

March 20, 2021

U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Durbin, Ranking Member Grassley and Members of the Senate Committee on the Judiciary:

SAFE, or Scrubs Addressing the Firearms Epidemic, is a nonprofit organization comprised of healthcare professionals devoted to decreasing firearms injuries and deaths through research, education and evidence-based legislation. SAFE has chapters in over 50 medical schools throughout the United States.

Firearms are a leading cause of death in young adults and children in the United States. The toll is greater than that of motor vehicle accidents. Yet, years ago, motor vehicles caused many more deaths. Public health-driven laws and regulations—speed limits, seat belt laws, airbags, crash tests, teen driving regulations, drunk driving laws, child car seats, and renewal of testing for the elderly—sent the death toll plummeting. Each of these measures was met with objections when they were enacted; they were considered too restrictive, too expensive and too inconvenient. Today, though, cars would not be marketable without these safety features and it is an unusual American who doesn't clip his or her child into a car seat, buckle up and follow the rules of the road.

We at SAFE know that the US can reduce injury and death due to firearms by adopting similar evidence-based, common sense measures for gun ownership. Such measures might include

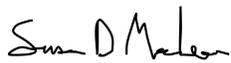
- Comprehensive background checks as in the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021
- Creation of a National Bureau of Firearms Injury Prevention
- Safe storage requirements
- Registration of weapons
- Liability insurance
- Demonstration of proficiency in use of each specific class of owned firearm
- Regular health examination to ensure capacity to safely handle firearms.
- Red flag laws to temporarily remove firearms in unsafe situations.

These measures, today, may sound ambitious, but are not dissimilar to those required for driving a motor vehicle. If enacted, each of these measures has the potential to decrease the physical, social, economic, and psychological toll of firearms in the United States.

In addition, we at SAFE recognize that much more work must be devoted to understanding root causes of gun violence including a culture of fear, systemic racism, inadequate access to mental health care, the opiate crisis, militarization of law enforcement, and, most recently, the despair caused by the ongoing SARS-CoV2 pandemic. No laws or regulations can be expected to completely stem firearms injuries without attention to these underlying societal issues.

SAFE sees firearms injuries and deaths as a public health crisis that continues to grow year after year with too little federal attention. The majority of our country supports sensible gun laws and regulations. We strongly endorse gun safety reforms and will be closely watching the Judiciary Committee's hearing on Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence.

Sincerely yours,



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Secretary, SAFE Board of Directors



Julie Parsonnet, MD
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