



January 9, 2019

The Honorable Michael Thompson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Thompson and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to offer our strong support for the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019 (H.R. 8), legislation just introduced in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress to expand and enhance the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). We applaud your continued efforts to reduce firearms-related violence through common sense legislation. As an organization representing physicians who have first-hand experience with the devastating impact on the health of their patients resulting from firearms-related injuries and deaths, we have a responsibility to be part of the solution in trying to mitigate firearms-related tragedies. We stand ready to work with you to advance this important legislation.

ACP is the largest medical specialty organization and the second largest physician group in the United States. ACP members include 154,000 internal medicine physicians (internists), related subspecialists, and medical students. Internal medicine physicians are specialists who apply scientific knowledge and clinical expertise to the diagnosis, treatment, and compassionate care of adults across the spectrum from health to complex illness.

We remain alarmed by the tragic toll of firearms violence in our neighborhoods, homes, workplaces, and public spaces. Deaths and injuries from firearms are not just a result of mass shootings, they are a daily occurrence; in 2016, more than 38,000 Americans lost their lives to firearms, according to a [report](#) by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; another 81,000 each year on average suffer non-fatal (yet often devastating) injuries from firearms. This issue represents an urgent public health crisis and now is the time to act, on a bipartisan basis, on measures to improve the safety of all Americans.

H.R. 8 would strengthen the accuracy and reporting of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) as well as expand Brady background checks to cover all firearm sales, including unlicensed firearms sellers currently not required to use background checks. With some exceptions, the legislation would also expand background checks to cover all private and commercial firearm transfers and sales, including those at gun shows, over the internet, or in classified ads.

In conclusion, for more than 20 years, we have urged the adoption of [policies](#) to reduce deaths and injuries related to firearms violence. A brief summary of ACP's updated position paper on this issue

can be found [here](#). We remain committed to this endeavor and we call on Congress to pass H.R. 8 as a necessary first step in addressing the public health crisis created by firearms violence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ana María López".

Ana María López, MD, MPH, MACP  
President

CC: House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force