



P.O. Box 3325 Newtown, CT 06470

February 24, 2021

Dear Senators:

We are families and survivors who have been directly impacted by gun violence in our nation. We are writing to urge you to confirm Judge Merrick Garland, President Joe Biden's nominee for Attorney General, to lead the U.S. Department of Justice.

The next U.S. Attorney General will be tasked with addressing many crises in our nation including gun violence, the rise of violent domestic terrorism, and police violence.

- Gun sales have surged and there has been a significant spike in gun deaths and injuries during the pandemic. Homicides have increased by double digits in more than a dozen major cities in 2020. Childhood deaths have risen by 40 percent in 2020 and teenage deaths are up by 37 percent. This past year, the United States experienced 612 mass shootings, a 47 percent increase from 2019. Numerous data points indicate that suicides are on the rise across the country as a growing number of Americans are taking their lives amidst the economic and social distress of Covid-19.
- A string of mass shooting incidents in El Paso, Texas; Gilroy, California; and Dayton, Ohio brought the threat of domestic terrorism into focus in 2019. According to [the Homeland Threat Assessment](#) released in October 2020, "Ideologically motivated lone offenders and small groups pose the most likely terrorist threat to the Homeland, with Domestic Violent Extremists presenting the most persistent and lethal threat." On January 6, 2021, we witnessed the violent insurrection in the U.S. Capitol. Shortly after the insurrection, the Acting Secretary of Homeland Security issued [a National Terrorism Advisory System \(NTAS\) Bulletin](#) due to "ideologically-motivated violent extremists with objections to the exercise of governmental authority and the presidential transition, as well as other perceived grievances fueled by false narratives, could continue to mobilize to incite or commit violence."
- Recent incidents that took the lives of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and Rayshard Brooks shed a light on America's history of police violence. There is [a call from the gun violence prevention community](#) to acknowledge that black lives matter and police violence is gun violence. We are pushing for anti-racist public health approaches to be prioritized with community-based policing and investments in community-based solutions to end gun violence.

Judge Garland has been lauded for his flawless and inspiring work as the leading federal prosecutor in the Oklahoma City bombing case after a domestic terrorist killed 168 people including 19 children in 1995. He brought everyone to the table including the families, survivors, and the first responders who were most impacted by the bombing. Throughout his career, Judge Garland has demonstrated his commitment to civil rights. In his recent acceptance speech when nominated by President Biden for Attorney General, he expressed that one of his top priorities will be “ensuring racial equity”.

Today, there is a call for stronger enforcement of our gun laws. More than [260 people who have been arrested and charged](#) for crimes related to the January 6th insurrection must be prosecuted, and police reform is necessary. Judge Garland’s expertise, knowledge, and history of fairly and swiftly prosecuting domestic terrorists and white extremists makes him uniquely qualified to lead the Department of Justice.

In 1997, Merrick Garland was confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate with a 76–23 vote for the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia seat and he has served as a Chief Judge since 2013. The Department of Justice plays a significant role in enforcing the nation’s gun laws. Judge Garland, with his extensive knowledge of the Second Amendment, will ensure that the DOJ has the tools necessary to do its job and help to end the gun violence crisis in America.

We are still angry and disappointed that Judge Garland was not confirmed to replace Justice Antonin Scalia for the Supreme Court of the United States in 2016 due to political gamesmanship. We urge all Senators to choose their country over party and confirm Merrick Garland as our next Attorney General. We are confident that he will bring the families and the survivors who are most impacted by gun violence, domestic terrorism, and police violence to the table to make our nation safer and restore justice to the Justice Department.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Families and survivors directly impacted by gun violence

