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NEWTOWN, CT 06470

March, 22, 2021,

Dear Chairman Durbin and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

Gun violence in America is a public health emergency. Homicides have increased by double digits in more than a dozen major cities in 2020. Childhood deaths have risen by 40 percent in 2020 and teenage deaths are up by 37 percent. This past year, the United States experienced 612 mass shootings, a 47 percent increase from 2019. Numerous data points indicate that suicides are on the rise across the country as a growing number of Americans are taking their lives amidst the economic and social distress of Covid-19.

We call on the Senate to immediately **eliminate the filibuster** for up-or-down votes on a set of comprehensive gun violence prevention policies that would dramatically reduce gun deaths and injuries in America. Gun violence prevention measures are highly favored by the majority of Americans therefore the life-saving bills must not be blocked by a group of obstructionists who take money from the gun lobby. Nearly one million Americans have been killed and millions more have been injured by guns since 1994. It's shameful that Congress has not passed a single life-saving gun legislation in 27 years.

Once the filibuster is eliminated, we encourage you to pass legislative proposals that support the principles and policies outlined in [GVpedia's Denver Accord](#). On April 7, 2019, shortly before the 20th anniversary of the mass shooting at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, a coalition of gun violence prevention researchers, advocates, and survivors from around the United States gathered in Denver to honor the lives lost to gun violence and to forge a path toward reducing gun violence.

From this assembly, the Denver Accord was born.

The Denver Accord principles:

1. Guns do not make us safer. Perhaps the most urgent change we must make is to dispel the myth that guns make us safer. A gun in the home TRIPLES the risk of gun suicide and DOUBLES the risk gun homicide. The United States has 393 million firearms in civilian hands and we have the highest rate of assault deaths and mass shootings than any other OECD country.
2. Gun violence in America is a pervasive public health crisis that demands substantial policy solutions and well-funded programs that effectively reduce gun violence. More than 100 people are shot in American every day. About two-thirds of those deaths are suicide—almost all are preventable. We cannot afford to continue to ignore gun violence and the toll it has taken on our country.
3. Equitable and just enforcement of gun laws is paramount. Some communities suffer the ill effects of the gun lobby's dangerous "guns everywhere" agenda more than others. Black and Brown communities

that also suffer from increased causal factors, like poverty, experience violence at rates that would be unthinkable in other places. In recent years, however, the emergence of impacted community-led non legislative approaches have flourished and preliminary data is encouraging.

4. Everyone has the right to live free from violence.

The Denver Accord policy recommendations:

Section I: Put Safety First

LICENSING

- 1.1 Firearm owners must receive a “may issue” permit-to-purchase (license) from law enforcement. “May issue” Permit-to-purchase (PTP) gives discretion to law enforcement for final decision to grant a permit. That decision may be appealed.
- 1.2 All permit-to-purchase applicants shall:
 - 1.2.1. pass a background check through the National Instant Check System (NICS) or by the applicant’s state police (if the State has a Point of Contact system),
 - 1.2.2. be at least 21 years of age,
 - 1.2.3. undergo fingerprinting,
 - 1.2.4. undergo live-fire training, and
 - 1.2.5. undergo substantive, standardized classroom training.
- 1.3 Applicants will be disqualified if they have a history of:
 - 1.3.1. Any violent misdemeanor convictions, or
 - 1.3.2. two or more drug- or alcohol-related convictions within a three year period, or
 - 1.3.3. any convictions for a misdemeanor or felony hate crime, or
 - 1.3.4. any convictions for misdemeanor stalking,
 - 1.3.5. any convictions for misdemeanor domestic or dating violence, or
 - 1.3.6. are subject to ex parte or final domestic or dating violence protective orders.
- 1.4 A permit holder will undergo a waiting period of seven calendar days from the date of purchase to the date of possession.

REGISTRATION

- 2.1. Firearms must be registered to the owner and include the make, model, and serial number of the firearms.
- 2.2. An electronic and searchable firearm registration database will be housed and maintained by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF).

