President, Brady

² National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-Based Injury Statistics Query & Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports, National, Regional and States, 1999 to 2017, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>

³ Olson, Erik J. et al., "American Firearm Homicides," *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*, 2019, available at <https://www.pennmedicine.org/news/news-releases/2019/march/states-with-strict-gun-laws-see-increase-in-homicides-when-they-border-states-with-lax-ones>

⁴ *District of Columbia v. Heller*, 554 U.S. 570, 626-627 (2008).

⁵ *Id.*, at 570.

⁶ Barnes, Robert, "Supreme Court passes up challenges from gun groups on laws they say violate Second Amendment," *Washington Post*, June 15, 2020, available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/supreme-court-passes-up-challenges-from-gun-groups-on-laws-they-say-violate-second-amendment/2020/06/15/e18ea442-af0d-11ea-8758-bfd1d045525a_story.html