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COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
SUBCOMMITTEES:
CYBERSECURITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION,
RANKING MEMBER

BORDER AND MARITIME SECURITY

COMMITTEE ON THE JUDICIARY
SUBCOMMITTEES:

CRIME, TERRORISM, HOMELAND SECURITY
AND INVESTIGATION

COURTS, INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AND
THE INTERNET

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS, CHAIR

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

February 16, 2018

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Chairman Michael T. McCaul
Committee on Homeland Security
H2-176 Ford House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman McCaul,

As Members of Congress, there is no greater responsibility we have than trying to protect our nation. As we saw this week with the attack at Stoneman Douglas High School, we have failed. Once again, one person with a gun has shocked the nation and shattered a community. It is time that the Committee on Homeland Security lived up to its name and mission. As a Member of the Homeland Security Committee, which you chair, I call on you to hold a hearing to explore these mass shootings as the domestic terrorism they are and figure out what we can do to stop them.

In the last decade, we have been shocked time and time again by mass shootings in places we thought were safe or sacred. There have been so many of these mass shootings that we have to distinguish *which* church or *which* school shooting we are talking about. That is unconscionable.

Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook Elementary, Mother Emanuel, Pulse Nightclub, First Baptist Church, Las Vegas. Though we know these tragedies by the name of the place in which they occurred, families across the country know them by the names of the loved ones whose lives were taken. These were tragedies on both a national scale and a personal level. And all of them have been made even deeper tragedies by a failure to act to prevent the next one.

Since I've been in Congress, we have seen mass shootings take the lives of more than 400 fellow citizens while they lived their everyday lives. We have seen 12 people killed as they watched a movie, 59 people killed as they listened to music, and 50 people killed as they danced. We have seen multiple shootings specifically targeting children as they went to school and people of faith as they prayed. What we have not seen is a real response from Congress or this Committee. That has to end. We have to do better. Failing to respond and better protect people makes us, at best, enablers of these tragedies.

Protecting our children is a priority everyone in Congress shares. It is time for us to prove that. So I call on you to hold a hearing and take a comprehensive look at this issue. There are people out there with the knowledge and expertise we need to prevent tragedies

like this and we should hear from them. We should hear from sheriffs and police chiefs who can offer real solutions. We should hear from researchers who have studied this issue in depth and government agencies charged with public safety. We should hear from survivors of these tragedies, principals from these schools, managers from these movie theaters and music venues, and pastors from these churches. We should hear from gun violence prevention groups like Giffords, Everytown, and the Brady Campaign. We should even hear from the National Rifle Association if that is what it takes to get to a place of action. All of these people should be invited to a hearing so that we can develop real solutions. What we can't do is continue to do nothing.

We should be willing to take a comprehensive look at how to prevent these tragedies. We know there are common sense steps with bipartisan support that we can take. We should pick that low-hanging fruit. These shootings were carried out by real people, with real guns, firing real bullets, that did real damage to bodies, took real lives, and caused real terror in communities across the country. The people of America deserve real action to prevent them from happening in the future. The very least we can do is hold a hearing. If we are not willing to even do that, why are we in Congress?

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "JR 2" followed by a stylized flourish.

Cedric L. Richmond