

June 6, 2022

Contact: Toni Valenti
tvalenti@nycla.org

**New York County Lawyers Association Issues Statement
on Gun Regulation in the Aftermath of Uvalde and Buffalo Shootings**

The New York County Lawyers Association (NYCLA), which represents 7500 attorneys, today issued the following statement:

In the wake of the mass shootings in Buffalo, NY and Uvalde, TX, we are a tiny bit encouraged by reports that a small, bi-partisan group of Senators has finally started to discuss some controls on gun ownership and use. Senator Chris Murphy from Connecticut leads the charge for the Democrats, as he has since Sandy Hook more than a decade ago, and Minority Leader Mitch McConnell encouraged Senator John Cornyn from Texas to lead the dialogue from the Republican side.

NYCLA has long supported what we regard as sensible gun regulation. We issued a comprehensive report on that subject in 2013 (copy or weblink attached), and unfortunately little has changed since then except for more mass shootings. Our commitment to gun regulation is demonstrated by the amicus brief we filed this year in the Supreme Court case challenging New York City's requirement of a permit demonstrating need to carry a concealed weapon. We thank Jacquie Woolf and Manatt Phelps for assisting on the brief.

We understand that the Senators are discussing things like universal background checks prior to gun purchases; raising the age of permitted purchase from 18 to 21; disqualifying felons and domestic violence perpetrators from purchasing guns; and possible "red flag" laws to enable authorities to take guns away from persons determined to be at risk of possible mental health issues that might impact their use of firearms. In the latter case there is a legitimate concern about "false positives", although we at NYCLA are willing to run that risk to save lives.

Given the restrictions that Congress has imposed on gun safety laws over the past generation, we are under no illusions that a single bill will solve the entire problem. The United States of America is the only country that routinely has mass shootings. And yet among other things we have prohibited the CPSC from considering gun safety; prohibited health authorities from even collecting data on gun deaths; and have prohibited large capacity ammunition magazines and automatic and semi-automatic weapons from being regulated. But a lengthy journey must begin with a single step, and the current discussion among the Senators at least constitutes a step.

The Supreme Court in Heller recognized an individual right to bear arms, separate and apart from the context of use of weapons in a militia. But even that decision recognized that the right need not be unlimited. We support the Senators in their current effort, and we hope it bears fruit.

About the New York County Lawyers Association

The New York County Lawyers Association (www.nycla.org) was founded in 1908 as one of the first major bar associations in the country that admitted members without regard to race, ethnicity, religion or gender, and has a long history of supporting the rights of LGBTQ+ people. Since its inception, NYCLA has pioneered some of the most far-reaching and tangible reforms in American jurisprudence. For more information on NYCLA please visit nycla.org.

###