



JOHNS HOPKINS

BLOOMBERG SCHOOL
of PUBLIC HEALTH

A critical time in the effort to save lives from gun violence

Dear Alumni and Friends,

On the evening before my first day as Dean, a gunman opened fire in Las Vegas, leaving 58 people dead and more than 800 injured. The recent shooting at the Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida left 17 more people dead. There is a line of thinking that there is little to be done in the United States to prevent such tragedies, that our politics are so broken that even common sense policies stand no chance of being enacted.

I reject such thinking, and I urge you to do so as well. Thanks to some remarkable young people in Florida, our nation is beginning to wake up to the fact that these mass shootings are common here for a reason. As legislators and others take up the case, many are relying on research and advocacy from our faculty, who have led the way in thinking of gun violence as a public health issue.

I urge you to listen to Bloomberg Professor of American Health Daniel Webster's interview on the American Health podcast here on what works to prevent gun violence. You should also read this paper about what happened when Connecticut passed a permit-to-purchase law regulating handguns, and this one about what happened when Missouri moved in the opposite direction and repealed its handgun purchaser licensing law. Four of our faculty recently published an article in the Washington Post calling

out five myths on gun violence. And several more are deeply involved in the national discussion on gun violence restraining orders, an innovative policy approach now on the table in Florida and under consideration in 20 states.

We should also reflect on how reasonable policy ideas have come back into the picture on guns in the United States. What happened in Parkland that did not happen in Las Vegas, or in Kentucky, or in other locations where there has been a shocking loss of life? The energy and advocacy of youth have undoubtedly played a critical role. They have framed this mass shooting as a crisis worthy of immediate attention and action. In doing so, they have become public health heroes before even graduating from high school. I fully support the decision of Johns Hopkins and other leading universities to recognize their actions in the admissions process.

The next few weeks and months will be critical in the effort to save lives from gun violence. I encourage everyone to consider ways to get involved, including by joining national efforts to advance evidence-based policies. As we do, we must keep in mind both the need to reduce mass shootings and the urgency of reducing the daily gun violence that is taking a profound toll on Baltimore and other U.S. cities.

At the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, we will only accelerate our efforts to make a difference.

Sincerely,

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