EXTREME RISK PROTECTION ORDER (ERPO)

- 3.1. Order is submitted to a federal database to prevent future purchases of firearms while the order is in effect.
- 3.2. Allow individuals to place themselves under an ERPO.
- 3.3. Allow family, peace officers, and medical professionals to apply for an order.

SAFE STORAGE

- 4.1 Personal Safe Storage
 - 4.1.1. Enact a Federal Child Access Prevention (CAP) law with a felony penalty.
 - 4.1.2. Provide for accountability in all cases of theft or loss in which the firearm owner cannot show proof of safe storage.
 - 4.1.3. Mandate reporting of lost and stolen firearms to reduce gun trafficking.
- 4.2 Federal Firearms License (FFL) Dealers Safe Storage
 - 4.2.1. Mandate standardized security measures including security cameras.
 - 4.2.2. Digitize inventory records (Acquisition and Data Book).

4.2.3. Mandate reporting of lost or stolen firearms to reduce gun trafficking.

4.2.4. Revoke FFL license in cases of substantial failure.

4.2.5. Increase ATF audits of FFLs.

REDUCE FIREARM LETHALITY

5.1 Assault Weapons

5.1.1. Prohibit future sale and transfer of assault style, semi-automatic firearms.

5.1.2. Grandfather existing assault style, semi-automatic weapons under the National Firearms Act.

5.1.3. Prohibit open and concealed carrying of semi-automatic and automatic assault weapons.

5.1.4. Create a federal gun buyback program.

5.2 Short-Barreled Rifles

5.2.1. Revise existing NFA regulations on short-barreled rifles to include bullpup style firearms.

5.2.2. Develop policy to limit high caliber handguns because of their increased lethality.

5.3 Additional Firearm Safety Devices

5.3.1. Incentivize market development of modern security features, like smart guns, through mandated public spending.

5.4 Ghost Guns

5.4.1. Ban gun components from which a firearm without a serial number can be readily manufactured or otherwise assembled.

5.4.2. Ban 3D printing of guns by unlicensed manufacturers or dealers.

5.4.3. Ban distribution of gun blueprints for 3D printers.

5.4.4. Mandate that all firearms must be visible to security screening devices.

5.5 Reduce Ammunition Lethality

5.5.1. Prohibit specific types of ammunition designed to substantially increase lethality, including armor piercing rounds, hydro-shock rounds, fragmenting rounds, and hollow points.

5.5.2. Prohibit the manufacture, sale, transfer, or possession of high-capacity magazines (more than ten rounds in a magazine).

5.5.3. Develop a national ballistic fingerprinting database.

Section II: Let Laws Work

STRENGTHEN AND ENFORCE EXISTING GUN LAWS

6.1. Strengthen The National Instant Check System (NICS)

6.1.1. Require NICS checks for all sales and transfers, including private sales.

6.1.2. Close Default Proceed Loophole (known as the "Charleston Loophole") which forces approval of any outstanding query of NICS after three days.

6.1.3. Include adjudicated mental health records in NICS.

6.1.4. Repeal Tiahrt Amendment which hamstring the ATF and requires the FBI to destroy potential evidence in gun crimes.

6.1.5. Require United States military records to be added to NICS.

6.1.6. Incentivize or mandate timely state reporting to NICS.

6.2 Enforce Current Law

6.2.1. Ensure all firearms are seized and possession rights are forfeited when a person becomes a prohibited purchaser or possessor.

6.2.2. Revoke firearm permits, licenses, and concealed handgun licenses when a person becomes a prohibited purchaser or possessor.

6.2.3. Require judges to inform prohibited purchasers or possessors they are no longer allowed to own firearms after conviction.

