



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

March 9, 2021

U. S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Representative:

On behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), the national leadership organization of more than 2,200 Catholic health care systems, hospitals, long-term care facilities, sponsors, and related organizations, **I am writing in support of the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 8).**

Catholic health care providers see firsthand every day in our hospital emergency rooms the devastating and long-term effects of gun violence on our communities and families. In the most recent statistics by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2018 alone more than 39,000 people across the United States lost their lives because of firearms. Six out of every ten firearm related deaths are a result of suicide.¹ In addition to this incalculable tragic loss of life, each year gun violence contributes to approximately \$2.8 billion in inpatient and hospital emergency room visits alone.²

The *Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021* would provide an important first step in protecting our communities by expanding the current criminal background checks system to all commercial firearm sales. This would help ensure that individuals with violent criminal records or suffering from mental health crisis are not able to circumvent existing background check requirements whilst providing exceptions to allow for firearm transfers between law enforcement officers, temporarily loaning firearms for sporting and hunting events, providing firearms as gifts to family members or temporarily transferring a firearm for immediate self-defense.

The *Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021* is an important first step in helping protect life and ending the ongoing firearms related public health crisis. I urge you to support this legislation so that we can work together to make our communities safer and healthier.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized.

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Firearm Violence Prevention factsheet, available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/firearms/fastfact.html>

² Gani, F., Sakran, J. V., & Canner, J. K. (2017, October). Emergency Department Visits for Firearm-Related Injuries In The United States, 2006–14. Retrieved March, 2021, from <https://www.healthaffairs.org/doi/pdf/10.1377/hlthaff.2017.0625>