

November 21, 2017

The Honorable John Cornyn
517 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chris Murphy
136 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tim Scott
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Blumenthal
706 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Cornyn, Murphy, Scott, and Blumenthal:

On behalf of the American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP) and our 37,000 members, I write to express our strong support for S. 2135, the “Fix NICS Act of 2017.” This legislation is an important and necessary step towards providing greater accountability in the nation’s background check system to ensure that domestic abusers and other criminals are not able to purchase firearms. We applaud your bipartisan leadership on this critical issue as we continue working to reduce the threat of firearms-related violence that has taken so many innocent lives throughout our country.

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.

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) is a vital program designed to protect our communities by preventing firearms from falling into the hands of those who would do harm. However, the system can only be effective if the necessary records are submitted by states and relevant agencies in a timely and accurate fashion. Unfortunately, as we have seen in far too many shootings, individuals who should not have been able to purchase firearms were able to do so, and subsequently have been able to carry out horrifying attacks on innocent men, women, and children. These systemic failures are unacceptable, and we must do better as a country to prevent such senseless tragedies.

Ensuring that existing laws are enforced is the bare minimum of the state and federal obligation to the public. Your legislation will help guarantee that existing laws are carried out the way they were intended by promoting greater compliance with NICS reporting, creating more stringent accountability measures for agencies that fail to upload relevant records, and ensuring that adequate resources are available to states to prevent felons or domestic abusers from purchasing firearms.

Again, thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We are hopeful that this effort paves the way for further bipartisan collaboration that is desperately needed to address firearms-related violence in the United States. 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,



Paul D. Kivela, MD, MBA, FACEP
ACEP President

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