



HUMAN
RIGHTS
CAMPAIGN®

March 22, 2021

The Honorable Dick Durbin
Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Grassley
Ranking Member
Senate Judiciary Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Grassley,

Thank you for holding a hearing on common-sense approaches to reduce gun violence.

On behalf of the Human Rights Campaign (HRC), America's largest civil rights organization working to achieve lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) equality, I write to express our gratitude for holding this strong support of H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021. This bipartisan legislation will close the dangerous gap in federal law that makes it possible for individuals who are prohibited from gun possession, like domestic abusers and persons with violent criminal histories, to have easy access to firearms. This is a moderate, common-sense piece of legislation that would have a significant impact on reducing gun violence and saving lives.

Currently, loopholes in federal law allow unlicensed gun dealers to transfer firearms without having to run background checks. As a result, nearly a quarter of U.S. gun owners were able to obtain a firearm without any additional screening. This is a significant gap in the law that allows individuals who are prohibited from gun possession to buy guns through private sales transactions at gun shows, online, or anywhere else. This is unacceptable.

While state and local-level measures have advanced in many states, laws predictably differ across state lines, creating a patchwork of protections that cannot fully address the problem. H.R. 8 represents the most comprehensive version of these laws, ensuring that all gun sales are conducted through a regulated and uniform process. Additionally, H.R. 1446, the Enhanced Background Check /Background Check Completion Act would close the "Charleston Loophole",

which allows gun sales to proceed with an incomplete background check once three business days have passed.

Universal background checks are supported by an overwhelming majority of Americans, regardless of gun ownership or political party. We simply cannot afford to wait any longer to close these dangerous loopholes in federal law.

The Disarm Hate Act, soon to be introduced, is another vital and common-sense piece of legislation that would prevent those convicted of a misdemeanor-level hate crime from buying or possessing guns.

Gun violence has taken an enormous toll on the LGBTQ community. From the Pulse shooting in Orlando in 2016 to youth suicides and anti-trans violence across the country, our community has suffered terribly as a result of our nation's inadequate laws to stop gun violence. Comprehensive, nationwide gun violence prevention measures would save countless lives. Lawmakers must offer more than "thoughts and prayers" to the millions of Americans whose lives continue to be affected by preventable gun violence. Congress must act quickly to pass these key pieces of legislation and take a critical first step in making our country safer.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact HRC Government Affairs Director David Stacy at David.Stacy@hrc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'AD', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Alphonso David

President
Human Rights Campaign
1640 Rhode Island Ave. N.W.
Washington, DC 20036-3278
(202) 628-4160
<https://www.hrc.org/>