

March XX, 2020

The Honorable Nita M. Lowey  
Chairwoman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chairwoman  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human  
Services, Education, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwomen Lowey and DeLauro and Ranking Members Granger and Cole:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2021, **the undersigned \_\_\_ national, state, and local medical, public health, and research organizations write to ask you to provide \$50 million in funding shared evenly between the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention.**

We would like to thank Congress for providing \$25 million for this public health research to the CDC and NIH in FY 2020, and the House for including \$50 million in the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education appropriations bill (H.R. 2740). This initial investment was a crucial step toward applying a public health approach to increasing gun safety and reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths, and continued and expanded investments are essential to the success of this important work.

Firearm-related injuries are a public health crisis that led to 39,740 fatalities in 2018,<sup>i</sup> and this research is an important response to this epidemic. 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. 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.

Over time, this funding can generate needed research into important issues such as 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. However, increased funding is still needed to overcome the decades-long lack of federal funding that set back our response to the public health issue of firearm-related morbidity and mortality.

**Our groups strongly urge the House to increase funding to the CDC and NIH for firearm morbidity and mortality prevention research to a total of \$50 million as part of FY 2021 appropriations.** Continued and expanded funding could support the creation of 10 to 20 new

large multi-year studies and accelerate the rebuilding of a research community that shrank in the decades before Congress restored this federal funding. Robust and sustained 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 that the CDC and NIH are able to adequately fund non-biased, evidence-based 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:**

**State and Local Organizations:**

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<sup>i</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. Accessed February 25, 2020. Available at: [www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars).