

House Committee on Ways and Means
Subcommittee on Oversight
September 26, 2019

The Public Health Consequences and Costs of Gun Violence

Testimony of Congresswoman Lucy McBath (GA-06)

Thank you Chairman Lewis and all the members of the Committee for holding this important hearing today.

As many of you know, I lost my son, Jordan, to gun violence in 2012. But Jordan's death is one of many. The epidemic of gun violence claims nearly 100 lives every single day. Together as a nation, we learn the stories of the victims of mass shootings—from recent events in El Paso, Dayton, and Gilroy, to the lives we are still missing from Columbine, and even more events that many of us can remember before that.

For all the stories we hear, there are so many more that we don't hear. Every day we are losing lives to domestic violence, suicide, and accidental shootings. Gun violence is an epidemic with many sources. Each of these must be researched so that we can begin saving lives.

The gun violence epidemic also has many effects. Every day, nearly 100 people are shot and killed, and every day, another [210 will survive](#) a shooting, but be injured. There are [psychological effects](#), too. Survivors, family members, and bystanders can suffer from anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress. And in the wake of so many school shootings, a [majority](#) of our country's teens now walk onto campus in fear that they might be next.

In spite of these serious effects, we have actually *reduced* funding for gun violence research. From 1996 to 2018, Congress [decreased](#) funding for the Center for Disease Control to study gun violence by 94%. Of the top 30 causes of death, 28 receive more research funding per life lost than gun violence. Thankfully, we are taking steps to reverse this deadly trend. I was proud to be among a group of colleagues calling for a \$50 million investment in gun violence prevention research by the National Institute of Health and Center for Disease Control—including the CDC Injury Center, which is located in my district. This funding was included in an appropriations package already passed by the House, but a Senate proposal [gutted](#) this life-saving funding—calling it “controversial.” Nothing should be controversial about saving lives.

Unfortunately, we are seeing the same pattern as the House repeatedly acts to address gun violence, only to be met with Senate stalling. Over 200 days have passed since the House passed H.R. 8, the Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019, yet the Senate has taken no action on this bill. Just last week, the House Judiciary Committee marked-up a package of legislation that included my bill, the Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act, H.R. 3076, yet the Senate still hasn't marked up an extreme risk law. But we know that [universal background checks](#) and [extreme risk laws](#) will save lives.

I know the pain of losing a child to gun violence. No one should have to bear that pain. It is our responsibility as lawmakers to take on this deadly epidemic, and to stand with the

researchers, doctors, nurses, and psychologists calling on us to act. We must enact those laws that we already know will be effective, and we must fund research that will guide us to other life-saving tools. I thank you the Committee for calling this hearing, and for the witnesses that have come to share their expertise. I urge all of us to keep demanding evidence-based solutions and to keep looking with hope to a future free of gun violence. Together, we will save lives.

Thank you.