

Prepared Statement by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa  
Ranking Member, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Hearing on “Protecting America’s Children from Gun Violence”  
Wednesday, June 15, 2022

Like all Americans, I’m truly heartbroken about the violence in recent weeks across America. From Uvalde, Texas to Ames, Iowa, shootings are bringing wrenching pain to communities across the country. The killing of innocent Americans, especially innocent children, is unbearable.

We must work together to pass legislation that will truly change this situation, while protecting constitutional rights. There is so much more we can do to protect America’s children.

First, school safety should remain a top priority. We must do more to intervene when both children and adults show signs of distress and other concerning behavior. I know I’m not alone in being sickened to hear, again and again, that a shooter showed the same predictable signs that they were mobilizing toward violence. We have to intervene.

One vital piece of legislation is the *Luke and Alex School Safety Act*. This bill was named after two victims of the tragic Parkland school shooting. We’re honored to have Alex’s father, Max, here with us today to speak about his advocacy on school safety and carrying on his son’s legacy. The bill provides free information to schools on how to protect themselves.

This bill was recently blocked on the floor by the majority leader, but I’m hoping we can move it forward very soon.

One way that we can help stop violence in schools is to pass the *EAGLES Act*. The *EAGLES Act* is named after the school mascot for Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. I wrote this bill after meeting with the families who lost loved ones during the Parkland shooting and conducting oversight into the failure by the FBI and local law enforcement to act on credible warnings about the shooter. Thank you Max, for supporting this bill.

This is a bipartisan bill that would provide funding to support the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center’s efforts to conduct cutting edge research into the prevention of violence. The bill would also enable the National Threat Assessment Center to train more of our nation’s schools in conducting threat assessments and early interventions.

Unfortunately, this legislation has been stalled during the last two congresses. I’ve pleaded with my colleagues to help move it forward this year. What happened in Parkland, and now in Uvalde, should never be allowed to happen again.

As I’ve stated before, it’s imperative we keep firearms out of the hands of those who should not have them. This can be done through my legislation with Senators Cruz and Tillis, the *Protecting Communities and Preserving the Second Amendment Act of 2021*. This legislation would improve the NICS system by incentivizing and ensuring that relevant records are uploaded in a timely and consistent manner. It

would also strengthen criminal penalties for straw purchasing and lying and buying offenses. If passed, \$20 million per year will be appropriated for five years for NICS improvement.

Mental health has taken a toll on Americans across the country, more so in recent years due to COVID-19 lockdowns. Students were forced to stay home and kept out of the classroom, and uncertainty about the future overwhelmed households and businesses. Mental health issues are also a root cause of many tragedies we see across the country. Any legislation proposed in the Senate that is looking to impact change must include resources to address mental health.

We can't live in a society where violence is tolerated. In terms of violence and crime, our country has seen enough. We must take necessary steps to prevent further acts of violence across our nation. When it comes to saving children's lives, that means combatting gang violence.

While mass shootings often receive national attention, there are countless parents who suffer outside of the spotlight by the terrible ramifications of a nationwide spike in violent crime.

For all those grieving the premature loss of a child or loved one, I cannot pretend to understand what you have gone through. But I'm here to listen. I look forward to discussing policy solutions that keep children safe.

