



June 4, 2019

**Re: Amnesty International USA Urges the Senate to pass  
The Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S. 184)**

Dear Senator:

On behalf of Amnesty International USA (“AIUSA”) and our more than one million members nationwide, I am writing to urge you to pass the Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S.184) introduced in the Senate by Senator Markey.

Gun violence is a human rights [issue](#) and under international law the U.S. is obligated to protect the rights to life and to security of person and to prevent firearm violence by private individuals.

Central to meeting these obligations is having up-to-date, accurate authoritative data showing the scale and impact of gun violence as well as evidence-based research detailing what initiatives have been effective in curbing or mitigating gun violence. Unfortunately, the federal government has not only failed to robustly fund gun violence research, but it has also taken active steps to stifle efforts to better understand the causes and potential solutions for gun violence through passage of the Dickey Amendment, a rider that openly curbed and discouraged gun violence research by federal agencies accompanied by cuts to the budgets of critical public research institutes.<sup>1</sup> In our 2018 report *In the Line of Fire: Human Rights and the U.S. Gun Violence Crisis*, Amnesty International detailed how for over 20 years, the United States has restricted federal funding for firearms research through publicly funded entities like the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH). The result has been that gun violence, one of the top 30 causes of death in the United States, has been the least researched (based on the number of publications) and the second-least funded.<sup>2</sup>

Effective policies and programs to address the gun violence crisis cannot be developed without credible data. Collecting authoritative data requires well-funded research and

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<sup>1</sup> In the Line of Fire, Human Rights and the US Gun Violence Crisis, Amnesty International 2018 pg. 168

<sup>2</sup> In the Line of Fire, page 167

scholarship. In 2012, former Congressman Jay Dickey, the author of the Dickey Amendment, called for the policy to be reversed and for research on gun violence to be adequately funded. Despite language issued in March 2018, clarifying that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are not barred from conducting gun violence research under the Dickey amendment, the amendment has not been repealed and Congress has failed to allocate funding for critically needed research.

Based on the recommendations of over 160 medical, public health and research organizations, S. 184 would appropriate \$50,000,000 to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct or support research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention from 2020 through 2025. Only with valid, current research and data can legislators make informed decisions as to what kind of policies have the potential to be effective in curbing the negative impact of firearm violence in the U.S., fulfilling U.S. obligations to protect the right to life and to security of person. Amnesty International USA urges the Senate to pass S. 184.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adotei Akwei', written in a cursive style.

Adotei Akwei  
Deputy Director, Advocacy and Government Relations  
Amnesty International USA  
600 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Ste 500  
Washington DC 20009