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May 26, 2022

The Honorable Mike Thompson
United States House of Representatives
260 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

HOUSE RESOLUTION 8 (THOMPSON)
SUPPORT

Dear Congressman Thompson:

The Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office is pleased to support House Resolution 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021.

Gun violence in the United States is a national health emergency. Each year tens of thousands of individuals are killed and injured as a result of gun violence. According to the most recent report from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Health Statistics, there were over 38,000 firearm related deaths in the United States in 2018. The rate of firearm deaths per 100,000 people has risen from 10.3 per 100,000 in 1999 to 12 per 100,000 in 2017. On average there are more than 110 people dying per day from firearm related injuries.

We know common-sense gun laws work. On May 27, 2022, the Los Angeles Times reported:

In 2005, California had almost the same rate of deaths from guns as Florida or Texas. California had 9.5 firearms deaths per 100,000 people that year, Florida had 10 and Texas 11, according to data from the National Center for Health Statistics.

Since then, California repeatedly has tightened its gun laws, while Florida and Texas have moved in the opposite direction.

California's rate of gun deaths has declined by 10% since 2005, even as the national rate has climbed in recent years. And Texas and Florida? Their rates of gun deaths have climbed 28% and 37% respectively. California now has one of the 10 lowest rates of gun deaths in the nation. Texas and Florida are headed in the wrong direction.

In order to combat the epidemic of gun violence in this country, H.R. 8 would establish a new federal background check requirement for firearm transfers between private parties (i.e., individuals who are not federally licensed as gun professionals). Specifically, H.R. 8 prohibits a firearm transfer between private parties unless a licensed gun dealer, manufacturer, or importer, first takes possession of the firearm while conducting a background check.

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While federal law requires background checks for all gun sales by licensed gun dealers, it does not require background checks for guns sold by unlicensed sellers, like non-dealers who sell guns online or at gun shows. This loophole enables people with felony convictions, domestic violence restraining orders, and other people who are legally prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm to buy guns with no questions asked. The loophole should be closed immediately so background checks would be required for all gun sales—not just on the sale of firearms from licensed gun dealers.

Twenty-one states and the District of Columbia have closed this loophole by requiring background checks on all handgun sales. It is time for Congress to act.

Very truly yours,



GEORGE GASCÓN
District Attorney