



HAWAII MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

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TO:
COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY
Rep. Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair
Rep. Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice Chair

DATE: Tuesday, March 27, 2018
TIME: 2:00 p.m.
PLACE: Conference Room 325

FROM: Hawaii Medical Association
Dr. Christopher Flanders, DO, Executive Director
Lauren Zirbel, Community and Government Relations

Re: HCR 133/ HR 119 URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO SUPPORT AND FUND THE SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF FIREARMS VIOLENCE AND PREVENTION.

Position: SUPPORT

Chairs & Committee Members:

The Hawaii Medical Association **strongly supports** HCR 133/ HR 119.

Gun violence today is a public health crisis in the United States; it knows no geographic, political or social bounds. We agree with Secretary Azar that the CDC has the authority to conduct this critical research into gun violence and they should begin their work immediately. An epidemiological analysis of gun violence is vital to address this public health crisis so our society can take action and prevent injury, death and other harms resulting from firearms.

As in any urgent public health threat, we cannot devise effective solutions until we have a deeper understanding of the underlying causes that prompt gun violence. With more than 30,000 Americans dying each year from gun violence and firearm-related accidents, the time to act is now.¹

Government scientists understand the value in studying gun violence, but we won't allow them to do their jobs. Since 1996 there has been an effective ban on the CDC from researching gun violence. The so called the Dickey amendment has not definitively outlawed research on gun violence and safety, but Congress "coincidentally" removed funding from the CDC to the exact

¹ <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-agrees-w-hhs-secretary-cdc-should-conduct-gun-violence-research>

HMA OFFICERS

President – William Wong, Jr., MD President-Elect – Jerry Van Meter, MD Secretary – Thomas Kosasa, MD
Immediate Past President – Bernard Robinson, MD Treasurer – Elizabeth A. Ignacio, MD
Executive Director – Christopher Flanders, DO



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amount it once spent on that research. This sends the message to CDC scientists that such research is strongly discouraged, deprioritized, and ultimately, it is not conducted.

Scientists are still feeling the effects of that decision two-decades later. In 2015, the Center for Science and Democracy (CSD) at UCS, long committed to protecting scientific integrity at federal agencies, conducted a survey of federal scientists, including scientists at the CDC. The purpose of the survey was to ascertain how scientists felt about the state of scientific integrity at their respective agencies, and to glean how effective science-based agencies were at meeting their missions. Several scientists at the CDC voiced their concerns about Congress and interest groups like the National Rifle Association (NRA) interfering in their work – especially related to gun violence research. Here are a few of the most poignant comments from CDC scientists:

- “The integrity of the scientific work would be improved if the National Rifle Association did not prevent CDC from doing more research on gun violence in the U.S.”
- “...I am not aware of the instances where internal processes for CDC’s decisions and other activities have been inappropriately affected by influence from industry or related interest groups. Yet, it is fresh in my memory that due to the influence from the congress CDC has not been able to engage in research on guns. In my view the widespread availability of guns is a major public health issue of the U.S. The congressional influence has limited CDC’s capacity to address this issue, and I strongly hope the ‘ban’ be lifted in the future.”
- “The main concern I have is about Congressional interference in scientific and epidemiological studies that relate to gun violence (i.e., cutting the funding for this type of research). This is a clear example of political interests preventing the advance of public health knowledge and practice.”

The families of victims need more than thoughts and prayers; they need action. They need policies. They need gun reform based on scientific research. And to do that, as policymakers have said themselves, we need data to ensure the most effective measures are taken.

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HCR-133

Submitted on: 3/23/2018 3:39:11 PM

Testimony for JUD on 3/27/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Michael Golojuch Jr	LGBT Caucus of the Democratic Party of Hawaii	Support	No

Comments:

HCR-133

Submitted on: 3/26/2018 11:51:38 AM

Testimony for JUD on 3/27/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Melodie Aduja	Oahu County Committee on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i	Support	No

Comments:

To the Honorable Scott Y. Nishimoto, Chair; the Honorable Joy A. San Buenaventura, Vice-Chair and the Members of the Committee on Judiciary:

Good afternoon, my name is Melodie Aduja. I serve as Chair of the Oahu County Committee ("OCC") on Legislative Priorities of the Democratic Party of Hawaii. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on **HCR133 / HR 119** relating to Gun Violence; Study; Funding; and the United States Congress.

The OCC on Legislative Priorities is in favor of **HCR133 / HR 119** and supports its passage.

HCR133 / HR 119 is in alignment with the Platform of the Democratic Party of Hawai'i ("DPH"), 2016, as it urges the United States Congress to support and fund a scientific study of firearms violence and prevention.

Specifically, the Platform of the DPH provides that "We believe in a government that will adequately, efficiently, courteously, openly, ethically and fairly administer to the needs of the people " (Platform of the DPH, P. 5, Lines 245-246 (2016)).

Given that **HCR133 / HR 119** urges the United States Congress to support and fund a scientific study of firearms violence and prevention, it is the position of the OCC Legislative Priorities Committee to support this measure.

Thank you very much for your kind consideration.

Sincerely yours,
/s/ Melodie Aduja

Melodie Aduja, Chair, OCC on Legislative Priorities of the DPH

Email: legislativepriorities@gmail.com, Tel.: (808) 258-8889

HCR-133

Submitted on: 3/26/2018 11:44:51 PM

Testimony for JUD on 3/27/2018 2:00:00 PM

Submitted By	Organization	Testifier Position	Present at Hearing
Marcella Alohalani Boido	Individual	Support	No

Comments: