

END THE HUMAN RIGHTS CRISIS OF GUN VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

CONGRESS MUST PASS THE BREAK THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE ACT (H.R. 4836, S. 2671), COMMIT \$150 MILLION ANNUALLY TO GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAMS, AND ESTABLISH A NATIONAL STRATEGY TO END GUN VIOLENCE.

Communities require increased support for gun violence intervention and prevention programs, focused on interrupting cycles of violence, and increased funding for direct services including mentorship to individuals at high risk of engaging in gun violence. These types of cost-effective programs have proven to be highly effective at reducing gun violence and saving lives. Further, taking these critical steps to reduce and prevent firearm homicides is not only good for our communities, it will also decrease the economic burden on our health care and criminal justice systems, quickly paying dividends for taxpayers and communities. With sustained investment into these programs, combined with a national comprehensive strategy aimed at reducing gun violence, particularly in communities of color, the U.S. can make inroads to reducing gun violence in all communities.

BACKGROUND:

Communities of color have a long and complicated history of disadvantage and marginalization in the U.S., which contributes to the disparate impact of firearm homicides and injuries. Unfortunately, community-level firearm violence in the U.S. disproportionately impacts communities of color, particularly young black men. Firearm homicide was the leading cause of death for black men and boys aged 15-34 in 2018 and the third-leading cause of death for Latino men and boys in the same age range.

ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE BY INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES:

Research indicates that sustained funding for evidence-based projects, tailored for specific local contexts, and working in partnership with the affected communities, can achieve significant and long-lasting reductions in firearm violence. A number of federal and state-funded violence intervention and reduction programs, and accompanying strategies, have proven effective in decreasing gun violence in communities. That is why Amnesty International USA is calling for Congress to authorize at least \$150 million in annual investment to effective violence intervention programs that provide group violence and hospital-based interventions along with evidence-based street outreach programs, all of which have all proved integral to reducing gun violence in communities.

By focusing efforts on a concentrated group and engaging community members in providing direct services and mentorship to individuals at higher risk of engaging in gun violence, many cities have made significant progress to reducing violence and creating safe communities. Importantly, the design and implementation of these programs must include human rights safeguards including the right to freedom from discrimination, the right to privacy, and the right to due process.

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Unfortunately, despite the significant success of these programs, both a lack of funding and political will have prevented the kind of long-term, consistent implementation these programs need to thrive. Even in cases where the models have drastically reduced gun violence, community leaders face challenges in maintaining them, sometimes leading to a devastating reversal of the program's gains, and a return to previous higher levels of gun violence.

AIUSA RECOMMENDATIONS:

The U.S. has a duty to take positive action to address gun violence, especially where models exist that could reduce it while making a long term and life-changing impact on systemically disenfranchised communities. To do this Congress should:

- Authorize \$150 million annually, for at least 10 years, to community gun violence prevention and intervention programs that have proven effective in decreasing gun violence in communities where there are persistently high levels of firearm violence.
 - » This funding should include funding for competitive grant programs to cities that develop effective, prevention-oriented violence reduction initiatives focused on young people at highest risk for violence and funding for grants that support the creation or expansion of hospital-based violence reduction initiatives with a focus on young people at highest risk for violence.
- Pass legislation which supports the funding and implementation of evidence-based violence prevention and intervention programs, including passing the Break the Cycle of Violence Act (H.R. 4836, S. 2671).

FOR QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT:

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