



A Passionate Voice for Compassionate Care

June 15, 2022

U.S. Senate
Washington, DC

Dear Senator:

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, service providers and organizations, I am writing to urge you and your colleagues to move quickly and approve legislation to address the distressing surge in gun violence affecting our nation.

Catholic health care providers too often are at the frontline of our nations ongoing and senseless gun violence. Every day in our hospital emergency rooms, the devastating impact of gun violence and mass shootings can be seen. The tragic loss of life and the related life-long mental health impacts on survivors, is a reality which is seen every day in hospitals across our country. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2020 alone more than 45,000 people across the United States lost their lives because of firearms. 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. This is a profound health, economic and moral crisis.

As CHA recently stated to Congressional leadership, we support several measures to curb gun violence including:

- Requiring completed background checks for the sale or transfer of all firearms, including gun shows and online merchants;
- Providing funding for the CDC to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention;
- Banning the purchase and sale of assault-style weapons;
- Temporarily prohibiting an individual from purchasing or possessing firearms when deemed by a judge to pose a danger to self or others; and
- Banning the purchase and sale of high-capacity ammunition magazines.

The reported bipartisan framework circulating in the Senate partially addresses some of these concerns, including establishing a grant program to encourage states to implement red flag laws, strengthening background checks for those under 21 and preventing gun sales to a broader group of domestic violence offenders. The framework also contains funding for mental health care and school security programs to protect students and expand behavioral intervention programs, as well as measures to expand access through telehealth services. While we strongly encourage you

to continue developing strong legislative proposals to address this issue, we do welcome these initial steps and urge you to move as quickly as possible to approve legislation that can gain the necessary support in the Senate.

CHA acknowledges the many challenges to addressing gun violence through meaningful legislative action, and we thank you for your efforts to overcome those challenges and respond to these terrible and unnecessary tragedies. We will continue to work with you and all members of Congress to find solutions that will allow our communities to live and prosper safely without the fear and devastation caused by the misuse of firearms.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sr. Mary Haddad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sr. Mary Haddad, RSM
President and CEO