

National District Attorneys Association
Staff Contact: Nelson Bunn
703-519-1666 or nbunn@ndaajustice.org
www.ndaa.org

June 23, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell,

On behalf of the National District Attorneys Association (NDAA), the oldest and largest national organization representing state and local prosecutors in the country, I write in support of the recently released *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*.

As you may be aware, NDAA is a national, non-partisan association that provides training, technical assistance and resources to prosecutors across the country. As part of our mission to serve as the voice of America's prosecutors, we engage with Congress, Federal agencies and the Administration to provide insight into the challenges and successes faced by local prosecutors across the country. One such challenge that continues to plague the communities we serve is the scourge of gun violence. While this legislation doesn't address all challenges that law enforcement and prosecutors face in the field, it's a commonsense, bipartisan package that holds bad actors accountable, works to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals, and provides needed resources to support law enforcement and prosecutors in their daily jobs of protecting their constituents and supporting public safety.

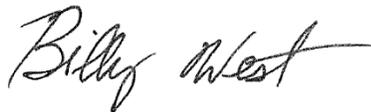
Some key aspects of the legislation are important to highlight, including provisions we have long supported:

- **Inclusion of the *Stop Illegal Trafficking in Firearms Act*.** This legislation, spearheaded by Senator Leahy, Senator Collins and Senator Durbin, tackles the issue of straw purchases and criminalizes the act of straw purchasing and trafficking firearms across state lines, while ensuring strong criminal penalties are in place for those who abuse the law.
- **Clarification around juvenile records and firearms.** Current law isn't clear on whether or not juvenile records are accounted for when determining whether an individual is prohibited from purchasing a firearm. This legislation clarifies the inclusion of juvenile records and requires the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) to check with state records *and* local law enforcement to determine whether the individual attempting to purchase a firearm should be disqualified.
- **Updates the definition of "misdemeanor crime of violence".** By expanding this definition, a current or recent romantic or intimate partner is held accountable for their actions, as Congress initially intended, while providing justice and support for victims.
- **New resources for public safety and public health stakeholders.** New resources and authorities are authorized to address mental health, substance use and other societal challenges that factor into gun violence in our communities. Our members strongly

support accountability, but also support rehabilitation, second chances and wrap-around services that provide assistance to individuals in need, so they don't unnecessarily interact with the criminal justice system. Included in this legislation is the flexibility to focus on crisis intervention programs that states can implement based on their specific needs.

The bipartisan package includes measures that not only address the use of firearms by criminal actors, but also recognizes the need to address the root causes of mental health challenges while also strengthening the ability of law enforcement to protect schools and the centers where our communities come together. For these reasons, we strongly urge the Senate to move swiftly on this bipartisan package to target gun violence plaguing our communities, support victims of crime and ultimately save lives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Billy West". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Billy West
NDAA President