



6/8/2021

The Honorable Rob Portman  
448 Russell Senate  
Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sherrod Brown  
503 Hart Senate  
Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Portman and Senator Brown,

The mass shootings that have shaken our country this spring are a reminder of the vulnerabilities we face when people who should not have guns are able to access them. Ohio cities continue to grapple with surging rates of gun violence that have been exacerbated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As mayors, we use all the tools at our disposal to keep guns out of the hands of people who are a danger to themselves or others. But we are in desperate need of the tools only the federal government can provide. We must close the gaping loopholes in our federal laws that have allowed illegal guns to flood our communities for far too long. For this reason, we, the undersigned mayors from across Ohio, call on Senator Portman and Senator Brown to pass background checks legislation now.

Background checks are the backbone of any comprehensive gun violence prevention strategy; they keep our communities safer and are associated with reduced rates of firearm homicide, suicide, and firearm trafficking. We know background checks work and stop sales to prohibited purchasers every day. Since 1994, background checks have blocked over 3.5 million sales to violent criminals and other prohibited people. In Ohio, over 85,000 illegal sales have been blocked by the system. However, current federal law only requires a background check when a gun seller is a licensed dealer, leaving all other sales, like those arranged online or at gun shows between perfect strangers, unregulated and unchecked. While many states have closed this loophole and now require background checks for at least all handgun sales, twenty-nine states have yet to take any action and there is a massive market for gun sales where no background check is required. For this reason, the Senate must act and pass legislation to update our background check laws.

Legislation to update background checks would save lives. These laws also enjoy broad public approval, with polls routinely showing that more than 90 percent of American voters support requiring background checks on all gun sales—including 89 percent of Republicans and 89 percent of gun owners.

As the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has intensified our country's gun violence crisis, it is now more important than ever for the Senate to take action on background checks.

Sincerely,

Martin Horwitz  
Mayor of Beachwood, OH

Fletcher Berger  
Mayor of Bedford Heights, OH

Ben Kessler  
Mayor of Bexley, OH

John Cranley  
Mayor of Cincinnati, OH

Andrew J. Ginther  
Mayor of Columbus, OH

Nan Whaley  
Mayor of Dayton, OH

Debbie Neale  
Mayor of Lakeline, OH

Meghan George  
Mayor of Lakewood, OH

David Scheffler  
Mayor of Lancaster, OH

Jack Bradley  
Mayor of Lorain, OH

Laurie Green  
Mayor of Mineral City, OH

Daniel Fritz  
Mayor of Moreland Hills, OH

James Wolf  
Mayor of Mount Healthy, OH

Tim DeGeeter  
Mayor of Parma, OH

Edward H. Kraus  
Mayor of Solon, OH

Georgine Welo  
Mayor of South Euclid, OH

Warren Copeland  
Mayor of Springfield, OH

Wade Kapszukiewicz  
Mayor of Toledo, OH

Michael Dylan Brennan  
Mayor of University Heights, OH

Dan Mathews  
Mayor of Shawnee Hills, OH

Kim Maggard  
Mayor of Whitehall, OH