May 23, 2017

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

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

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

As the House Committee on Appropriations develops each of the twelve Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations bills, we urge that you ensure the Committee’s legislation not include harmful legislative language, or “riders,” that impact the enforcement of gun laws, the operations of Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL), or research into the causes of gun violence and how to prevent it. Gun violence reduction and prevention is an important and sensitive issue. Given the renewed national focus on gun violence prevention, now is not the time to include controversial appropriations riders that negatively impact gun laws.

Instead, such changes to gun policy must be seriously and properly considered by Congress through the regular order. This must be done in an open and transparent process where a full range of options can be frankly discussed and debated by the proper committees of authorizing jurisdiction and the entire House of the Representatives. Over the past several years, various appropriations riders related to gun policy have had unintended consequences that could have been prevented had these issues been properly and more thoroughly debated in Congress.

For example, the Tiahrt and Rehberg amendments, among others, have prevented law enforcement from requiring FFLs to keep an inventory of their firearms, prevented law enforcement and academic institutions from using gun trace data to better understand the pattern of crime gun transfers, and chilled unbiased scientific research into the causes of gun violence and the means of preventing it.

As the Fiscal Year 2018 appropriations process begins through the respective subcommittees, we urge you to support the development of legislation that is free of harmful gun-related riders. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON  
Member of Congress

PETER T. KING  
Member of Congress

ELIZABETH H. ESTY  
Member of Congress
JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress

LOUISE SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress

EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

NYDIA VELAZQUEZ
Member of Congress

FREDERICA WILSON
Member of Congress

JOHN CARAMENDI
Member of Congress

BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress

BETTY MCCOLLUM
Member of Congress

MATT CARTWRIGHT
Member of Congress

KATHERINE CLARK
Member of Congress

JIM Himes
Member of Congress

JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

JOHN LARSON
Member of Congress

RUBEN J. KIHUEN
Member of Congress

JOSE E. SERRANO
Member of Congress
JOYCE BEATTY  
Member of Congress

ALAN LOWENTHAL  
Member of Congress

JOHN YARMUTH  
Member of Congress

THOMAS R. SUOZZI  
Member of Congress

IMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress

FRANK PALLONE, JR.  
Member of Congress

ANNA G. ESCHOO  
Member of Congress

JOHN LEWIS  
Member of Congress

MARK DESAULNIER  
Member of Congress

ERIC SWALWELL  
Member of Congress

DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.  
Member of Congress

DANIEL T. KILDEE  
Member of Congress

TED W. LIEU  
Member of Congress

VAL BUTLER DEMINGS  
Member of Congress

PRAMILA JAYAPAL  
Member of Congress

COLLEEN HANABUSA  
Member of Congress
STEPHANIE MURPHY
Member of Congress

BETO O’ROURKE
Member of Congress

SETH MOULTON
Member of Congress

MICHAEL CAPUANO
Member of Congress

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Member of Congress

KATHLEEN M. RICE
Member of Congress

RAUL GRIJALVA
Member of Congress

CAROL SHEA-PORTEER
Member of Congress

ROBIN KELLY
Member of Congress

ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress

ED PERLMUTTER
Member of Congress

MARK POCAN
Member of Congress

MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress

TONY CARDENAS
Member of Congress

MARC VÉASEY
Member of Congress

DONALD NORCROSS
Member of Congress
JOE COURTNEY
Member of Congress

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress

BILL PASCRELL, JR.
Member of Congress

STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress

JOHN CONYERS, JR.
Member of Congress

TED DEUTCH
Member of Congress

BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress

PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress

WILLIAM KEATING
Member of Congress

JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress

ADAM SCHIFF
Member of Congress

JUDY CHU
Member of Congress

JOHN SARBAKES
Member of Congress

MIKE QUIGLEY
Member of Congress

DINA TITUS
Member of Congress
JARED POLIS
Member of Congress

NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGAN
Member of Congress

ELIOT L. ENGEL
Member of Congress

SALUD O. CARBAJAL
Member of Congress

CHARLIE CRIST
Member of Congress