



February 13, 2023

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Cicilline
2233 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Feinstein and Representative Cicilline:

On behalf of the Big Cities Health Coalition (BCHC) and Prevention Institute (PI), we write to applaud your leadership in introducing the Assault Weapons Ban of 2023 (S.25/H.R.698). Commonsense gun laws have an important role to play in preventing injury and death caused by gun violence, and in the case of the assault weapons ban, the harm one person with a gun can do. As organizations with extensive track records of championing a public health approach to community safety, we also know that no one policy or program can sufficiently reduce or prevent gun violence.

As such, we write to urge you not only to consider building political will for such gun measures, but also to seize every opportunity to advance more comprehensive strategies, solutions, and investments that are necessary to truly make all our communities as safe and healthy as possible.

BCHC and PI are longstanding partners in promoting a public health approach to community safety. This public health approach widens our strategic impact by working on all the areas that affect community safety—that is, improving our communities in ways that prevent violence before it starts—rather than focusing narrowly on policing and criminal justice.

BCHC is a membership organization for public health officials in 35 of the nation's largest cities, who together serve more than 61 million—or about one in five—Americans. By partnering with community leaders, law enforcement, schools, hospitals, businesses, libraries, faith-based organizations, and other stakeholders to address complex issues, local health officials across the nation consistently demonstrate their commitment to stopping violence. PI is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting health, safety, and wellbeing through thriving, equitable communities. Partnering with local and national groups, PI has directly shaped how local, state and national coalitions, government entities, and philanthropy have approached community-driven efforts to promote community safety and prevent multiple forms of violence, including gun violence.

A public health approach to community safety addresses the roots of violence—including structural racism—to change the underlying conditions that contribute to multiple forms of violence. To help change the narrative and insert this approach into the broader national conversation, BCHC and PI launched a [campaign](#) last month that emphasizes the importance of investing in the health of the whole community to prevent gun violence. The point of this work

is to start to change the narrative around violence and offer a broader base of activities through which we can move to prevent unnecessary injury and death from guns.

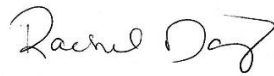
We all deserve safe communities where we can live, work, learn, and play without fear of violence or harm toward us or our loved ones. As discussions around violence prevention continue to unfold in Congress, we stand ready to champion comprehensive solutions that center proven, community-determined public health investments. We would be happy to meet to discuss how BCHC and PI could further support these efforts—including through direct connections with public health leaders who are leading these efforts in their communities.

Please do not hesitate to contact Chrissie Juliano, juliano@bigcitieshealth.org and Rachel Davis, rachel@preventioninstitute.org for additional information. And again, thank you for your leadership.

Sincerely,



Chrissie Juliano, MPP
Executive Director
Big Cities Health Coalition



Rachel Davis, MSW
Executive Director
Prevention Institute