



COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY & COMMERCE
DEMOCRATS
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 26, 2017

CONTACT

[CJ Young](#) – (202) 225-5735

Pallone Opening Remarks at Forum on Public Health Solutions to Gun Violence in America

“The country urgently needs Congress to do more to protect American communities from gun violence.”

Washington, D.C. – *Energy and Commerce Committee Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks today at Democratic Forum titled, “Exploring Public Health Solutions to Gun Violence in America:”*

Thank you all for being here today. I want to recognize Mr. Rush for leading this effort to identify public health solutions to protect our families and communities from gun violence. Let me also say that this forum was in the works long before the horrific event that occurred in Las Vegas on the night of October 1 – but Las Vegas stands as a tragic example of how gun violence is affecting communities across this country.

Every day 93 Americans die from gun violence. Some people mistakenly believe that gun violence is an inner city problem that primarily affects young minority males. Gun violence affects everyone. It is taking the lives of individuals in urban and rural communities; men, women, and children; as well as individuals from all racial and ethnic backgrounds. In fact, gun violence is among the top five causes of death in the United States for Americans under the age of 65. Every day, seven children under the age of 19 die in a gun-related incident.

Despite the tragedy of the premature loss of life and preventable injury that results from gun violence, the federal government has failed to direct the necessary attention and resources needed to combat this public health epidemic. And unfortunately, that lack of involvement has not been by chance. Efforts by the National Rifle Association and their Congressional allies have stymied the type of robust federal efforts needed to respond.

We know what’s needed to respond to public health threats. For example, – we’ve invested in research and programs to reduce the number of deaths from motor vehicles and to treat and prevent health conditions such as cancer and HIV. To this day, we continue to invest in research and programs in these areas to ensure that we are protecting the health and lives of Americans.

Yet, we treat firearm injury differently. Not only are we not providing robust investment in research and public health interventions, but the continued inclusion of a CDC ban in annual Appropriations legislation has had a chilling effect on any funding for gun violence prevention research. The evidence is clear on the harmful consequences of this ban and our failure to dedicate robust federal funding to research into gun violence prevention. We see the evidence each day through the tragic loss of life in communities across the country. Studies have also shown the dramatic decline in research funding and publications since the adoption of the CDC ban. We also see it in the data that shows a miniscule investment in gun violence research as compared to other leading causes of deaths. One study found that while gun violence leads to the comparable loss of life as sepsis, funding for gun violence research totaled a mere 0.7 percent of research funding for sepsis.

Our country can no longer afford this indifference and injustice. The country urgently needs Congress to do more to protect American communities from gun violence. That is why I am so glad to participate in this Forum today with my Democratic colleagues from the Energy and Commerce Committee as well as with experts on this issue from across the country. I look forward to engaging in a dialogue with our witnesses about this very important issue.

I would now like to recognize my colleague, Bobby Rush for an opening statement.

###

democrats-energycommerce.house.gov | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [YouTube](#) | [Flickr](#)