

**GUNS
DOWN**

**MARCH
FOR OUR
LIVES** 



August 25, 2021

Dear President Biden,

You ran on one of the strongest gun violence prevention platforms in American history, promising to pursue a bold agenda that broadly resonated with voters, particularly young people, across the country.

Since taking office, you have taken significant steps to invest in the communities closest to the pain of everyday interpersonal gun violence, begun the process of regulating particularly deadly firearms and firearm accessories, and announced a plan for responding to the troubling increase of gun violence across our nation.

And while we celebrate these critical actions, they fall significantly short of the promises you yourself made while running for the presidency.

Mr. President, you pledged to [“bring Democrats and Republicans together”](#) in the United States Congress to pass big things, to deal with big issues” and stressed that your past success in passing gun reform in the Senate will translate into your ability to advance life-saving measures once elected President. Yet we have not seen you publicly pressure key Senators to support bipartisan House-passed legislation that would strengthen our nation’s background check system and you have not advocated for the repeal of the filibuster, an archaic tool that creates a major impediment to legislative reform.

During a February 20, 2020 campaign event in Las Vegas you declared that [“the country is ready”](#) for reform, adding, “Every day that we do nothing about this epidemic of assault weapons and high capacity magazines in our streets is an insult and innumerable lives across this nation that have been forever shattered by this violence.” At that event, you also promised to “send a bill to Congress repealing the liability protections for gun manufacturers, closing the background check loophole, and closing waiting periods” [“on my first day in office.”](#)

But asked about your plan for reducing gun deaths [during a CNN town hall](#) on July 21st, you preemptively conceded that you’re “not likely to get [an assault weapon ban] done in the near term.” You’ve also failed to submit the aforementioned bill to Congress and on August 24, lawyers at your Department of Justice actually [defended](#) the legality of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA). PLCAA shields gunmakers, dealers, and importers from most civil suits and in 2020 a Pennsylvania appeals court [ruled that the law is unconstitutional](#).

In March of 2020, [you pledged to appoint](#) a point-person to drive your gun violence prevention agenda, yet, to our knowledge, your administration still lacks such a position.

Mr. President, we know you are personally invested in the issue of gun violence prevention. As you told a joint session of Congress in late April, “I will do [everything in my power](#) to protect the American people from this

epidemic of gun violence.” We are asking you to live up to this pledge because we need your leadership now more than ever.

So far this year, more than [28,000 Americans have lost their lives](#) to gun violence. Given the heightened and growing threat of gun violence in our country, we urge you to actively work alongside Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and redouble efforts to confirm David Chipman to lead the ATF. We are also asking you to take the following additional actions:

1. **Establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention** in order to streamline the government’s efforts to reduce violence, recognize gun violence as a national security crisis and a public health and prevention priority, and establish a long-term sustained effort to reduce gun deaths.
2. **Unveil a comprehensive strategy and proactive plan for pursuing your legislative agenda on gun reform** in a way that creates a viable pathway for securing passage of these critical initiatives while supporters of reform still hold a narrow majority in the Senate, eliminating the filibuster if necessary.
3. **Use the presidential bully pulpit to talk to Americans** about the risks and dangers of firearm ownership within the home and in our communities while also highlighting successful community efforts and legislative reforms that have saved lives across the nation.

These actions are the floor, not the ceiling for what progress on gun violence prevention can look like.

Your administration is hard at work pursuing important priorities from infrastructure reform to reducing the disastrous impacts of climate change. But with rising gun deaths and the heightened threat of armed political extremism, gun violence can no longer be seen as a back burner issue.

Politicians have told us for decades that we must wait for the “right time” to tackle this crisis. We are writing to tell you that the time for bold executive action is now -- and that you cannot wait on the Senate to take action. Our lives depend on your leadership.

Thank you,

Guns Down America
March For Our Lives
Newtown Action Alliance
Survivors Empowered