

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 21, 2018

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Chairman
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Committee on Health, Education, Labor
and Pensions
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, District of Columbia 20510

Dear Senators Alexander and Murray,

On February 14, 2018, America witnessed one of the deadliest mass shootings in our nation's history when fourteen students and three faculty members were killed at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The shooting was a sober reminder that mass shootings, including school shootings, and gun violence more broadly, are persistent threats that affect children, teachers, and families across this country.

According to the New York Times, since December 2012, when 20 first graders and six adults were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary, there have been at least 239 school shootings.¹ These shootings have left 138 dead and thousands of students, families, and communities traumatized.² These young lives were taken far too soon, as a result of a preventable tragedy. These statistics are emblematic of our country's larger epidemic of gun violence. A recent study in *Pediatrics* found that on average, almost 1,300 children die each year from gun-related injuries.³ Out of all children and youth ages 0 to 24 killed by firearms in countries participating in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), over 90 percent are in the United States.⁴

In the aftermath of the Parkland shooting, students at Marjory Stoneman Douglas and across the country have organized in their communities to try to bring about change. In the words of student Emma Gonzales, *"If us students have learned anything, it's that if you don't study, you will fail. And in this case if you actively do nothing, people continually end up dead, so it's time to start doing something."*⁵ It is time for Congress to start doing something.

As Senators, it is our responsibility to address gun violence like the public health crisis that it is, investigate the causes of these deadly acts of violence and hatred, and make policy changes to ensure that they no longer happen. Doing so necessitates hearing from survivors of gun violence and others who have been affected, including students, parents, and teachers. It also requires

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/15/us/school-shootings-sandy-hook-parkland.html>

² <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/02/15/us/school-shootings-sandy-hook-parkland.html>

³ <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/06/15/peds.2016-3486>

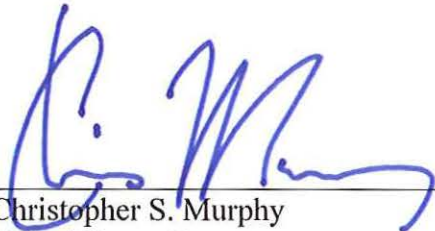
⁴ [http://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343\(15\)01030-X/pdf](http://www.amjmed.com/article/S0002-9343(15)01030-X/pdf)


⁵ <https://www.cnn.com/2018/02/17/us/florida-student-emma-gonzalez-speech/index.html>


hearing from experts who can speak to how public health research and interventions could support our efforts to end school shootings in this country.


Therefore, we request that you hold a hearing as soon as possible to examine the causes and remedies for mass shootings, including school shootings, across the country. Thank you for your consideration to this important topic.


Sincerely,

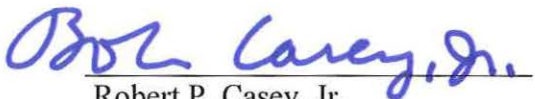

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United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator

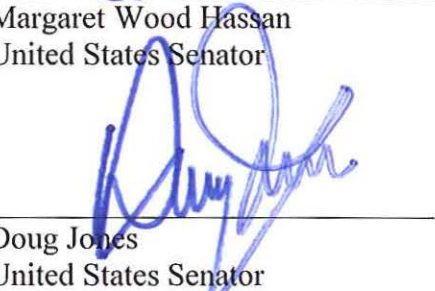

Tina Smith
United States Senator

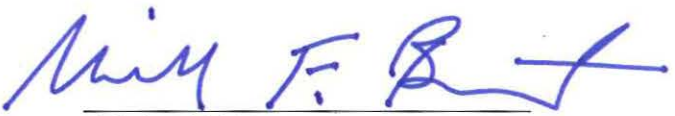

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Robert P. Casey, Jr.
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