



March 4, 2021

The Honorable Michael Thompson  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Thompson:

On behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP), I am writing to offer our strong support for the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 8), legislation introduced in the 117th 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.

The American College of Physicians is the largest medical specialty organization and the second-largest physician membership society in the United States. ACP members include 163,000 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 2019, 39,707 Americans lost their lives to firearms, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.<sup>1</sup> 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.

The Bipartisan Background Checks Act 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

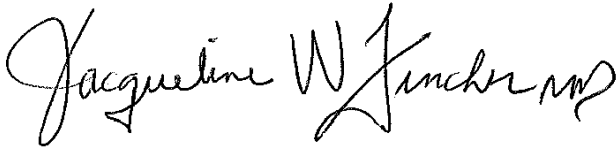
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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2019 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2020. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 1999-2019, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10.html>

use background checks. Examples of gun sales not requiring background checks through NICS include those at gun shows, through the internet, and between private individuals or classified ads. With some exceptions, the legislation would expand background checks to cover all private and commercial firearm transfers and sales. In addition, because gun sellers would now be required to perform background checks for all sales and transfers, gun purchasers would no longer be able to cross state lines to buy firearms in a state with less rigorous background check laws.

In conclusion, for more than 20 years, we ACP has 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 black ink that reads "Jacqueline W. Fincher MD". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jacqueline W. Fincher, MD, MACP  
President

CC: House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force