



# Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street  
Chicago, IL

## Legislation Text

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File #: 16-4068, Version: 1

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### PROPOSED RESOLUTION

#### CALLING ON CONGRESS TO REPEAL THE DICKEY AMENDMENT

**WHEREAS**, on October 7, 1993, a study titled “*Gun Ownership as a Risk Factor for Homicide in the Home*” sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (Vol. 329 No. 15) concluded that rather than confer protection, guns kept in the home are associated with an increase in the risk of homicide by a family member or intimate acquaintance, and that residents in homes with a gun faced a 2.7-fold greater risk of homicide and a 4.8-fold greater risk of suicide; and

**WHEREAS**, this peer-reviewed published study that analyzed 1860 homicides recorded in 3 U.S. Counties from August 23, 1987, and August 23, 1992, also concluded that although firearms are often kept in homes for personal protection, the practice is counterproductive and that efforts to increase home security have largely focused on preventing unwanted entry, but the greatest threat to the lives of household members appears to come from within; and

**WHEREAS**, as a result of the publication of this study, the National Rifle Association moved to suppress the dissemination of the results and to block funding of future government research into the causes of firearm injuries. Hence, in 1996, the NRA lobbied to include an amendment to an appropriations bill that removed \$2.6 million from the CDC’s budget, the amount the agency’s injury center had spent on firearms-related research the previous year; and

**WHEREAS**, named after its author Jay Dickey, a Republican member of the United States House of Representatives from Arkansas, the now known as the Dickey amendment, is a provision first inserted as a rider into the 1996 federal government omnibus spending bill which mandated that “none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote gun control”; and

**WHEREAS**, the Dickey amendment has been part of the federal government spending bill ever since, preventing U.S. scientists from answering a most basic question: What works to prevent firearm injuries?; and

**WHEREAS**, on July 27, 2012, Jay Dickey, through a *Washington Post* Opinion, called to repeal the amendment that bears his name, and to conduct scientific research into preventing firearm injuries and to find ways to prevent firearm deaths without encroaching on the rights of legitimate gun owners; and

**WHEREAS**, Mr. Dickey also rationalizes that “the federal government has invested billions to understand the causes of motor vehicle fatalities and, with that knowledge, has markedly reduced traffic deaths in the United States. Since the mid-1970s, research has inspired such interventions as child restraints, seat belts, frontal air bags, a minimum drinking age and motorcycle helmets. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that 366,000 lives were saved through such efforts from 1975 to 2009”; and

**WHEREAS**, in an editorial in the April 7, 2015 issue of *Annals of Internal Medicine*, a team of doctors wrote: "It does not matter whether we believe that guns kill people or that people kill people with guns-the result is the same: a public health crisis"; and

**WHEREAS**, in a *Mother Jones* article published in April, 2015, an analysis of data from 2012 conducted in collaboration with Ted Miller from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, an independent nonprofit that studies public health, education, and safety issues, found that the annual cost of gun violence in America exceeds \$229 billion. Direct

costs account for \$8.6 billion-including long-term prison costs for people who commit assault and homicide using guns, which at \$5.2 billion a year is the largest direct expense; and that the average cost to taxpayers for a single gun homicide in America is nearly \$400,000. Indirect costs amount to at least \$221 billion, about \$169 billion of which comes from what researchers consider to be the impact on victims' quality of life. Victims' lost wages, which account for \$49 billion annually, are the other major factor; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 2, 2015, physicians with Doctors for America joined the National Physicians Alliance, Doctors Council, American Medical Women's Association, American College of Preventive Medicine, The Committee of Interns and Residents, Physicians for the Prevention of Gun Violence, American Medical Student Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, and Reps. David Price, Nita Lowey, Mike Thompson, Robin Kelly and Mike Quigley to urge Congress to end the effective ban on the ability for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to conduct research on gun violence. Over 2,000 doctors in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia signed a petition urging Congress to remove the barriers to common sense research that have existed for nearly 20 years and include annual funding to identify causes and ways to prevent gun violence.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the members of the Cook County Board of Commissioners do hereby urge the United States Congress and the United States Senate to repeal the Dickey Amendment and fund scientific research into preventing firearm injuries and the prevention of firearm deaths; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Secretary of the Board to send a copy of this Resolution to Joseph R. Biden, Vice-President; Sen. Mitch McConnell, Majority Leader; Sen. Harry Reid, Democratic Leader; Rep. Paul D. Ryan, Speaker of the House; Rep. Kevin McCarthy, Majority Leader; and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, Minority Leader.