



December 11, 2015

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Office of the Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Office of the Majority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Office of the Majority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Harry Reid
Office of the Minority Leader
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Office of the Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Speaker Ryan and Representatives McCarthy and Pelosi, Senators McConnell and Reid:

As you work on finalizing the content of the omnibus appropriations bill, on behalf of the 120,900 members of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), I would strongly urge you and the United States Congress to eliminate all existing limitations, bans, and/or prohibitions that may exist on research associated with gun violence and its prevention.

Our country is forced to deal with the ramifications of gun violence all too frequently. The prevalence of gun-related injuries and death has become a major public health issue and the federal government should approach it as any other public health issue – through a comprehensive analysis of data that would illuminate the key facts. Unfortunately, such research has been effectively prohibited for the past 20 years as a result of a provision commonly referred to as the “Dickey Amendment.” Ironically, former Congressman Jay Dickey of Arkansas, the author of original legislative provision, recently commented that “it is my position that somehow or someday we should slowly but methodically fund [gun] research until a solution is reached. Doing nothing is no longer an acceptable solution.”

The AAFP concurs with former Congressman Dickey – doing nothing is no longer acceptable. This is why the AAFP and our members have for several years called for an elimination of the ban on federal funding for objective, scientific research on gun violence. Earlier this year, the AAFP joined other physician organizations and the American Bar Association to call for the elimination of the ban on federal funding for gun-related violence in an [article](#) in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. This article explains why the existing ban lacks a scientific justification and how it impedes our efforts to improve

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the health of the public. As physicians, we see the results of gun violence in our communities. The avoidable loss of life and the devastating impacts on the mental wellbeing of individuals and families are issues that family physicians must confront in their practices on a daily basis. If we are ever to confront these issues effectively, family physicians need the sound, evidence-based guidance that only scientific research can provide. Please do not hinder CDC's ability to conduct this research any longer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert L. Wergin MD". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "W".

Robert L. Wergin, MD, FAAFP
Board Chair

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