

Plaskett Lauds Passage of Gun Bill, Noting That USVI Homicide Rate is Nine Times Higher Than the 50 States

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Delegate to Congress Stacey Plaskett on Tuesday praised the passage of the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](#), stating that the new gun law will have a profound impact on gun violence in the territory.

Ms. Plaskett, a member of the House Ways and Means Committees, stated, ““I am pleased that the House successfully passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. As the most significant legislation addressing guns in 30 years, this legislation is truly historic. This commonsense, bipartisan bill will protect America’s children, keep our schools safe, and reduce the threat of violence across our country. Also, this legislation is particularly impactful for the Virgin Islands where we have the second highest rate of guns smuggled across our borders and a homicide rate nine times higher than the 50 States.”

According to the congresswoman's office, the bill does the following:

- **Protections for Victims of Domestic Violence:** Closing the “Boyfriend Loophole” by adding convicted abusers to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.
- **Support for State Crisis Intervention Orders:** Incentivizing states to implement extreme risk protection order laws to keep weapons out of the hands of individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others.
- **Cracking Down on Gun Trafficking and Straw Purchases:** Preventing dangerous individuals from illegally evading background checks by establishing new federal criminal offenses that cover straw purchasing and trafficking.
- **Anti-Violence Community Initiatives:** Providing \$250 million in funding for community-based violence prevention initiatives.
- **Child and Family Mental Health Services:** Improving access to mental health services for children, youth and families through Medicaid, the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and other programs.
- **Investments in School Safety:** Expanding mental health and support services in schools, including early identification and intervention programs.

Ms. Plaskett said these measures will save lives and are a "tremendous step forward in addressing gun violence."

She added, "The horrific recent mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas and Buffalo, New York are stark reminders of the horrors of gun violence in our country. In 2020, 45,222 Americans died of gun-related injuries, more than any other year on record. That is a 43 percent increase since 2010. Communities across the nation have been torn apart by nearly 300 mass shootings since 2009 – attacks that have killed more than 1,500 people and wounded 1,000 more. Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in this nation.

“The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is the first step necessary to address this gun violence epidemic and make our children, our schools, our communities, and our country safer. Yet it is only the first step. House Democrats remain committed to fighting for additional gun safety legislation and finally putting an end to our nation’s daily drumbeat of gun violence.”