



January 24, 2019

The Honorable Anthony Brown
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressmen Brown and Fitzpatrick:

I am writing on behalf of the American College of Physicians (ACP) to share our support for H.R. 717, the *Raise the Age Act*, legislation that would prohibit anyone under 21 from buying semi-automatic rifles, with exceptions for active duty personnel and some police officers. We commend you for introducing this bipartisan legislation as a common sense first step as the 116th Congress considers a number of measures to reduce gun violence.

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.

For more than two decades, ACP has advocated for the urgent need for meaningful legislation that would decrease firearms-related injuries and deaths. In October of 2018, we released an updated version of our firearms policy paper [Reducing Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in the U.S.](#) that was originally released in 2014. This paper offered nine evidence-based strategies to reduce firearms-related injuries and deaths by keeping firearms out of the hands of those at risk of harming themselves or others.

One strategy that we recommend to accomplish this goal would be to enact legislation to ban the manufacture, sale, transfer, and subsequent ownership for civilian use of semi-automatic firearms that are designed to increase their rapid killing capacity (often called “assault weapons”) and their large capacity magazines, and retaining the current ban on automatic weapons for civilian use. Only as an interim step toward a complete ban, ACP supports increasing the minimum age to purchase semi-automatic firearms to 21, consistent with the federal requirement for handguns.

We are pleased to support the *Raise the Age Act*, which would raise the age from 18 to 21 for an individual to purchase a semi-automatic rifle, such as an AR-15, that has or can accept a magazine of five rounds or more. It would provide an exemption for active duty military and full time law enforcement officers who wish to purchase a semi-automatic rifle. This legislation

would also include a report requirement for the FBI to submit recommendations on how to improve the Public Access tip line.

We urge the Congress to pass this legislation without delay as a first step toward common sense measures to reduce the threat of violence from semi-automatic weapons. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please do not hesitate to contact Brian Buckley at 202-261-4543 or by email at bbuckley@acponline.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ana María López". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ana María López, MD, MPH, MACP
President