August 5, 2019

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Democratic Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Republican Leader McCarthy,

The American Academy of Nursing (Academy) is heartbroken and enraged by the two tragic acts and senseless loss of life that occurred this weekend in less than 24 hours of each other. The Academy serves the public by advancing health policy through nursing knowledge. Gun violence and mass shootings are public health crises that demand immediate attention. Nurses have the responsibility to care for the injured and the vulnerable within impacted communities and those who fear violence may come to their hometown. Academy fellows are leaders in practice, education, policy, and research who are committed to working with Congress to find solutions that work.

For many years, our organization has consistently written to Congress and engaged with our colleagues in the healthcare community to call for action. The evidence is clear—mass shootings and gun violence affect the public’s health.1 The debate on the best action has gone on for decades and while measures have been taken, they are clearly not enough to address the rising numbers of death in our country. Only 216 days into 2019, there has been 250 mass shootings, more than any industrialized nation.2 This is not a statistic that should be acceptable for the United States of America.

The Academy will keep its request simple for clarity of action. We urge the Senate to act by passing the Background Check Expansion Act (S.42). A version of this legislation was passed in the House and we ask that the Senate do the same.3

Additionally, we call on the Senate to follow suit and provide increased funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, which is responsible for leading research on violence prevention. The House provided $50 million ($25 million for the Centers for

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for Disease Control and Prevention and $25 million for the National Institutes of Health) in its Fiscal Year 2020 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and Related Agencies Appropriations bill to specifically support firearm injury and mortality prevention research. To reexamine public health policies, funding is needed to conduct national research and public health surveillance on firearm-related injuries.

The Academy stands ready to engage in policies taken up at the federal level to prevent gun violence and mass shootings in our nation. Please call on our experts in violence prevention, toxic stress, public health, and care across the life span. If the Academy can be of any assistance to you or your staff, please do not hesitate to contact the Academy’s Strategic Outreach Manager, Ellie Cook, at ecook@AANnet.org or at 202-777-1175.

Sincerely,

Karen Cox, PhD, RN, FACHE, FAAN
President

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