



March 22, 2021

Senator Richard J. Durbin
Chair
United State Senate Committee on the Judiciary
224 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Durbin,

On behalf of Prevention institute, we submit this statement for the record for the Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on Constitutional and Common Sense Steps to Reduce Gun Violence on March 23, 2021. Prevention Institute is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, safety, and wellbeing through thriving, equitable communities. We have championed a public health approach to preventing multiple forms of violence—including gun violence—since our founding in 1997.

Prevention Institute understands that gun violence and its associated traumas are a public health crisis, and that Congress must therefore enact meaningful legislation to reduce gun violence in our communities. We strongly support S. 529 (requiring a background check for every firearm sale) and S. 591 (prohibiting firearms dealers from selling a firearm prior to the completion of a background check).

Prevention Institute works with communities throughout the country that are reducing gun violence through public health prevention approaches that address risk factors associated with gun violence and bolster resilience in individuals, families, and communities. A public health approach addresses the roots of gun violence—including structural racism, and other forms of structural violence—to change the underlying conditions that contribute to multiple forms of violence in homes, schools, and neighborhoods.

Our support for universal and enhanced background checks comes from our knowledge that gun violence is preventable, not inevitable. The deaths of Soon Chung Park (74), Hyun Jung Grant (51), Suncha Kim (69), Yong Yue (63), Delaina Ashley Yaun (33), Paul Andre Michels (54), Xiaojie Tan (49), and Daoyou Feng (44) in Atlanta on March 16th are a tragic reminder of what can happen when society fails to address the convergence of hate-motivated violence and easy access to firearms.

Gun violence is a complex public health issue and one program or policy alone is not sufficient. However, by adopting comprehensive public health strategies and solutions, we can achieve safety in our homes, schools, and communities. Enacting universal background checks is an important next step. We strongly urge passage of S. 529 and S. 591 as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sana Chehimi".

Sana Chehimi, MPH
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