



May 26, 2022

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(2021-2022/v12)

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), we call on you to immediately do everything in your power to live up to the promises you make to voters every election year. Your urgent, personal intervention is needed to stem the endless massacres of our fellow Americans and school children by gunfire. Following the most recent school shooting Tuesday at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, the [second-deadliest school shooting](#) in U.S. history, and the increase in gun violence across the country.

LULAC is the nation's largest and oldest Latino civil rights volunteer-based organization that empowers Hispanic Americans and builds strong Latino communities. We have a LULAC council and members in Uvalde. LULAC denounces the national epidemic of hate speech and gun violence, which ultimately contributed to the tragedy in Uvalde on Tuesday, May 24, which marks the [27th school shooting](#) this year alone.

Armed with assault weapons, the gunman killed at least 19 children and two educators on Tuesday at Robb Elementary School in the deadliest school shooting since 20 children and six educators were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut. Nearly 600 students are enrolled in Robb Elementary School, a predominantly Hispanic school around 85 miles west of the city of San Antonio. [90 percent](#) of the students are Hispanic and more than [four-fifths](#) economically disadvantaged. Gun violence should not be a norm anywhere. Our children deserve better. Our country deserves better.

Whether it be through hate-motivated violence, city gun violence, police violence, or firearm suicide, Latino and Hispanic communities remain among the most severely threatened groups. Gun violence also reaps generational

cycles of unacknowledged trauma throughout these communities, where conversations about mental health are still stigmatized, further deepening the devastating impact of this crisis.

The 2019 shooting at a local Walmart in El Paso, Texas, which killed 22 and injured 26, was then the third deadliest shooting in Texas history, and the seventh deadliest in modern U.S. history. I personally went to visit some of the victims at El Paso hospitals one day after the shooting. The pain both physical and mental was devastating. That murderer, another 18-year-old, drove over 600 miles from home to kill innocent people.

Including this latest tragedy, [four out of the ten deadliest](#) mass shootings in modern U.S. history have taken place within the state of Texas. The 18-year-old suspect in the Uvalde, Texas school shooting had a handgun, an AR-15 semi-automatic rifle and high-capacity magazines, according to investigators. Both the El Paso, TX shooter, and the Dayton, OH shooter, who massacred nine people mere hours after the attack in El Paso, purchased their weapons legally in Texas. LULAC demands Congress pass stricter gun legislation to protect fellow Americans, our children, and prevent mass shootings fueled by hateful, racism animus. In Texas, as in most of the country, you have to be 21 or older to drink alcohol or buy cannabis. **LULAC calls on Congress to pass legislation raising the age to 21 for persons to buy military assault high capacity weapons.**

Congress has not had a serious debate on gun violence prevention measures since 2012, after a 20-year-old gunman killed 20 children and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. LULAC calls on Congress to take decisive action in response to this week's school shooting in Uvalde, Texas. Action is needed especially now as firearms have overtaken auto accidents as the [leading cause of death](#) in children. Studies have shown that [firearm violence increased](#) during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. On November 5, 2017 at Sutherland Springs Church 26 people were killed and 22 wounded also by one gunman with assault weapons. Common sense background checks also could save lives.

LULAC stands with its people in their resilience and determination to heal, while remembering and heeding the past. Gun violence of this vein must be cured through firm legislation that guarantees the safety and security of all Americans. The moment is now for Congress to pass the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act*.

Current law requires federally licensed firearms dealers to request background checks on buyers for most sales of firearms. The *Bipartisan Background Checks Act* would require all sellers of firearms to request such checks, except in certain cases. Under the bill's provisions, most sales of firearms by people who are not federally licensed firearms dealers at gun shows or through online transactions would require background checks on potential buyers.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) performs background checks on behalf of the firearms dealers through the agency's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The NICS is an effective tool to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and other dangerous individuals and has blocked millions of illegal gun purchases in the past two decades. In recent years, the FBI has completed about 26 million such checks annually, on average.

Enacting the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act* would result in more firearms sales that require background checks. Based on a 2017 study of the prevalence of such background checks, the Congressional Budget Office (CBO) estimates that implementing the act would lead to roughly 3 million additional checks annually, an increase of about 10 percent.

LULAC remains committed to this endeavor and we call on Congress to immediately pass the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act* and send the bill to the President's desk as necessary first steps in addressing the public health crisis created by firearm violence. We support the second amendment but common sense safety regulations will protect Americans from their misuse by criminals.

For more information, or should you have any questions, please contact Art Motta, LULAC National Director of Policy, by email at AMotta@LULAC.org or by phone at 202-833-613.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Together We Rise,



Domingo Garcia
LULAC National President



Sindy M. Benavides
LULAC National Chief Executive Officer