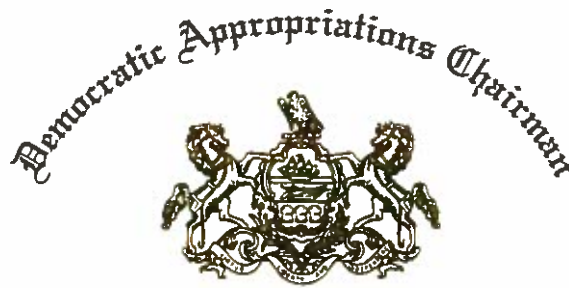


7TH DISTRICT  
**VINCENT HUGHES**  
SENATE BOX 203007  
THE STATE CAPITOL  
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3007  
717-787-7112  
FAX: 717-772-0579

2401 NORTH 54TH STREET  
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19131  
215-879-7777  
FAX: 215-879-7778

EMAIL: [hughes@pasenate.com](mailto:hughes@pasenate.com)  
TWITTER: @SenHughesOffice  
FACEBOOK: [facebook.com/Vincent.Hughes.7](https://www.facebook.com/Vincent.Hughes.7)  
WEB: [www.senatorhughes.com](http://www.senatorhughes.com)



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PA LEGISLATIVE BLACK CAUCUS  
PA MINORITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
STATE EMPLOYEES RETIREMENT SYSTEM BOARD

## Senate of Pennsylvania

August 8, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Baker  
Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Room 362, Main Capitol  
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17120-3020

Dear Senator Baker:

I am pleased to hear of your interest in holding a series of public hearings to determine potentially effective remedies to mass shootings.

The events of El Paso and Dayton unfortunately are a part of a troubling trend across the Nation. Pennsylvania has not been immune to tragic events like those in El Paso and Dayton. In October 2018, a gunman opened fired at the Tree of Life synagogue in the Squirrel Hill section of Pittsburgh murdering 11 people.

While mass shootings tend to grab headlines, gun violence is a daily occurrence in many communities across the Commonwealth. During the month of June, three public parks in the City of Philadelphia were the sites of gun related violence. According to data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, the rate of deaths involving a firearm in Pennsylvania is higher than the national rate.

As the Senate Judiciary Committee embarks on this admirable endeavor to find what reasonable laws can be enacted to reduce firearm related deaths in the Commonwealth, I hope that background checks for firearm purchases will be part of the conversation.

Senate Bill 88, universal background checks, has bipartisan support in the Senate as does the version introduced in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. The bipartisan support for these proposals coincides with increased national support for universal background checks. In fact, democrats and republicans alike have called for expanded background checks in the wake of the tragedies in Texas and Ohio. I hope that this proposal will be given strong consideration during this process.

I look forward to being your partner through this process.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vincent J. Hughes", written over a horizontal line.

Vincent J. Hughes  
Democratic Chair  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
PA 7<sup>th</sup> Senatorial District

cc: Senator Larry Farnese, Democratic Chair, Senate Judiciary Committee  
Senator Jay Costa, Democratic Leader