



THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to congratulate you and your Administration on the steps you have already taken to address the scourge of gun violence we face in cities across America. These include the Department of Justice's proposed rules to stop the proliferation of ghost guns and clarify that when individuals use accessories to convert pistols into short-barreled rifles, they must comply with the heightened regulations on those dangerous and easily concealable weapons; the Department's publication of a model state red flag law; and the prioritization of gun violence intervention efforts in the various grant programs and increased funding to carry them out. We also applaud the actions announced by the Justice Department on May 26th that will bring together and enlist U.S. Attorneys, the Department's law enforcement agencies and other relevant Department components in a coordinated and comprehensive violent crime reduction initiative.

We believe there are other steps that the federal government is uniquely qualified to take to enhance the efforts already underway. These steps will help to reduce the epidemic of gun violence that we face daily in our cities:

- Continue to use the platform of the Presidency to make reducing gun violence not just a law enforcement priority, but truly a public health imperative. Stressing the importance of root cause analysis and supporting investments in mental health, community health initiatives, our youth – particularly efforts to help them reconnect to school and community in the aftermath of the pandemic – as well as support for proven efforts to help returning residents transition back into communities from incarceration are all crucial. These and other efforts to build peaceful and vibrant neighborhoods are essential and the effective use of soft power interventions. As you know well, we cannot police our way out of this problem, but saying it is not good enough. As a nation, we need to take concrete, tangible steps and as our leader, your voice is critically important in this fight.
- It is important that your Administration continue to take a leadership role in enacting meaningful and common-sense gun control legislation. We are clear-eyed about the political challenges, but now more than ever, we need to continue this hard but necessary work. So many cities and towns are now dots on a map of mass shootings that could have been prevented if there was a federal web of uniform laws on background checks, eliminating access to guns for those who have a demonstrated history of mental illness or other disqualifying conditions, just to name a few. The challenges that cities and states face around the proliferation of crime guns do not respect geographic boundaries, and require a federal set of laws. Here are some specific steps that must be taken:

- We need universal background checks and closure of simple loopholes, a ban on assault weapons, and policies that keep guns out of the hands of people who are dangerous to themselves and others as well as promote gun safety.
- Additionally, adequate federal enforcement of existing laws is critical, including supporting federal efforts to investigate federally licensed gun dealers, including the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) which has been constrained by the gun lobby. Illegal gun trafficking market originating in other states and ending up on the streets of cities like Chicago, Detroit, Baltimore, St. Louis and others is a significant source of the gun violence in these and other cities. Interstate gun trafficking requires a federal focus. It can never be adequately addressed by local law enforcement alone and requires sufficient staffing.
- Additionally, every day, on social media platforms, illegal gun sales are happening among criminals. Here again, local law enforcement has limited tools to address this significant threat. There needs to be both regulatory and enforcement actions to bring accountability to these social media platforms that often ignore the problem entirely and make it difficult for local law enforcement to stop these illegal sales. The weight of the federal government is needed to elevate this issue and demand a level of accountability that will keep our residents safe.
- Finally, we urge this Administration to authorize the provision of resources for the purchase of National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBN) machines and staffing for more firearms examiners. These two elements would be important and worthwhile investments.

We stand ready to work with you and Vice President Harris, Ambassador Susan Rice and Attorney General Merrick Garland to see these actions implemented as quickly as possible and this administrative and legislative agenda achieved.

Sincerely,

Nan Whaley
Mayor of Dayton
President

Lori E. Lightfoot
Mayor of Chicago
Chair, Criminal and Social
Justice Committee

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director

Steve Adler
Mayor of Austin

Muriel Bowser
Mayor of Washington, DC

London Breed
Mayor of San Francisco

Jane Castor
Mayor of Tampa

Bill de Blasio
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