**Sample Letter**

Dear [Legislator’s name or Governor’s name]:

As the governor of the [insert state] chapter of the American College of Physicians, representing [add chapter membership] internal medicine physician specialists and medical students in our state, I am writing on behalf of our chapter to urge action on common-sense laws to reduce injuries and deaths from firearms. Our chapter is part of the American College of Physicians, which nationally represents 163,000 internal medicine physician specialists and medical student members.

Our chapter is very concerned about the toll that the rising number of firearms-related injuries and deaths is having in our state, and nationwide. Nearly 40,000 Americans lose their lives, and another 80,000 are injured, each year from firearms. These include deaths and injuries from firearms used in suicides and attempted suicides, unintentional and negligent shootings, and homicides and attempted homicides, including the rising number of mass shootings in schools, homes, places of worship, workplaces, stores, and streets. As physicians, we see first-hand the devastating impact of such violence on our patients and their families. We are the ones that often have to inform and counsel families that have lost a loved one; we treat survivors of firearms violence who often face lifelong disabilities and trauma, and we treat their family members.

*Many of these deaths and injuries from firearms are preventable if lawmakers would work together to pass meaningful reforms to keep firearms away from those at the greatest and most immediate risk of harming themselves or others, while respecting and preserving second amendment rights.* Specifically, we urge you to support enactment of the following:

* ***Extreme* *Risk Protection Orders* (ERPO)** to empower families, household members, or law enforcement officers to ask a judge to temporarily remove a person’s access to firearms who is found to be at imminent risk of using them to harm themselves or others (also called “red flag” laws).
* **Legislation to close loopholes in the background check system that enable many domestic violence offenders to obtain firearms.** Federal law prohibits abusers who have been convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors and abusers subject to certain domestic violence protective orders from purchasing or possessing firearms. However, **these laws have significant limitations**, in that they do not apply to abusers who victimize non-spouse partners or family members other than a child, and they do not apply to persons with temporary, versus permanent, domestic violence restraining orders. We urge enactment of legislation to close the domestic violence loophole by prohibiting sales and possession of firearms in our state by persons convicted of domestic violence offenses on persons outside of their own household, as well as for any person with a temporary restraining order during the time when the restraining order is in effect.
* ***Child Access Prevention initiatives* to ensure safe storage of firearms.** The presence of unlocked and loaded firearms in homes increases the risk of both unintentional firearms injuries and intentional shootings especially when children are present. We urge the enactment of child access prevention policies that hold firearm owners accountable for the safe storage of firearms by imposing criminal liability on those who negligently store firearms under circumstances where minors could or do gain access to them.

We can no longer sit idly by as the daily toll of firearms-related injuries and deaths continue to rise in our communities. Lawmakers need to step up and enact common sense policies to address this public health threat. I am counting on your support in this effort, and offer our chapter’s assistance in this effort.

Yours truly,

[Insert name]

Governor

[Insert state] Chapter of the American College of Physicians