



A Letter from Brady President Kris Brown

Dear Member of Congress

I hope this finds you, as well as your family and staff, safe and well.

At the opening of each Congress, Brady's president presents the legislative priorities of our organization and the grassroots activists we represent. As part of the welcoming message this year, I had hoped to relay our optimism and joy of a legislature and executive united in preventing gun violence in America, with majorities in both congressional chambers committed to making it a top issue. While these dynamics remain, they have been perilously overshadowed by the January 6 attack on the Capitol by a violent insurrectionist mob incited by the President of the United States.

While the unspeakable and unprecedented violence that was visited on the heart of our democracy will live in infamy, it cannot be overstated how much more devastating it would likely have been if not for the District of Columbia's laws protecting the public from gun violence. We know all too well the damage that can be inflicted by a single determined individual armed with an assault rifle; we can only imagine what destruction would have been wrought by a horde, likewise armed and already willing to murder law enforcement officers, actively hunting congressional leaders such as the Speaker of the House while chanting for the public hanging of the Vice President. While the worst possible outcome was avoided, the presence and perceived threat of firearms during the attack greatly increased the chances of it resulting in a mass casualty event. **Few moments in American history have more clearly highlighted the dire need for stronger national laws to prevent gun violence.**

We are incredibly grateful that you and your colleagues were not seriously injured, nor deterred from carrying out your sacred duty of ensuring the lawful transfer of power which protects the vital institutions of our republic. We are deeply saddened by the loss of life — especially the murder of Brian Sicknick and the recent death of Howard Leibengood, officers of the Capitol Police — and the injuries sustained that day by those who fulfilled their obligation to protect the citadel of democracy against terrorist attack.

As one of the oldest national organizations focused on preventing gun violence in America, we know all too well that you and your colleagues will endure the trauma of this siege for years to come.

Watching these events unfold, we experienced the same terror and helplessness that we have felt while watching coverage of too many incidents of gun violence. We understand the abject fear that fills the hearts of our fellow citizens when they are facing the unthinkable. Be vigilant of your feelings; trauma manifests in diverse and difficult ways, and we beseech you to seek assistance and support should you require it.

We must recognize that the attack on January 6 was not preordained: President Trump had ample opportunity to quell the passions of his supporters. That the violence was able to take place at all was the logical and inexorable result of decades of corruptive and perverting messaging about the Second Amendment from the gun industry and its lobby. In 2009, Wayne LaPierre stood in front of the NRA convention and decreed that “the guys with the guns make the rules,” and for decades the gun lobby has peddled a false narrative proclaiming that the Second Amendment provides recourse against a perceived tyrannical government — rhetorical fodder for the white nationalist groups which have become deeply entrenched in the gun rights extremist movement. Over the last two years alone, we have witnessed numerous instances of heavily armed individuals, emboldened by the gun lobby, attempting to pressure or outright coerce lawmakers in state capitals across the country. On January 6, the country witnessed firsthand the extreme danger of this perpetuated rhetoric. It is past time to hold those who encourage and incite violence to account. We need our elected leaders to stand up against extremism in every form, just as we need a system of gun laws that protects Americans, not the gun lobby — and we simply have no time to waste.

It is within this context that I write to you today to emphasize the importance of prioritizing the measures highlighted in this [Legislative Blueprint for a Safer America](#). We call on the 117th Congress not only to expand and strengthen Brady Background Checks, but also to institute democratic reforms and protections, reimagine policing, work toward racial and social justice, and prevent gun violence in all of its forms. These needed policies will prevent violence and ensure transparency and accountability in systems that have thus far failed to adequately prioritize and ensure public safety and justice in this country.

We look forward to working with you toward a better, safer, and more just America.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris Brown', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kris Brown, President, Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence