



Montefiore

From the OFFICE OF THE DEAN



Dear Einstein Community:

As the cases of COVID-19 begin to ebb, once again we've been reminded of another deadly public health crisis in our country—gun violence.

Twice in the past weeks we've witnessed the senseless slaughter of innocent people through mass shootings in Georgia and Colorado. There is no justifiable rationale for these deplorable acts; they are unconscionable, unacceptable, and must stop. The fact is that both killers, like many before them, had far-too-easy access to weapons specifically designed to kill rapidly and efficiently. And they are just two instances among many others in the same period where shootings have killed our fellow citizens.

In the United States, 110 people are killed *every day* by gun violence. This is an appalling statistic, representing avoidable deaths that are punctuated, once again, for calls for meaningful gun control. Our nation is second only to Brazil in deaths per year from gun violence and we lead the world of high-income nations in per capita firearms deaths. We should be both embarrassed and ashamed that this is the case, especially since each new incident is met with legislative inaction amid reflexively offered "thoughts and prayers."

Equally disturbing is how this violence disproportionately affects minority communities, and how racism was a contributing factor in at least one of the recent shootings. While thoughts and prayers may be well-intended, they are not enough. We must all stand against such bias and violence, not passively but actively. We need legislation and action. Now.

Despite the overwhelming consensus that gun legislation is needed, recent efforts have been thwarted by lobbyists and political inaction. The need for common-sense legislation around background checks is only a start. Assault weapons that

are designed to kill humans, high-capacity magazines, and ammunition that facilitate mass shootings need to be banned outright, as they were in the 1990s—with the ban made permanent this time. And anyone trafficking in these weapons needs to be punished to the fullest extent of the law, with that violation and its consequences spelled out clearly.

I will be reaching out to our key legislators at the state and federal levels to let them know my concerns on this issue and to urge them to assume leadership in pushing the solutions needed so that our nation can prevent future atrocities from occurring. I encourage anyone who shares these concerns to consider taking action as well, whether writing or calling legislators, volunteering within the community, or supporting initiatives aimed at addressing sensible gun laws.

I also want to remind you that if you feel anxious about or traumatized by these latest horrible incidents, help is available through our [student mental health center](#) or [office of academic support and counseling](#) (for students and postdocs), or through our employee assistance program, [Carebridge](#).

As with COVID-19, together we can offer one another support, and we can take action toward ending the cycle of senseless deaths that gun violence has wrought in our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Tomaselli', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gordon F. Tomaselli, M.D.

The Marilyn and Stanley M. Katz Dean

Albert Einstein College of Medicine

Executive Vice President and Chief Academic Officer

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