

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 21, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy,

As you negotiate spending for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, we write to request the inclusion of \$50 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct scientific research on the causes and prevention of gun violence in the United States.

In 2017 — the year for which we have the most recent, complete data — we lost nearly 40,000 lives due to gun violence.<sup>1</sup> It was the largest yearly number of fatalities on record since at least 1968, and the third consecutive year that the rate of firearm deaths increased in the United States.<sup>2</sup>

It has become increasingly clear that gun violence in America is going to continue unabated until Congress takes meaningful action. Since we last wrote to request this funding seven months ago, our country has experienced a string of mass shootings — including two horrific shootings in El Paso and Dayton that left twenty-nine people dead and more than fifty wounded, as well as two heartbreaking shootings in California in just the past week. Each day that passes in which American lives are cut short by preventable violence is a moral failing of this Congress.

We should embrace our responsibility to enact evidence-based solutions to the epidemic of gun violence. While limited research exists, policymakers, healthcare practitioners, and researchers lack comprehensive scientific information about the causes and characteristics of gun violence, which could inform the development of strategies to thwart future tragedies. This appropriations request will allow federally-funded public health researchers to revive a dormant field of study.

The United States government is in a position to establish an integrated public health research agenda to fully understand the causes of gun violence and identify the most effective strategies for prevention. We simply request the funds to do so. On behalf of families across the country, we urge you to recognize gun violence as a public health issue and include funding for the CDC

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<sup>1</sup> Sarah Mervosh, *Nearly 40,000 People Died From Guns in U.S. Last Year, Highest in 50 Years*, N.Y. Times (Dec. 18, 2018), <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/12/18/us/gun-deaths.html>.

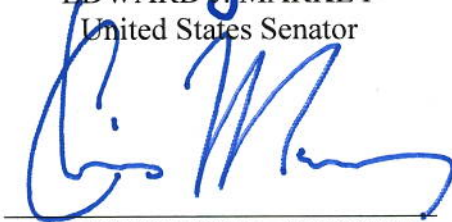
<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

to conduct this important research in any FY 2020 spending agreement. We thank you for your consideration of this request.


Sincerely,

  
EDWARD J. MARKEY  
United States Senator

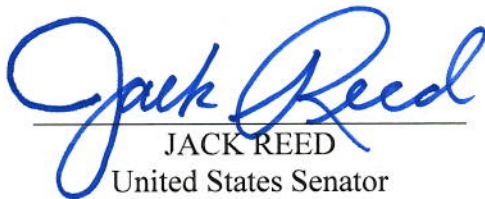
  
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