



Press Release



**Congressman John Conyers, Jr.
Michigan, 14th District**

**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

www.house.gov/judiciary_democrats/index.html

For Immediate Release:
March 22, 2005

Contact: Danielle Brown
(202)225-1294

**Conyers and Judiciary Democrats Request
Immediate Action on Gun Violence in Schools**

Washington, DC - Rep. John Conyers, Jr. Ranking Member House Judiciary Committee and eight Democratic Members of the Judiciary Committee sent a letter today to Chairman Sensenbrenner requesting emergency action be taken in reaction to this week's shooting in a Minnesota school. The text of the letter is below.

March 22, 2005

The Honorable F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Chairman
Committee on the Judiciary
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

We are writing to ask that you immediately commence work on the emergency issue of gun violence in our schools. Yesterday, ten individuals were shot and killed, including five students, in a gun rampage by a high school student in Minnesota. In addition, the student apparently wounded at least 14 other individuals before killing himself. The student shooter was able to perpetrate this massacre despite the presence of a guard and the school's use of metal detectors.

There are many potential responses to the shooting spree that our Committee could consider, including enhanced child safety guards, closing of gun loopholes (including the loophole recently identified by the GAO in their report for Senator Lautenberg), renewal of the federal assault weapons ban and limits on ammunition magazine capacity, increased school

security measures, and increased resources for state and localities to hire and retain safety officers. With regard to each possible solution, we are more than willing to work with you on a bipartisan basis in considering these or any other potential responses to yesterday's tragic events.

In the past, we established a bipartisan process after Columbine and came up with a juvenile delinquency prevention bill and a juvenile accountability bill which were virtually unanimously supported. Unfortunately, the funding for those two bills has been reduced by more than half since they were enacted and further cuts are proposed in the Administration's current budget proposals. We should reexamine our strong bipartisan goals and steps leading to these bills to see what further steps may be necessary.

The Committee is fully able to function on important policy matters of this nature even when the House is in adjournment. It is difficult for us to conceive of a more pressing public policy matter than protecting our children from school violence. As we learned in the wake of the Columbine tragedy, the risk of copy-cat incidents is particularly grave in the aftermath of such incidents, making immediate congressional action all the more imperative.

Thank you for promptly considering this request.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Conyers, Jr.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler

Rep. Robert Wexler

Rep. Linda Sanchez

Rep. Anthony Weiner

Rep. Mel Watt

Rep. Robert Scott

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee

Rep. Chris Van Hollen

##JUD-109-032205##