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December 14, 2017

The Honorable Stephanie Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
1237 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Murphy:

On behalf of the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) and our more than 42,000 members, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 1478, the Gun Violence Research Act. This important legislation will help clarify the federal government's role in sponsoring research into gun violence.

As you know, the epidemic of gun violence in the United States has reached epic proportions. Nearly 90 Americans are killed by guns every day, with another 200 suffering non-lethal injuries. Recent mass shootings in Texas, California, Nevada and South Carolina are further evidence of the escalation of this carnage. Moreover, guns are involved in nearly half of all suicide attempts in the US, resulting in a near-95 percent fatality rate and 22,000 deaths annually. By comparison, suicide attempts by overdose are successful just 1.5 percent of the time. As emergency nurses, our members are on the front lines of this epidemic and witness firsthand the devastating effects gun violence has on victims and their families.

Since 1996, the so-called "Dickey Amendment" has had the effect of restricting the ability of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), primarily through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), to sponsor evidence-based research into the causes of gun violence as well as strategies to reduce injuries and fatalities resulting from guns. To address the myriad issues associated with gun violence, we must first understand why these events occur and evaluate strategies to reduce gun-related fatalities and injuries. This can only be done through the kind of evidence-based research sponsored by HHS through the CDC, NIH and its other agencies.

The Gun Violence Research Act will ensure that future appropriations bills will not prevent federal funding from sponsoring research exploring the root causes and mitigation strategies for gun violence, an epidemic that claims around 33,000 American lives annually.

As professionals on the frontlines of our nation's health care system, emergency nurses are critical to providing lifesaving emergency care, including to victims of gun violence. We would like to thank you for introducing this legislation and your leadership on this critical issue. If you have any questions, please contact ENA's Chief Government Relations Officer, Richard Mereu, at 202-741-9373.

Sincerely,

Karen Wiley, MSN, RN, CEN
2017 ENA President