



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

RECOGNIZING JUNE AS GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH IN COOK COUNTY

WHEREAS, a national coalition of organizations has designated the first Friday in June as the sixth National Gun Violence Awareness Day, to help honor Hadiya Pendleton, a teenager from Chicago who was shot and killed weeks after marching in the presidential inaugural parade in 2013, as well as all other gun violence victims and survivors commemorating this day by wearing orange; and

WHEREAS, Americans are 25 times more likely to die by gun homicide than people in other high-income countries, and more than 100 are killed by gun violence daily on average with more than 13,000-gun homicides each year and 100,000 Americans are shot and injured each year; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, the most recent year for which complete data is available, 39,773 people died from gun-related injuries in the U.S., according to the CDC. This figure includes gun murders and gun suicides, along with three other, less common types of gun-related deaths tracked by the CDC: those that were unintentional, involved law enforcement or whose circumstances could not be determined; and

WHEREAS, suicides have long accounted for the majority of U.S. gun deaths. In 2017, six-in-ten gun-related deaths in the U.S. were suicides (23,854), while 37% were murders (14,542), according to the CDC; and

WHEREAS, in Illinois, more people are killed by guns than by cars. In 2014, 924 people were killed in car crashes, and more than 1,167 people were killed by firearms in Illinois, according to the Illinois Department of Transportation and CDC respectively; and

WHEREAS, on a per capita basis, there were 12-gun deaths per 100,000 people in 2017 - the highest rate in more than two decades; and

WHEREAS, according to the Cook County Medical Examiner Statistics there were 582 victims of gun homicides in Cook County in 2019, 114 of which took place in suburban Cook County; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association (AMA) has long advocated against the culture of violence in America, and advocates to find workable solutions to reduce gun violence and the culture of violence in America; and

WHEREAS, the AMA considers the epidemic of gun violence to be a public health issue, and while gun violence claims the lives of so many Americans daily, there has been virtually no publicly funded research on it for almost 20 years because Congress has effectively imposed a ban on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funding for conducting research on gun violence and how to prevent it even extending the research ban to the National Institutes of Health (NIH); and

WHEREAS, in 2017, Cook County Health's Stroger Hospital cared for more than 1,100 patients with gunshot wounds, and spends an average of \$30,000-50,000 to treat a patient who has been the victim of gun violence, amounting to an annual expenditure of between \$30- 40 million, which only accounts for the cost of the initial hospital treatment, not the extensive outpatient or rehabilitation many patients require; and

WHEREAS, gun violence is a symptom of complex socioeconomic disparities that disproportionately impact disenfranchised communities, and although there is no single solution to the problem of gun violence, it is clear that any public health response to violence must include approaches that understand the role trauma plays in shaping behavior and promote opportunities for addressing and healing from trauma in addition to other factors such as educational and economic opportunities, as well as federal gun laws; and

WHEREAS, youth violence and trauma are inextricably linked, with at-risk youth reported exposure of an average of 10 different types of traumatic stress, mostly chronic, beginning on average at age 6, and exposure to ongoing violence shapes a person's personality and developmental capacities, including their ability to regulate emotions and to read safety and danger cues; and

WHEREAS, youth injured by violence are among those most at risk for future violence and injury, which is why it is important that support is provided to address the psychological trauma that can drive this cycle of violence;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners, on behalf of the more than 5.2 million residents of Cook County, do hereby take this opportunity to acknowledge National Gun Violence Awareness Day, which took place on June 5, 2020; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the month of June be hereby declared Gun Violence Awareness Month in the County of Cook; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this text be spread upon the official proceedings of this Honorable Body in recognition of Gun Violence Awareness Month.