



COUNTY OF ERIE

MARK C. POLONCARZ

COUNTY EXECUTIVE

February 22, 2018

The Honorable Chris Collins
U.S. Congressman, NY-27
117 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Continuing Dialogue on Sensible Gun Laws

Dear Congressman Collins: *Chris,*

Following up on our phone conversation of Friday, February 16, 2018, as I noted during that discussion you stated during your February 15 interview with "Spectrum News - Buffalo" we need to have "a sit -down and a conversation of what we can do" to prevent future tragedies like the Parkland, Florida school shooting. I agree we should and that is why I called you to offer doing just that - I would speak on behalf of the passage of common sense gun laws and you can talk about what legislation or steps you believe should be taken, if any, to reduce this senseless violence in our country.

While we only had the opportunity to speak for about 20 minutes last Friday, we candidly discussed numerous facets of the issue and I offered to explore the possibility of continuing the dialogue in a broadcast setting that would reach a wider audience on this incredibly important topic. I am pleased to say today that such an opportunity has presented itself.

I have spoken to WNET-TV President Don Boswell and the station's producer John Grant and both have advised me their organization would be honored to host a live, Town Hall format-type discussion of this issue in their downtown Buffalo studios, which would additionally be simulcast on WBFO-FM and/or WNET-AM radio. WNET's quick willingness to air a program of this nature across several media platforms also underscores the undeniable importance and immediacy of the gun violence issue, so it is imperative we act now.

There is no more important issue in the nation today than protecting our citizens from the senseless slaughter of innocent individuals, including children, from mass shootings. No place is safe anymore: churches, movie theaters, concerts, and, as we have seen repeatedly, schools. So far our community has been spared from adding its name to the long list of mass

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shooting locations – Columbine, Newtown, Orlando, Las Vegas, Sutherland Springs, Parkland, and so many others – but we should never leave the future to chance. Our nation must address this issue and as a leader of your party you have a unique opportunity to do so.

Let us build on our conversation of last week with a healthy, informed and energetic moderated discussion at the WNED studios, soon. Our constituents elected us to serve and be leaders of our community, so let us lead on this issue. Join me for a frank discussion and we can lead our nation forward to a time where hopefully none of us have to worry about being a victim of a mass shooting.

I look forward to your reply and the opportunity to continue our conversation.

Sincerely yours,



Mark C. Poloncarz
Erie County Executive

MCP/pa

cc: Don Boswell, WNED-WBFO