



THE COALITION TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

February 6, 2019

Chairwoman Eddie Bernice Johnson
2321 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Johnson,

Thank you for introducing this vitally important piece of legislation. Gun violence is a public health epidemic that requires a public health solution -- and research is at the heart of public health. On behalf of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, I write in in strong support of H.R. 435, the National Gun Violence Research Act.

In 2017, nearly 40,000 Americans died by firearms and more than 100,000 were injured. Our country is in the midst of a public health crisis. Gun violence affects every state, every community, and all socioeconomic groups. Yet, there is no coordinated national research program to better understand gun violence and the evidence-based solutions that can reduce firearm-injury and death. H.R. 435 will ameliorate this problem.

H.R. 435 will create a National Gun Violence Research Program to improve public health and safety by awarding grants for and supporting projects on gun violence research, establishing interdisciplinary research centers, supporting education and training of students in gun violence research, and promoting the development of gun safety technical standards.

Compared to other leading causes of death, gun violence is the least researched and second least funded cause of death, just after falls.¹ Gun violence research received only \$22.1 million in federal funding from 2004-2014 and in 2014 alone, there were fewer than 90 scientific articles on the topic. In comparison, there were 5,000 articles published on influenza in 2014. The number of Americans killed and injured by guns simply is not proportional to how little we are investing in prevention and policy research. By awarding grants and supporting projects for gun violence research, H.R. 435 will inform us on how to best combat our gun violence epidemic.

Gun violence comes in many forms -- suicide, homicide, unintentional injuries and deaths, self-defense, and trafficking, among others. As such, there is no single solution to gun violence. H.R. 435 takes a much-needed comprehensive, multidisciplinary approach to gun violence research.

Today, there are approximately 30 dedicated gun violence policy researchers in the U.S. There are so few researchers because there are no government training grants available to fund doctoral students and postdocs in gun policy research. This is not the case in other injury prevention and policy fields. Without government funding for research, young researchers are deterred from joining the gun violence policy field. By supporting the education and training of students in gun

¹ Stark DE, Shah NH. Funding and Publication of Research on Gun Violence and Other Leading Causes of Death. *JAMA*. 2017;317(1):84–85. doi:10.1001/jama.2016.16215



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violence research, there will be a new class of gun violence researchers dedicated to solving this public health epidemic.

Establishing a coordinated research program and agenda will help prevent gun deaths and injuries and translate research into effective interventions through policy and practice. Robust public health research has contributed to lifesaving breakthroughs, such as reducing fatalities due to motor vehicle accidents, drowning, fires, and tobacco use. H.R. 435 will fill an obvious void and do the same for gun violence. It is time to address our gun violence problem and formulate research-driven solutions to save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Josh Horwitz', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Josh Horwitz
Executive Director