

## **Testimony**

### **National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)**

#### **Before U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary**

**Wednesday, September 25, 2019**

Committee Chairman, Representative Jerrold Nadler, Ranking Member, Representative Doug Collins, and members of the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on the Judiciary, I bring you greetings on behalf of the Executive Board and members of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives – NOBLE.

My name is Dr. RaShall Brackney and I am a member of NOBLE and the Chief of Police for the Charlottesville Police Department in Charlottesville, VA. It is an honor for NOBLE to provide written testimony on the topic of “Protecting America from Assault Weapons.”

NOBLE is very concerned about the level of gun violence in the United States, and specifically the correlation between violence and the proliferation of assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines. It is our organization’s opinion that violence—particularly gun violence is a public health issue. And, as with all public health issues, it demands a comprehensive, nonjudgmental, pragmatic, evidence-based approach to saving lives and reducing injury. NOBLE along with organizations such as the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (of which we are a

member) is committed to addressing the pervasive nature of gun violence and its horrific impact on communities across America. Specifically, firearm-related injuries and deaths to include homicides, suicides, and accidental shootings, involving assault weapons is unacceptable and demands immediate attention.

To be clear, NOBLE defines assault weapons as semi-automatic guns with a high-capacity ammunition magazine designed for military use. We advocate for limiting high-capacity ammunition magazines to ten rounds and the regulation of new semi-automatic assault weapons. In 2016, assault weapons accounted for 1 in 4 police officers killed in the line of duty through gun violence (Violence Policy Center - February 27, 2018). NOBLE supported the Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act or Federal Assault Weapons Ban (AWB) of 1994 and the Federal Assault Weapons Ban Reauthorization Act of 2004, and we support H.R. 8 (Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019) as does 90% of all Americans.

Assault weapons have been used in many mass shootings such as Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, The Tree of Life Synagogue Shooting, The Las Vegas Music Festival Shooting and in El Paso. We believe the level and lethality of gun violence directed at police officers and our communities requires an organized and aggressive response from policy makers at the federal, state, and local levels. Elected officials must commit to closing gaps in the current regulatory system, including those

that enable felons, minors, and other prohibited persons to access firearms, and those that allow the trafficking of illegal guns.

Law enforcement plays a central and critical role in preventing gun violence and solving crime. Effective strategies for the strict enforcement of laws concerning the illegal possession, trafficking, and criminal use of firearms are vital, and need to be supported by data, research, technology, training, and best practices. Because the public's health and safety depend on the efforts of law enforcement, agencies must have resources sufficient to prioritize the protection of officers and communities against illegal guns and firearm violence. The crisis of gun violence in our country necessitates a sustained, coordinated, and collaborative effort involving citizens, elected officials, law enforcement, and the entire criminal justice system.

On behalf of the law enforcement leaders of NOBLE, thank you for supporting law enforcement and our ability to maintain public safety while continuing to address the health issue of gun violence. Our members stand ready to meet the needs of our communities and nation. Thank you again for this opportunity to provide testimony.