Dear Speaker Johnson,

As House Democrats, we write about our deep concerns with your troubling comments following the devastating mass shooting in Lewiston, Maine where 18 people were killed and another 13 were injured.

Mr. Speaker, our children, God’s children, are being killed every day in our country in part because of the inaction of Republican leadership on gun violence prevention legislation. Families of every faith in America have empty chairs around the dinner table because Republicans have failed to answer our constituents’ prayers for action.

In response to the gun violence crisis, you have called for more thoughts and prayers without a commitment to taking any action to address the bloodshed. As Speaker, you were quoted as saying, “This is a dark time in America. We have a lot of problems, and we are hopeful and prayerful. Prayer is appropriate at a time like this, that this senseless violence can stop.” Additionally, during a recent interview about gun violence prevention legislation you said, “America’s problem is not guns. America’s problem is a heart problem.”

This fatalistic view of gun violence is factually wrong and paints a dark view of America and its people. First, gun violence in America is not inevitable, it is simply tolerated by Republican leadership. Second, gun violence prevention legislation is evidence-based and saves lives. In fact, the state of Louisiana has an “F” rank on the Giffords gun violence scorecard because it fails to enact universal background checks and a red flag law, has weak gun domestic violence laws, and allows assault weapons and large capacity magazines to be sold. Not surprisingly, gun deaths in Louisiana are 99 percent above the national average, second only to Mississippi.

Conversely, the states that emphasize responsible gun ownership with strong gun safety laws have the lowest rate of gun violence. Troublingly, more and more of the gun violence in those states is perpetrated by guns that flow in from states with weak gun laws. We need a stronger national floor that protects all Americans from gun violence.

Epidemic levels of gun violence are an American problem because we uniquely allow people who are a danger to themselves or others easy access to firearms. The gun homicide rate in America is 26 times that of other high-income countries. It is outrageous to insinuate that...
Americans have 26 times the mental health challenges or our fellow Americans’ hearts are 26 times more troubled than our international peers.

House Democrats will continue to demand action on the gun violence epidemic. We urge you to hear the prayers of the children terrified of being killed at school and the families praying for leaders to lead. The book of John says that “the good shepherd lays down his life” for his flock. As Democrats, we are not asking for personal sacrifice, but simply that Republican leadership work with us to enact common sense laws that will save lives. We stand ready to work with you on any policies that will help end gun violence.

Sincerely,

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Robert Garcia
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress

Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress

Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

Yadira Caraveo, M.D.  
Member of Congress

Glenn Ivey  
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress

Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress

Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Katie Porter
Member of Congress

Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress

Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress

Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

David J. Trone
Member of Congress
Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

Mike Levin  
Member of Congress

Mary Gay Scanlon  
Member of Congress

Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress

Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress

Becca Balint  
Member of Congress

Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

Angie Craig  
Member of Congress
Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress

Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

Patrick K. Ryan  
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

Wiley Nickel  
Member of Congress

Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

David Scott  
Member of Congress

William R. Keating  
Member of Congress

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress
Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress

Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

Jill Tokuda  
Member of Congress

Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress

Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress

Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress

Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress