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MISSOURI SENATE
JAMILAH NASHEED
Senator, 5th District

August 28, 2019

The Honorable Dave Schatz, Senate President Pro Tem
201 W Capitol Ave., Room 326
Jefferson City, MO 65101

Senator Schatz,

I am writing in response to an unyielding and deadly public health threat in Missouri, and to request that pursuant to Senate Rule 31.1, you designate an interim committee on the issue of gun violence.

The gun violence epidemic in the State of Missouri, especially in the City of St. Louis, is a public health crisis and must be treated as such. Since April of this year, at least twelve innocent children have died from gun violence in St. Louis. In June, four children were killed by guns in a single weekend, including a three-year old little girl. Two other girls, ages 5 and 6, were also injured. More recently, Kennedy Powell was eating pizza with friends outside her house when she was shot in the back and killed. She was also just three years-old. Jurnee Thompson was killed near a place where countless kids and families across Missouri find themselves most Friday nights – a high school football game. Jurnee was eight. These are just a handful of the 134 homicides in St. Louis already committed this year, nearly all of which involved at least one firearm.

As you know, Governor Mike Parson has rejected a request from the Legislative Black Caucus for a special legislative session on gun violence. The governor was quoted in response as saying: "There are many different opinions on how to find a solution."

In response to the governor's words, I believe an interim legislative committee can gather, study and evaluate these different opinions and put forward a reasonable solution to the General Assembly when we reconvene in January.

For years, St. Louis has consistently had the highest per-capita murder rate of any large metropolitan area in America. The FBI reported that St. Louis had a murder rate of 66 murders per 100,000 people in 2017, the worst rate in the nation. Forbes has named us the second most dangerous city in the country for violent crime. This is not a picture we can continue to present to the world and expect our state to grow and prosper.

Senator, we must do everything we can to restore a sense of safety, hope and pride for the people who live, work and visit the City of St. Louis. Your commitment to their wellbeing through a dedicated and productive interim committee would be a significant step forward in providing peace of mind for the families and businesses of St. Louis.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. I look forward to working with you and all our colleagues to end the epidemic of gun violence in Missouri.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jamilah Nasheed".

State Senator Jamilah Nasheed
District 5