

February 12, 2019

The Honorable Mike Thompson  
231 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Thompson:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and our 38,000 members, I write to express our support for H.R. 8, the “Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019.” This legislation requires a federal background check to be completed for any transfer or sale of a firearm, with certain reasonable exceptions. ACEP thanks you for your leadership on this commonsense effort as we continue working to reduce and eliminate the scourge of firearm violence that has taken so many innocent lives.

As emergency physicians, our highest priority is ensuring the health and safety of the public, and like you, we are saddened and appalled by the current level of intentional and accidental firearms injuries in our country. Mass shootings have inflicted unimaginable horror on our communities, friends, families, and loved ones. Still hundreds of other firearm-related injuries and deaths occur every day, and their toll upon our communities and families is no less tragic. Emergency departments across the U.S. bear witness to this epidemic as we treat victims of firearms-related violence every single day.

Expanding background checks to cover all firearms purchases is a practical step towards addressing our nation’s problem with firearms-related violence, and is an effort supported by most Americans. In fact, ninety percent of Americans support expanding and strengthening the background check system. ACEP policy supports universal background checks for firearms transactions, and we should do all we can to ensure that individuals who cannot pass a background check do not have access to a firearm.

ACEP does not claim to have all the answers needed to solve this ongoing public health crisis; however, we do believe that reasonable, commonsense, and important steps must be taken to address firearms violence and change the status quo. There is no one perfect solution, and we cannot let the perfect be the enemy of the good. Continued inaction is irresponsible and unacceptable.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. ACEP stands ready to help secure enactment of this vital legislation into law, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the health and safety of our communities.

Sincerely,



Vidor Friedman, MD, FACEP  
ACEP President

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