



RICHARD H. CARMONA, M.D., M.P.H., FACS
17th Surgeon General of the United States

April 4, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid
Minority Leader
U. S Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Democratic Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, Leader Pelosi, and Members of the United States Senate and the U. S. House of Representatives:

As the former Surgeon General of the United States and as a police officer and U.S. Army Special Forces combat veteran, I write to you to urge Congress to encourage and fund research into firearms related violence in order to objectively be able to address the significant public health consequences of firearms related death and disability.

Currently a restrictive Congressional budget amendment passed in 1996 prevents federally funded gun violence research. Although the President has lifted the ban, Congress has not yet funded the research.

The morbidity, mortality and cost of firearms related death and disability in the United States constitutes a major public health challenge. The gun issue in the United States has become exceedingly politicized with each side arguing its position more on emotion rather than needed epidemiologic science.

As a soldier and police officer, I have owned and used firearms most of my life; as a citizen, I own firearms and I believe that fellow citizens who are appropriately educated in firearms safety and vetted for risk should be able to safely own firearms.

However, without appropriate research into firearms related death and disability, we really have no idea what policies and/or regulation may be needed in order to ensure the public's safety.

Our Center for Disease Control and Prevention has been a global leader in addressing all types of public health risk and discerning what risk factors need to be addressed, for any and all causes, in order to prevent death and disability and reduce the cost of care.

I respectfully urge you to consider funding this needed research through CDC and any other academic, public and private organizations that have the expertise to provide the unbiased scientific information to guide our nation's future decisions and ensure the public's health and safety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Richard H. Carmona". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Richard H. Carmona, M.D., M.P.H., FACS