Megan Ackerman, Los Angeles, California

Elizabeth Adams, Gulf Breeze, Florida

Katherine Aker, Tujunga, California

Mayra and Daniel Alvear, Orlando, Florida

Miyoshia Bailey, Chicago, Illinois

Sharon Baker, Goshen, Indiana

Michelle Barnes-Anderson, Brooklyn, New York

Teche Bergeron, Las Vegas, Nevada

Terri Betz, Sutherlin, Oregon

Stephanie Bishop, Atlanta, Georgia

Michael Bishop, Pine Mountain, Georgia

Jeri Bishop, Pine Mountain, Georgia

Paul Bocanegra, San Jose, California

Susan Bolle, Tiburon, California

Tika Bordelon, Seattle, Washington

Shaundelle Brooks, Naahville, Texas

Susan Browder, Gainesville, Florida

Stephanie Brown, Chicago, Illinois

Linda Brundage, East Lansing, Michigan

Amy Bruner, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Valerie Burgest, Chicago, Illinois

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Julie Butcher, La Crescenta, California
Barbara Campbell, Newtown, Connecticut
Tom Campbell, Danbury, Connecticut
Janice Cannon, Chicago, Illinois
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Shirley Carter, Dallas, Texas
Monica Cassaberry, Brooklyn, New York
Heather Chapman, Parkland, Florida
Lauren Child, South Pasadena, California
David Christman, Athens, Georgia
James A Clark Jr, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Patrice Collins, New Haven, Connecticut
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Michele Cooper, San Diego, California
Yvonne Crasso, Middletown, Connecticut
Marie Curtis, Oakhurst, New Jersey
Deborah Davis, Hartford, Connecticut
Marina Delgado, San Pedro, California
Judith DeNunzio, Beech Mountain, North Carolina
Carolyn Dixon, South Jamaica, Queens, New York
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Tara Donnelly, Easton, Connecticut
Jane Dougherty, Littleton, Colorado
Brad Dupee, Boulder, Colorado
Annika Dworet, Coral Springs, Florida
Mitchell Dworet, Coral Springs, Florida
Christine Evans, San Diego, California
Gail Finney, Davis, California
Kathleen Florence, Oak lawn, Illinois
Adam Friedman, Washington, District of Columbia
Mary Fryer, San Francisco, California
Randy Gardner, South Pasadena, California
Kim Gatbunton, Lakewood, Washington
Gerald F. Gaudin, Metairie, Louisiana
Carol Gaxiola, SAHUARITA, Arizona
Wayne Gilbert, Tiburon, California
Jordan Gomes, Sandy Hook, Connecticut
Roxanna Green, Tucson, Arizona
Shanequa Griffin, New York, New York
Shirell Gross, North Hollywood, California
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Jacinda Maatu, Bridgeport, Connecticut
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Patricia Maisch, Tucson, Arizona
Denise Marks, Valencia , Pennsylvania
Veronica Maul, Crowley, Texas
Marcel McClinton, Houston, Texas
Kimberly McFadden, Mundelein, Illinois
Christine Miller, Sandy Hook, Connecticut
Dionne Miller, Sauk Village, Illinois
Brenda Mitchell , University Park , Illinois
Cindy Montoya, Los Angeles, California
Sydney Montstream-Quas, Barrington, Rhode Island
Giselle Morch, Silver Spring, Maryland
Jenny Morgan, Grand Prairie, Texas
Peter Murchison, Ridgefield, Connecticut
David O'Connor, Shoreline, Washington
Manuel Oliver, Parkland , Florida
Corey E. Olsen, Delafield, Wisconsin
Rick & Martha Omilian, Plainwell , Michigan
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Gail Warek, Sandy Hook, Connecticut
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Angela Weber, Coral Springs, Florida
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Jane Weiss, Snohomish, Washington
Stephanie Wells, Carlsbad, California
Wendy Wheatcroft, San Diego, California
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Larriccia Wiley, Dallas, Texas
Elsie Wilkens, St Louis, Missouri
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María José Wright, Miami, Florida
Frederick Wright, Miami, Florida
Abbie Youkilis, Cincinnati, Ohio
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