



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF THE UNITED STATES

March 22, 2018

To: Members of the U.S. Senate

From: Chris Carson, President

Re: Reducing Gun Violence

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On behalf of our 300,000 members and supporters, as well as the millions of Americans at risk every day, the League of Women Voters strongly urges you to pass common sense solutions to the gun violence that is plaguing our nation.

It is time for Congress to adopt legislation that will close the gun show loophole, increase penalties for straw purchases of guns, ban assault weapons, place limits on high capacity ammunition magazine size, and fund research and reporting on gun violence in America. Curbing gun violence is a critical matter of public safety, public health, and public confidence.

Along with the majority of American citizens, the League supports closing the gun show loophole and providing for universal background checks. Currently, background checks are not required for the 40 percent of gun sales that take place at gun shows, person-to-person sales or other private transactions. A recent Quinnipiac poll found that support for background checks is almost universal with 97 percent of voters in favor of background checks on all gun purchasers. This is the highest level of support ever measured by the independent poll. In addition, Congress should pass legislation to increase the penalties for straw purchases in which individuals who do not have criminal records buy guns and pass them on to individuals who are not eligible to purchase a firearm, including felons and domestic abusers.

The League also believes that the 115th Congress should pass legislation to ban all military-style semi-automatic assault weapons along with high capacity ammunition magazines. The Quinnipiac poll found that 67 percent of registered voters nationwide support a ban on the sale of assault weapons. Placing limits on magazine size is a common-sense solution to shootings that kill many people at once. This limit should include magazines and other ammunition feeding devices that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. These devices allow shooters to fire numerous rounds in rapid succession without having to stop and reload, and they have been a central part of the mass killings of recent years.

Throughout the country, local and state Leagues have been holding meetings with their fellow citizens to discuss the crisis of gun violence. They have testified before state legislatures and met with their neighbors in community meetings to come together, air their differences and work to find common ground and solve some of the difficult problems presented in the gun debate, including mental health issues and the problem of domestic violence. Congress should follow suit and start to act on common sense solutions to curb gun violence.