



# AMERICAN ACADEMY OF NURSING

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January 30, 2013

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

The American Academy of Nursing is pleased to endorse the *Assault Weapons Ban of 2013*. The Academy serves the public and the nursing profession by advancing health policy and practice through creating, synthesizing and disseminating nursing knowledge. Every day across America, the Academy and its members develop initiatives to drive reform of America's health care system. Every day across America, 34 Americans are murdered by gun violence.

Firearm related mortality and morbidity in the United States is a significant public health problem, accounting for over 30,000 preventable deaths a year.<sup>1</sup> The health implications of illegal gun use are staggering. The total costs of fatal and nonfatal firearm injuries is over \$37 billion per year, according to 2005 information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A 1999 study noted that nearly half of the health systems costs related to firearm injuries are borne by US taxpayers.<sup>2</sup>

It is estimated that restricting firearm access could reduce suicide and homicide deaths by more than 25%.<sup>3</sup> Conversely, access to a firearm increases a battered women's odds of being killed by her abuser by more than 5 times.<sup>4</sup> In 2007, more preschoolers under age 5 died by gunfire (85 children) than law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty (57 officers).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1Murphy SL, Xu JQ, Kochanek KD. Deaths: Preliminary data for 2010. National vital statistics reports; vol 60 no 4. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2012.

<sup>2</sup> 2Cook PJ, Lawrence BA, Ludwig J, Miller TR. The Medical Costs of Gunshot Injuries in the United States. JAMA. 1999;282(5):447-454. doi:10.1001/jama.282.5.447.

<sup>3</sup> 4Fotios C. P, Alkistis S, Theodoros NS, Spyros K, Lisa E, Eleni T. (2009). Preventing suicide and homicide in the United States: The potential benefit in human lives, *Psychiatry Research*, 169(2), 154-158.

<sup>4</sup> Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A Gary, F., Glass, N., McFarlane, J., Sachs, C., Sharps, P., Ulrich, Y., Wilt, S., Manganello, J., Xiao, X., Schollenberger, J., Frye, V., & Laughon, K. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multi-site case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1089-1097.

<sup>5</sup> Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence <http://www.bradycampaign.org>

Given the ongoing toll of gun violence in the United States through suicide, homicides and accidental shootings, the American Academy of Nursing supports:

1. Creating a universal system for background checks designed to highlight an applicant's history of dangerousness and require that all purchasers of firearms complete a background check.
2. Strengthening laws so that high-risk individuals, including those with emergency, temporary, or permanent protective or restraining orders or those with convictions for family violence, domestic violence and/or stalking are prohibited from purchasing firearms.
3. Banning the future sale, importation, manufacture, or transfer of assault weapons, incorporating a more carefully crafted definition of the term "semiautomatic assault weapon" to reduce the risk that the law can be evaded.
4. Banning the future sale, importation, manufacture, or transfer of large capacity (greater than 10 rounds) ammunition magazines.
5. Ensuring that health care professionals are unencumbered and fully permitted to fulfill their role in preventing firearm injuries by health screening, patient counseling, and referral to mental health services for those with high risk danger behaviors.
6. Focusing federal restrictions of gun purchase for persons on the dangerousness of the individual and fully funding federal incentives for states to provide information about dangerous histories to the National Instant Check System for gun buyers.
7. Supporting enriched training of health care professionals to assume a greater role in preventing firearm injuries by health screening.
8. Researching the causes of and solutions to firearm violence.

The American Academy of Nursing applauds your leadership in fighting this national health crisis. Please do not hesitate to contact me ([Cheryl\\_Sullivan@AANnet.org](mailto:Cheryl_Sullivan@AANnet.org)); the co-chairs of the Academy's Expert Panel on Psychiatric, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Michael Rice ([mjrice@unmc.edu](mailto:mjrice@unmc.edu)) and Linda Beeber ([beeber@email.unc.edu](mailto:beeber@email.unc.edu)); or the co-chairs of the Academy's Expert Panel on Violence, Kathryn Laughon ([klc6e@virginia.edu](mailto:klc6e@virginia.edu)) and Angela Amar ([aamar@emory.edu](mailto:aamar@emory.edu)).

Sincerely,



Joanne Disch, PhD, RN, FAAN  
President  
American Academy of Nursing



Cheryl G. Sullivan, MSES  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Academy of Nursing