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May 15, 2018

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Alumni of New England

Dear Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School Alumni of New England,

While I cannot be with you this evening, it was a pleasure meeting with many of you in my office at the State House last Friday. I want to sincerely thank you for your advocacy, and the important voice you continue to bring to this conversation, particularly for all those who were taken from us too soon.

Earlier this year, we watched as the heartbreaking and senseless acts unfolded at your alma mater in Florida, and the Commonwealth's thoughts and prayers continue to be with the students, faculty and alumni of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, the first responders and hospital staff, and the greater Parkland community.

Seventeen lives were cut far too short and many more injured that day, in an incident that has become all too common, along with the tens of thousands of lives and families completely uprooted by gun violence each year.

Massachusetts has been well served by some of the nation's strongest gun control laws and safety measures that I believe can set an example for other states and the rest of the country, including an assault weapons ban that I believe Congress should adopt once again. We also have a reputation for strong public safety programming to prevent gun and gang violence among youth and in our communities.

Last year, Massachusetts became the first state to ban bump stocks following the deadly and tragic events in Las Vegas, Nevada. Following the events in Parkland, we announced that Massachusetts would join the "States for Gun Safety" Coalition and work with governors and experts from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Delaware and Puerto Rico on the nation's first Regional Gun Violence Research Consortium to share data that will inform an in-depth look at all manners of gun violence, including the tracking and interception of illegal guns.

We will continue to work with this coalition and the Commonwealth's legislative leaders to both share Massachusetts strengths in reducing gun violence, as well as to inform future efforts to make our gun laws better as the General Court considers legislation establishing extreme risk protective orders.

These efforts will not bring back those who were taken from us and may offer little solace to the families of those tragically lost in Florida, the Commonwealth and too many other places. A few weeks ago, I was also able to meet with Fred Guttenberg, whose 14-year old daughter was among the 17 victims that day in Parkland. I for one cannot imagine the pain and suffering of personally losing a child or loved one to this kind of senseless violence, but his strength in sorrow and knowing that we can do better, was nonetheless inspiring.

I can assure you we remain committed to working with experts, public officials, law enforcement and stakeholders like you on the measures that have proven to be effective at reducing violence and saving lives.

Thank you again for everything you are doing to inform this conversation, and help make our communities, Commonwealth and country, safer.

Sincerely,



Charlie Baker
Governor
Commonwealth of Massachusetts