



**MAYORS AGAINST
ILLEGAL GUNS**

September 14, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

As members of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, we share an interest in reducing gun violence in our cities in all its forms. We are troubled by the recent rise in organized groups, particularly extreme-right militias, openly carrying firearms under the guise of upholding law and order, and we wish to express clearly the risks this creates for public safety in our cities.

In recent weeks, we've seen an alarming number of fellow elected officials, including yourself, applauding armed intimidation of peaceful protesters. We are calling for an end to this dangerous rhetoric. Instead of inciting vigilantism, we urge you to join us in condemning reckless escalations by militias and other extremists.

Acts of intimidation and vigilantism do not promote public safety. They undermine it. As we have seen multiple times over the last few weeks, in an instant, the presence of firearms can turn disagreement or a scuffle into a deadly tragedy.

We have seen time and again how white supremacy and xenophobia can fuel gun violence, with deadly results for Black Americans and other people of color. It is particularly disturbing, therefore, to see armed vigilantes turning out in recent weeks in direct opposition to demonstrations for racial justice — and to see this not only tolerated by elected leaders but actively encouraged.

The use of firearms to escalate confrontations stands in stark contrast to the practices of responsible gun owners, for whom safety is paramount. Private citizens brandishing weapons bring deadly risks into volatile situations, and they make it harder for law enforcement to protect the public.

When self-styled vigilantes brandish firearms, they make violence more likely, not less. As elected officials, we have an obligation to condemn this recklessness, not encourage it.

Signed,

Rosalynn Bliss



**MAYORS AGAINST
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Mayor of Grand Rapids, Michigan

Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle, Washington

Timothy M. Keller
Mayor of Albuquerque, New Mexico

William Peduto
Mayor of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

McKinley L. Price
Mayor of Newport News, Virginia

Satya Rhodes-Conway
Mayor of Madison, Wisconsin

Stephen M. Schewel
Mayor of Durham, North Carolina

Andy Schor
Mayor of Lansing, Michigan

Levar M. Stoney
Mayor of Richmond, Virginia

Ted Wheeler
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