

RESOLUTION NO. 20190808-149

WHEREAS, the City is committed to the safety, health, and welfare of all of its residents; and

WHEREAS, ensuring the safety of Austin residents, public safety officers, and visitors is a top City priority; and

WHEREAS, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that gun violence in the United States is at epidemic levels, claiming over 30,000 lives annually; and

WHEREAS, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, in 2011, firearms were the number one cause of death for police officers killed in the line of duty; and

WHEREAS, in the first week of the 116th Congress, House Resolution 8 (H.R. 8) was introduced on a bipartisan basis in the United States House of Representatives to require background checks for all commercial gun sales; and

WHEREAS, on February 27, 2019, the United States House of Representatives, on a bipartisan basis, approved H.R. 8, marking the first time major gun safety legislation has passed the United States House of Representatives in more than twenty years; and

WHEREAS, in the over 150 days since H.R. 8 was passed by the United States House of Representatives, the United States Senate has not debated or voted on this important legislation; and

WHEREAS, the United States Congress is currently on a five-week August recess and will not be considering legislation during that time; and

WHEREAS, in just the first weekend of August, at least 29 people were killed in mass acts of gun violence in 24 hours, and on average, 100 Americans will be shot and killed every day the Senate does not act; and

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2019, one of those mass acts of gun violence occurred in El Paso, Texas where 20 individuals are reported to have been killed by a shooter who, according to initial reports, uploaded an online manifesto describing a so-called “Hispanic invasion of Texas” and referencing inspiration from the attack on mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand that left 51 dead; and

WHEREAS, federal authorities have reported that they are investigating the El Paso mass shooting as a potential hate crime and as a potential act of domestic terrorism; and

WHEREAS, the wounded in El Paso ranged in age from two years old to 82 years old and the initial reporting indicates that an assault-style rifle similar to an AK-47 was secured at the scene; and

WHEREAS, after the May 18, 2018 shooting at Santa Fe High School, in Santa Fe, Texas, where 10 people were killed and 13 injured, Texas Governor Greg Abbott met with superintendents, administrators, law enforcement officials, as well as survivors of gun violence, to discuss policies that could increase the safety of schools and communities while preserving Second Amendment rights; and

WHEREAS, on May 30, 2018 Texas Governor Greg Abbott released a School and Firearm Safety Action Plan, which included a recommendation encouraging the Texas Senate and House leaders to consider the merits of adopting a red flag law or “extreme risk protective orders” allowing law enforcement, a family member, a school employee, or a district attorney to file a petition seeking the removal of firearms from a potentially dangerous person only after legal due process is provided; and

WHEREAS, Texas Governor Greg Abbott's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan described the so called "red flag laws" as a proposal which could have been used to prevent the shootings at Sutherland Springs and at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; and

WHEREAS, the 86th Legislative Session began January 8, 2019 and provided opportunities for the Texas House and Senate to consider important gun safety legislation; and

WHEREAS, on average over 3,350 gun-related deaths occur in Texas each year; and

WHEREAS, local organizations, including Texas Gun Sense and local chapters of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, have advocated at the Texas Legislature for sensible gun safety legislation; and

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature adjourned without taking sufficient action to reduce the risk of gun violence in our schools and communities; and

WHEREAS, Texas Governor Greg Abbott has the authority to call a special session of the Texas Legislature to immediately address meaningful action to prevent tragedies, such as the mass shooting in El Paso from happening in other Texas communities; and

WHEREAS, City Council has taken extensive action to address the epidemic of gun violence including Resolution No. 20130228-035 signifying City Council's intent to endorse efforts to develop a comprehensive approach to reducing gun crime as well as Resolution Nos. 20161215-064, 20171207-054, and 20180510-047; **NOW, THEREFORE**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:

City Council implores the state and federal governments to immediately take emergency action to end gun violence and address the associated public health and public safety crisis; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED:

City Council calls on Texas Governor Greg Abbott to immediately call a special session of the Texas Legislature to advance proposals included in Governor Abbott's own School and Firearm Safety Action Plan; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVLED:

City Council calls on the United States Senate to immediately return from recess and begin debate and deliberation on H.R. 8 and other meaningful gun safety legislation that has been approved by the United States House of Representatives and remains languishing in the Senate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to send a copy of this Resolution to the Texas delegation of the United States Congress and to the White House; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to send a copy of Governor Abbott's School and Firearm Safety Action Plan along with a copy of this Resolution to the Travis, Williamson and Hays County delegation of the Texas House and Senate, the Texas Governor, the Texas Lieutenant Governor, and to the Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

City Council directs the City Manager to send a copy of this Resolution to the Texas Municipal League and to all municipalities in the State of Texas with populations over 500,000 residents to encourage them to consider taking similar action.

ADOPTED: August 8, 2019

ATTEST:



Jannette S. Goodall
City Clerk