



MAJOR CITIES CHIEFS ASSOCIATION

March 5, 2021

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The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Republican Leader McCarthy,

I'm writing on behalf of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA), a professional organization of police executives representing the largest cities in the United States and Canada. The MCCA strongly supports H.R. 8/S.B. 529, the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021/Background Check Expansion Act*. The Association has been a strong advocate for sensible gun policy for many years. Instituting universal background checks is a core tenant of the MCCA's Firearms Violence Policy, which our membership approved in 2018.

Since 1993, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has conducted firearm background checks on gun purchasers. Federally licensed dealers must run a check through NICS to determine whether a potential buyer is prohibited from purchasing firearms. If information in NICS shows that a person is indeed prohibited, the dealer must deny the sale. However, there is a loophole in federal law, and no background check is required for sales at gun shows, through online marketplaces, or between private individuals. Individuals who would otherwise be prohibited from purchasing or possessing a gun can easily buy guns through such unregulated sales.

H.R. 8/S.B. 529 would require a background check on every sale, ensuring that people prohibited from purchasing firearms cannot exploit loopholes and purchase guns through an unregulated sale at a gun show, online, or from an unlicensed seller. In addition, individuals would no longer be able to cross state lines solely to purchase a firearm in a state with less stringent background checks. Closing these background check loopholes is critical to reducing gun violence throughout the United States.

Many MCCA members are experiencing a significant uptick in gun violence in their cities. The MCCA's most recent Violent Crime Survey, which showed a nationwide rise in both homicides and aggravated assaults in 2020, supports these reports.¹ Ensuring background checks for all gun sales and transfers will save lives by helping keep firearms out of the hands of those who are not permitted to have them under the law. It will also be a critical step in combatting the epidemic of gun violence currently plaguing our country.

Gun violence is more than just a public safety issue; it's an officer safety issue as well. MCCA members, and law enforcement agencies all across the country, have had far too many officers killed or wounded in the line of duty by individuals who should have been prohibited from purchasing a firearm. We must enact policies at the national level to help ensure these brave men and women return home safely after their shifts.

The MCCA urges Congress to pass H.R. 8/S.B. 529, the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021/Background Check Expansion Act*, as soon as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact me at art.acevedo@houstonpolice.org if the MCCA can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Chief Art Acevedo
Chief, Houston Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association

¹ <https://majorcitieschiefs.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/MCCA-Violent-Crime-Report-2020-and-2019-Year-End-Final.pdf>