- 6.2.4. Improve coordination between local, state, and federal law enforcement and prosecutors to ensure prohibited abusers and people subject to orders prohibiting possession of firearms do not retain illegally possessed firearms.
- 6.2.5. Incentivize states to deter and prosecute individuals who lie on background check forms.
- 6.3 Demand Accountability
 - 6.3.1. Repeal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA).
 - 6.3.2. Create a federal offense of firearm trafficking.
 - 6.3.3. Limit state concealed carry reciprocity to permit-to-purchase states only.
 - 6.3.4. Allow the ATF to maintain a registry on guns, gun owners, and gun sales.
 - 6.3.5. Digitize ATF records.
- 6.4 International
 - 6.4.1. The weapons and ammunition currently controlled under U.S. Munition List Categories I-III should remain under the control of the US State Department.
 - 6.4.2. Address legal export of firearms to countries with known human rights violations through compliance of the Leahy Law.
 - 6.4.3. Demand US ratification of and adherence to the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty.
- 6.5 Repeal the Dickey Amendment and fully fund research into gun violence and gun violence prevention laws.

Section III: Protect Community

REDUCE PRESENCE OF FIREARMS IN PUBLIC SPACES

- 7.1. Allow municipalities discretion to ban concealed or open carry in public spaces, public buildings, and at events, in addition to gun-free zones.
- 7.2. Repeal Stand Your Ground Laws.
- 7.3. Prohibit firearms on public university or school grounds, with exceptions for military, police, ROTC, and shooting teams.

FUND AND PROLIFERATE COMMUNITY BASED SOLUTIONS

- 8.1 Public health, community-located models
 - 8.1.1. Proliferation and funding of focused deterrence models.
 - 8.1.2. Proliferation and funding of violence interruption models.
 - 8.1.3. Study of, and funding for, incentivized mentorship programs.
 - 8.1.4. Fund harm-reduction public education campaigns.
- 8.2 Hospital Based Intervention Programs
 - 8.2.1. Proliferation and funding of Hospital Based Intervention Programs.
 - 8.2.2. Expand trauma-informed care and access to trauma therapy.
 - 8.2.3. Train mental health care providers to emphasize removing lethal means.

POLICE REFORM

- 9.1 Community based policing
 - 9.1.1. Provide incentives for community-based policing and programs.
 - 9.1.2. Shift away from “Broken Window Theory” policing.
- 9.2 Safety
 - 9.2.1. Develop additional non-lethal tools police can deploy instead of a firearm.
 - 9.2.2. Require the reporting of lost or stolen service weapons to ensure accountability.
- 9.3 Education
 - 9.3.1. De-escalation training for law enforcement and Student Resource Officers in schools.
 - 9.3.2. Train police officers in active shooter drills that are not held in the presence of students where child trauma can occur.

9.3.3. Allow for diversion of Student Resource Officer funding to student mental health resources where deemed appropriate by local leaders.

9.3.4. Mandate and increase already existing levels of implicit bias training.

9.4 Accountability

9.4.1. Fund and use body cameras.

9.4.2. Develop standards to ensure accurate data collection on police-involved shootings.

9.4.3. Mandate and fund law enforcement collection and analysis of firearm-related ballistic and trace evidence.

9.4.4. Raise legal standards for justifiable use of lethal force.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to working with you to end the gun violence crisis in our nation.

Sincerely,

Newtown Action Alliance & 44 Allies

Amnesty International USA

Arizonans For Gun Safety

Brady Campaign Stanislaus County

Broward for Progress

Businesses for a Livable Climate

Call to Action Colorado

CatholicNetwork.US

Ceasefire Oregon

Change the Ref, INC

Chi-Town GVP Summit

Citizens for an Engaged Electorate

Coalition for Peace Action

Colorado Businesses for a Livable Climate

Colorado Ceasefire

DemCast USA

Episcopal Peace Fellowship

Faith Community of St. Sabina

Franciscan Action Network

Grandmothers Against Gun Violence

Honor with Action Coalition

Indivisible Marin

indivisible northern nevada

Journey4ward

Mainers for Accountable leadership

Marylanders to Prevent Gun Violence

Monmouth Center for World Religions and Ethical Thought

National Council of Jewish Women Illinois

National Equality Action Team (NEAT)

NCJW Chicago Northshore

Orange Ribbons For Gun Safety

OSF

People for a Safer Society

Physicians for the Prevention of Gun Violence

RapidShift Network
Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia
Stop Handgun Violence
Supermajority
Survivors Lead
The Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus
The Connecticut Effect
The Ethan Miller Song Foundation
Voto Latino
Zero Hour