



CITY OF HOUSTON

Houston Police Department

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November 29, 2017

Art Acevedo
Chief of Police



The Honorable Chuck Grassley, Chairman
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Ranking Member
Committee of the Judiciary
U.S. Senate
Washington D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Grassley and Ranking Member Feinstein:

As the Chief of Police in Houston, I see first-hand the bloodshed and death toll from gun violence. Recent horrible events in Texas and Nevada serve as grim reminders that we have not done enough to prevent gun violence in America. While I am sorry I cannot attend your planned hearing, I serve as the First Vice President of Major Cities Chiefs and ask that you also enter this letter into the record.

The mass shooting in Texas is an ugly and tragic example of the need to strengthen our system of background checks. That's why I am supporting the measure introduced by Senator Cornyn and I urge the Committee to move his bill forward. The proposed legislation seeks to make current law work better by strengthening procedures. But we should not stop there as much more can be done to prevent the public from gun violence. This measure alone does not go far enough to stop what recently happened in Texas and the many, many senseless mass shootings that preceded our own tragedy.

Universal Background Check: The mass shooting in Texas represents a renewed call for the Universal Background Check that Congress has failed to adopt in the past. Much has been said about how the Texas gunman would have been precluded from the store purchase if the background system had worked correctly. But what would have stopped him from buying the same weapons at the next gun show? It's a disservice to the public to conduct background checks only in some cases, but not for all of them.

"Bump Stocks": Another common-sense measure is a ban on "bump stocks" and similar accessories that replicate fully automatic weapons fire. Such features result in a number of shots fired that causes the carnage we witnessed in Las Vegas. Like other law enforcement officials, I have studied the Las Vegas slaughter and concluded that there is no reasonable sporting or hunting purpose served by deadly devices that simulate military weapons capabilities. I was seated next to the ATF Director at a recent meeting of Major Cities Chiefs when he advised the Chiefs that new legislation will be required.

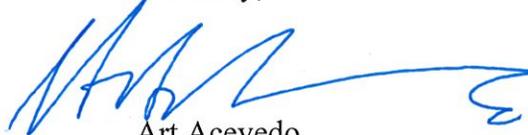


Concealed Weapons: Each State has carefully crafted its own laws relating to concealed weapons. While Congress has heretofore respected the Constitutional sovereignty of the States, there is legislation now pending that would undermine the authority of State laws relating to carrying of weapons. We strongly urge Congress to reject the misguided and impractical proposal for reciprocity. As police officers could not be expected to recognize legitimate or forged permits from thousands of jurisdictions, it would be impossible to determine which persons are authorized to carry a concealed weapon.

Silencers: Legislation to deregulate silencers is ill-advised because it would further threaten public safety. These devices were invented for killing and stealth. Once widespread, hunters would be unable to hear nearby gunfire and thus be endangered. Gunshot detection systems in urban areas would be thwarted. Worst of all, the proposed legislation would permit criminals to purchase and possess silencers without any screening requirements. There is simply no legitimate justification for a measure that would further endanger the public.

Our Duty to Protect: Like those of us who wear a badge, members of Congress share our solemn duty to protect the public. The recent tragedies in Texas and Nevada should be recognized by Congress as cries for help from past and future innocent victims of gun violence. Chiefs of Police and Sheriffs join these victims in asking you to act now to prevent more death and bloodshed. We turn to you for courage and leadership to consider multiple steps and measures to curb the ongoing threat of gun violence in America.

Sincerely,



Art Acevedo
Chief of Police

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