



March 22, 2021

Senator Dick Durbin
Chair, US Senate Judiciary Committee

Re: Doctors for America supports Firearm Safety measures to save health and livelihood

We are pleased to provide our written or oral testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee's March 23 hearing for "Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence." Doctors for America is an organization of 18,000 physicians and physician-trainees across all 50 states representing public health, primary care, and procedural specialties. Doctors and trainees are on the front lines of the gun violence epidemic, from providing lifesaving medical and mental health care to victims and their families, to educating gun owners and families about the safe storage of firearms to prevent catastrophes. We strongly believe in common sense steps to reduce gun violence. Our exposure to the gun violence epidemic includes the following:

- pediatric visits for children who live in homes with unlocked and loaded weapons
- managing traumatic injuries and life sustaining treatments for victims of gun-shot wounds
- performing pathologic autopsies for deceased victims of gun violence
- physical and neurological rehabilitation, psychiatric treatment, and medical management for the survivors of all gun violence and the PTSD resulting from the gun violence epidemic

We know the magnitude of the problems include:

- 40,000 people killed every year from gun violence, over 80,000 are non-fatally injured
- 2/3 of the deaths are suicides, firearm is the most lethal means of suicide
- over 4 million children live in households with unlocked and loaded weapons
- young adult black males have an extremely disproportionate high rate of harm from guns

Existing structural and procedural barriers to safe ownership and storage of firearms includes lack of national background checks on all sales, no Federal requirement for reporting lost or stolen firearms, differing and sometimes nonexistent laws for Extreme Risk Protection Orders across states, differing and often unenforced Safe Storage laws across states. The variation in firearm safety measures across States has created an environment for every American to be vulnerable to gun violence and injury.

We believe there will be significant reduction in firearm related injury and death from **nationwide** uniform Background Checks for all sales of firearms (including gun show sales and unlicensed dealer sales), mandatory reporting of lost or stolen firearms, recognition and support for Extreme Risk Protection Orders, national Safe Storage Laws, and identifying and strengthening a Federal authority tasked with Public Health leadership to manage national efforts to reduce and eliminate all preventable harm from gun violence. Our members are developing a model for a National Bureau for Firearm Injury Prevention to promote a Public Health strategy, similar to the National Highway Safety Administration.

We fully support the Committee's deliberations in the endeavor to eliminate all preventable harm from guns in America. We stand ready to answer questions on the clinical or public health considerations the Committee may have. Thank you for your attention to the gun violence epidemic.

Sincerely,

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