



June 8, 2021

Dear Senator:

Re: Co-sponsor Break the Cycle of Violence Act

Amnesty International USA urges you to co-sponsor the Break the Cycle of Violence Act. This bill will be introduced during the week of June 14 by Senator Booker. We thank you for co-sponsoring this legislation in the prior Congress, and are counting on you to support this critical life-saving bill. The 2021 bill importantly will include the \$5 billion funding (over eight years) to support community gun violence intervention programs, as requested by President Biden in his American Jobs Plan.

If passed and enacted into law, the legislation would provide funding for federal grants to communities that experience 20 or more homicides per year and have a homicide rate at least twice the national average, or to communities that demonstrate a unique and compelling need for additional resources to address gun and group-related violence. This legislation would transform community violence intervention programs nationwide and would reduce gun violence in Black and Brown communities across the country.

In 2020-21 the COVID-19 pandemic has fueled the highest number of gun homicides in over 20 years. This public health and human rights crisis disproportionately impacts Black and Brown communities. Gun homicides are the leading cause of death among Black men ages 15–34 and the second-leading cause of death for Latino men and boys of the same age range.

There are evidence-based approaches for dramatically reducing the increase of gun violence. These approaches have been around for many years and have proven track records of success in many cities. What has always been sorely lacking, however, is a strong federal commitment to scaling a comprehensive infrastructure commensurate with that magnitude of the gun violence crisis.

Effective community-based programs narrowly focus on the tiny percentage of individuals at highest risk to shoot or be shot and, in life-giving ways, work to prevent shootings from happening in the first place. The most effective programs are typically linked to broader systems of city or county-wide support that integrate public health, economic development, public safety, and community-based agencies.

Amnesty International USA is counting on your solid support of Break the Cycle of Violence Act, so we can get this critical bill across the finish line. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Joanne Lin at 202/281-0017 or jlin@aiusa.org.

Sincerely,



Joanne Lin
National Director, Advocacy and Government Affairs



Ernest Coverson
Campaign Manager, End Gun Violence