

June 21, 2022

U.S. Senate
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515



John Baackes

Chief Executive Officer

Dear Senators and Representatives:

Earlier this month, an 18-year old, armed with a military-style semiautomatic rifle entered an elementary school and murdered 19 children and two teachers. These fourth graders—in the final week of classes -- were horrifically and senselessly massacred - cut down in the dawn of their young lives. Only hours before, some of these innocent victims were rejoicing with their families at the school's honor roll ceremony. Unfortunately, this tragedy is just one of so many mass shootings occurring on a daily basis, not only in schools, but throughout all of our communities— in places of worship, festivals, night clubs and other locations, all because guns were easily accessible and placed into the hands of the wrong person. We must be united in our efforts to halt the continued massacre of innocent lives. No more hashtags. No more media headlines. No more short-lived outrage. No more moments of silence. No more empty promises and inaction. We need meaningful change and we need it now!

L.A. Care Health Plan - the nation's largest publicly operated health plan with more than 2.5 million Medicaid, Cal MediConnect (Dual Eligibles), PASC- SEIU Homecare Workers, and state-based marketplace enrollees throughout Los Angeles County, implores Congress to finally pass much-needed gun safety legislation that promotes common sense gun safety measures and increased access to mental health services. In the wake of horrific mass shootings, suicides, and homicides occurring throughout the United States on a daily basis, it is clear there is a public health crisis occurring throughout this county. L.A. Care feels a deep responsibility to take a community leadership role in advocating for responsible gun safety laws and expanded resources for mental health.

California has done significant work in passing state laws that have reduced gun violence including the prohibition of assault weapons, a Red Flag law, a 10-day waiting period for all gun purchases, universal background checks, mental health reporting requirements, and increased age restrictions to purchase guns, but California can't do this alone. A recently released study by the Violence Prevention Research Program at the University of California-Davis showed that California's six-year-old law on gun violence restraining orders resulted in disarming 56 people who were threatening a gun massacre. We urge you to look at the laws enacted by California as an example of what also could be done at the congressional level to protect all of our citizens.



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Bipartisanship has never been more important than now! If the framework announced by the Senate is enacted into law, it will be the most significant piece of gun safety legislation to make it through Congress in more than 25 years. We thank this bipartisan coalition, led by Senators Murphy and Cornyn, for their efforts to address the gun violence crisis in our country and we call on their colleagues to stand up and vote yes on gun safety legislation and improved mental health services, so that a bill can go to the Senate floor, and the House and Senate can then work together to finalize policies that are more than just rhetoric. And please let this just be the start of a sustained and comprehensive effort to reverse this public health tragedy.

It is time to bring meaningful action to reduce gun violence and improve mental health resources throughout the United States. We ask Congress to honor the victims and survivors of gun violence with long overdue action.

Sincerely,



Chief Executive Officer

