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March 9, 2021

U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they teach and support, we urge you to VOTE YES on the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 8), which requires a background check for every gun sold as well as most transfers, and the Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2021 (H.R. 1446), which extends the initial background check review period from three to 10 days. Votes associated with these issues may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 117th Congress.

NEA supports this legislation because:

- [Everytown for Gun Safety](#) estimates that nearly 3,000 American children and teenagers are shot and killed each year, while 3 million children are exposed to gun violence each year.
- Firearms are the leading cause of death for African American children, and the second leading cause of death for all American children.
- The legislation narrows the "Charleston loophole" in current law, a gap that allows gun ownership to be transferred after three days even if the background check is incomplete.

In the [2019 Monmouth University Poll](#), 83 percent of respondents supported comprehensive background checks for all gun sales, including 65 percent of NRA members and 76 percent of gun owners who are not NRA members. But background checks are only a first step. Congress must also expand the focus on students' mental health; establish more school-based health centers; and increase funding for educators' professional development with programs to combat bullying, foster mental and behavioral health, and address related areas.

We can only educate, nurture, and support students to the extent that we can keep them safe in our schools and communities. We urge you to VOTE YES on H.R. 8 and H.R. 1446.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association