

February 21, 2019

Chairman Richard Shelby  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Roy Blunt  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Patty Murray  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Murray:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, **the undersigned 166 national, state, and local medical, public health, and research organizations write to ask you to provide \$50 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention.**

In 2017, there were over 39,000 U.S. firearm-related fatalities.<sup>i</sup> Federally funded public health research has a proven track record of reducing public health-related deaths, whether from motor vehicle crashes, smoking, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. This same approach should be applied to increasing gun safety and reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths, and CDC research will be as critical to that effort as it was to these previous public health achievements. The foundation of a public health approach is rigorous research that can accurately quantify and describe the facets of an issue and identify opportunities for reducing its related morbidity and mortality.

We were heartened by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar's February 2018 comments clarifying that the Dickey Amendment does not prohibit CDC from funding gun violence prevention research. As you know, the Dickey Amendment was a 1996 amendment to a federal spending bill indicating that the CDC could not advocate for or promote gun control. This language created a chilling effect on public health research on firearm morbidity and mortality prevention at the federal level. Despite the amendment sponsor's later statement that he never intended to undermine public health research, the practical effect has been just that: CDC has not funded needed research into important issues including the best ways to prevent unintended firearm injuries and fatalities among women and children; the most effective methods to prevent firearm-related suicides; the measures that can best prevent the next shooting at a school or public place; and numerous other vital public health questions.

**Our groups strongly urge the Senate to provide CDC with \$50 million specifically for firearm morbidity and mortality prevention research as part of FY 2020 appropriations.** If provided on an annual basis, this funding could support the creation of 10 to 20 new large multi-year studies each year (or even more single-year studies) and the rebuilding of a research community that has shrunk in the decades since the Dickey Amendment. Robust research on motor vehicle crashes and subsequent legislation has helped save hundreds of thousands of lives through public health interventions, including seat belts and other safety features. The same

approach can help reduce gun violence in our communities, including ensuring CDC is able to adequately fund research into this public health priority.

Our organizations stand ready to work with you to support this critical effort. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

**National Organizations:**

AASA, The School Superintendents Association  
Academic Pediatric Association  
AFFIRM Research  
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Academy of Neurology  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Anthropological Association  
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Neurological Surgeons  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Surgeons  
American Educational Research Association  
American Medical Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Medical Student Association  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Pediatric Surgical Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychological Association  
American Public Health Association  
American Society for Clinical Pathology  
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology  
American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology  
American Sociological Association  
American Thoracic Society  
American Trauma Society  
Association of Accredited Public Health Programs  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Departments of Family Medicine  
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association of Pediatric Program Directors  
Association of Population Centers  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses  
Big Cities Health Coalition  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Catholic Health Association of the U.S.  
Child Injury Prevention Alliance  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Children's Defense Fund  
Children's Hospital Association  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service  
Congress of Neurological Surgeons  
Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council on Pediatric Subspecialties  
Council on Social Work Education  
Doctors for America  
Emergency Nurses Association  
Families USA  
Futures Without Violence  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
Healthy Teen Network  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of Community Health Centers  
National Association of County and City Health Officials  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials  
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National League for Nursing  
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives  
National Women's Health Network  
North American Primary Care Research Group  
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition  
Pediatric Endocrine Society  
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Pediatric Trauma Society  
Population Association of America  
Prevention Institute

Psychiatrists for Gun Violence Prevention  
Safe States Alliance  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Scoliosis Research Society  
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine  
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine  
Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research  
Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics  
Society for Pediatric Anesthesia  
Society for Pediatric Pain Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Prevention Research  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society for Social Work and Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine  
Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Trust for America's Health  
Zero to Three

**State and Local Organizations:**

Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 2  
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 3  
American Academy of Pediatrics Georgia Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Orange County Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, Rhode Island Chapter  
American Academy of Pediatrics, South Carolina Chapter  
Arizona Public Health Association  
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Arkansas Public Health Association  
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin  
Colorado Public Health Association  
Connecticut Public Health Association  
DC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association  
Doctors for America, New York Chapter  
Doctors for America, Washington State Chapter  
Florida Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics  
Hawaii Public Health Association  
Hezekiah Beardsley Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Illinois Public Health Association  
Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Massachusetts Public Health Association  
Michigan Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics  
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Mississippi Public Health Association  
Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Nevada Public Health Association  
New Hampshire Pediatric Society  
New Hampshire Public Health Association  
New Jersey Public Health Association  
New York State American Academy of Pediatrics  
North Carolina Pediatric Society  
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Ohio Public Health Association  
Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Oregon Pediatric Society  
Oregon Public Health Association  
Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Public Health Association of Nebraska  
Rhode Island Public Health Association  
Seattle Children's  
Texas Pediatric Society  
Utah Public Health Association  
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Washington Academy of Family Physicians  
Washington Coalition to Protect our Patients  
West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of  
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics  
Wisconsin Public Health Association

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm\\_mortality/firearm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm)