

Approve the research funding and support we need to make evidence-based policies to prevent gun violence a reality.

To: The elected members of Congress,

Three of the deadliest shootings in modern US history have happened in the last six months. These are but three of hundreds of recent mass shootings that have torn apart families and communities. These acts of violence now happen with such frightening regularity that in some cases they pass almost without recognition, not even registering in the public conscience long enough for us to know the names of the lives lost and communities shattered.

We unite today as a diverse, nonpartisan, and interdisciplinary group of organizations and advocates to call for Congress to provide dedicated federal funding for research into gun violence. **The current restriction on federal funding for gun violence research limits our understanding of this epidemic and prevents us from enacting evidence-based policies that will protect our lives, our families, and our communities.** We also ask for Congress to remove restrictions preventing federal agencies from sharing information that could help them better understand - and ultimately prevent - injuries and loss of life.

Gun violence is a public health crisis that, on average, takes the lives of 100 people and injures hundreds more in the United States *every day*. In order to address gun violence as the public health issue that it truly is, both the public and our elected officials who serve us need to understand what works to prevent gun violence, and this can not be accomplished without credible, scientific research.

Research into the causes and prevention of violence is not a partisan issue. Yet for more than two decades, Congress has failed to provide dedicated funding for gun violence research, in part because of the Dickey Amendment, a law that states that “None of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote gun control.” Although the Dickey Amendment does not explicitly prevent research on gun *violence*, it is widely acknowledged that absent clearer guidance from Congress it has had a devastating effect on violence prevention research at the CDC. As advocates for science, we demand policies based on scientific evidence, and we ask that

Congress immediately repeal the Dickey Amendment and provide dedicated funding for research into the causes and prevention of gun violence.

Without this research, we cannot identify risk and protective factors, nor can we develop prevention strategies. Gun violence affects all communities, but disproportionately affects marginalized communities, who will continue to suffer the greatest consequences of our inaction. The lack of publicly funded research on gun violence has left us without evidence to guide us in responding to an epidemic that kills tens of thousands of people each year and adversely impacts millions more.

We further ask that the federal government repeal the Tiahrt Amendment, a 2003 provision prohibiting the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives from releasing information about its firearms database to the CDC and the National Institutes of Health. Researchers need systematic data collection and a national database dedicated to storing and collecting data on gun sales and registrations. This information must be coupled with a database on firearms injuries and deaths nationwide to monitor and better understand the scope of this national public health problem. To help accomplish this goal, we ask Congress to provide funding for the CDC National Violent Death Reporting System to support the participation of all 50 states, U.S. territories, and the District of Columbia in reporting gun violence statistics to the national database; currently, 42 states receive funding. In order to prevent gun violence, we must understand how it affects adults and children in all states, without exception.

Research and policy development on firearm-related injuries and deaths warrant the same level of attention, and dedicated federal and state funding and support, as are currently directed to public health challenges presented by the opioid epidemic, cigarette smoking, and HIV/AIDS. Regardless of political party, every member of Congress must play a role in supporting the research we need to protect our communities and enact evidence-based policy to combat gun violence.

We urge you to honor victims, survivors, and their loved ones by writing and implementing evidence-based policies to protect our communities from gun violence. We stand together in asking Congress for the support and funding needed to make these policies a reality.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Nursing
American Anthropological Association

American Association of Geographers
American Association of University Professors
American Educational Research Association
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO
Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
Clergy Letter Project
Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health
Consortium of Social Science Associations (COSSA)
Federation of Associations in Behavioral and Brain Sciences
Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education in Social Work
Hindu American Foundation
Macaulay Honors College, CUNY
National Council on Family Relations
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
National Science Teachers Association
Pantsuit Nation
Physician Women For Democratic Principles
ScienceDebate
Society for Prevention Research
Unitarian Universalist Association

For an up to date list of organizations or to add your name, visit us at
marchforscience.com/gunviolence

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