

RESOLUTION NO. 20220616-086

WHEREAS, the City Council has consistently supported efforts to reduce gun violence to protect the health and safety of all members of the community members and visitors; and

WHEREAS, during the past decade, gun violence has increased dramatically across the United States, in the State of Texas, and within the City; and

WHEREAS, City Council passed resolutions addressing the epidemic of gun violence in 2015, 2017, 2019, 2020, and 2021; and

WHEREAS, in August of 2019, City Council approved the creation of The Gun Violence Task Force, which recommended a series of potential actions the City could take to prevent gun violence, including the creation of the Office of Violence Prevention; and

WHEREAS, the Office Violence Prevention, created in 2020, has launched a successful safe gun storage education campaign, distributed free gun locks and is working on the formation of a strategic plan based on the principles of community-based violence interruption and localized problem analysis; and

WHEREAS, the City is a participant in President Biden's White House Community Violence Initiative, which provides technical assistance and resources to aid in the formation of community based violence intervention programs; and

WHEREAS, consultants have identified the need to provide additional funding to the Office of Violence Prevention; and

WHEREAS, the City has launched a comprehensive effort to reduce gun violence and improve safety in the downtown entertainment district; and

WHEREAS, gun violence prevention policies factor prominently in the City's federal and state legislative agendas; and

WHEREAS, the following list includes facts and data on gun violence:

- In 2022, 45,013 people were killed by firearms in the United States, according to the Gun Violence Archive; and
- Texas suffered 4,164 gun-related deaths in 2020, at a rate of 14.2 per 100,000 people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (the "CDC"); and
- In 2021, the City experienced a record number of gun-related homicides and injuries, the majority of which impacted communities of color; and
- The City is experiencing a rise in gun-related violence in the downtown entertainment district, including a June 2021 mass shooting on East Sixth Street resulting in one death and 13 injuries; and
- Firearm related injuries result in an estimated 30,000 hospital stays and 50,000 emergency room visits, at a cost of more than \$1 billion dollars annually, according to the U.S. Government Accountability Office; and
- Guns are the leading cause of death for children in the United States, according to the CDC; and
- Every month an average of 70 women in the United States are shot and killed by an intimate partner, according to Everytown for Gun Safety and the CDC; and

- Young black males account for 38% of gun-related deaths, even though they represent only 2% of the total US population, according to the Gun Violence Archive; and
- Young black males are 18 times more likely to be killed in gun-related homicides than their white peers, according to the Children's Defense Fund; and
- More than 67,000 LatinX people were killed by guns in the United States between 1999 and 2019, and these numbers are almost certainly higher due data recording errors, according to the Violence Policy Center; and
- More than 10,000 hate crimes each year involve use of a firearm, according to Everytown for Gun Safety; and
- Guns are involved in three of every four murders of transgender people and eight of every ten homicides of black trans women, according to the Human Rights Campaign; and
- As of June 7, 247 mass shootings have taken place in 2022, according to the Gun Violence Archive; and
- On May 24, 2022, an 18-year-old assailant committed the deadliest school shooting in Texas history, using an AR-15 semi-automatic assault style rifle to murder 19 children and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde; and
- Semi-automatic assault style rifles have been used in several recent Texas mass shootings, including inside an El Paso Walmart (23 killed, 25 injured), during a Midland / Odessa highway shooting spree (seven killed, 25 injured) and at a Sutherland Springs church service (26 killed, 20 injured); **NOW, THEREFORE,**

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

The Council reiterates its call for Congress to enact legislation to reduce gun violence listed in the Federal Legislative Agenda for 117th Congress, including legislation that accomplishes the following:

- Requires background checks for all gun sales;
- Provides for prosecution of straw purchasers (i.e., when someone uses another person to execute the paperwork necessary to purchase a firearm from a federally licensed firearms dealer) and gun traffickers;
- Improves the accuracy and completeness of background check databases to ensure the safety of our residents;
- Limits or prevents access to firearms by domestic abusers who are not currently prevented access by federal law, including abusers who victimize non-spouse partners; abusers who victimize a family member other than a partner or child; and convicted stalkers and others subject to a protective order;
- Requires domestic abusers to surrender their firearms;
- Convenes a national commission on gun violence (including elected officials from all levels of government, victims' family members, survivors, gun advocates, law enforcement, and others) to offer recommendations; and
- Promotes the safe storage of firearms.

The Council further calls on Congress to further reduce gun violence by enacting President Biden's proposals to perform the following actions:

- Renew the Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2004, and which included a ban on the sale or possession of ammunition magazines containing more than ten rounds;
- Increase the allowed age of purchase from 18 to 21 for all semi-automatic assault-style rifles;
- Increase funding for CDC to conduct comprehensive research to identify the underlying causes that lead to gun violence and mass shootings in communities;
- Support a federal extreme risk protection order (“red flag law”) that would allow judges to temporarily restrict access to gun for individuals at an elevated risk of harming themselves or others;
- Repeal liability shields for gun manufacturers; and
- Ban the manufacture of “ghost guns,” including un-serialized assembly kits that can be purchased online or at a store without a background check.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City calls on the Biden Administration to take immediate executive action to expand and assist the movement to end gun violence, including Executive Orders that do the following:

- Create a Federal Office of Gun Violence Prevention within the White House; and
- Establish a coordinator within the Department of Justice, dedicated to the goal of ending gun violence; and
- Prioritize funding for states to enforce their existing and potential “red flag laws” (extreme risk protective orders); and

- Expand funding for violence prevention programs in collaboration with local offices of violence prevention; and
- Direct the Department of Justice to clarify those “engaged in the business” of dealing firearms to also include people selling guns at gun shows or online marketplaces.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City of Austin reiterates its support for legislation listed in the State of Texas Legislative Agenda that reduces gun violence in coordination with local law enforcement including legislation that would limit or prevent access to firearms by domestic abusers and promote safe storage for firearms.

The Council further calls on Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature to enact legislation that would do the following:

- Raise the minimum age of purchase from 18 to 21 for semi-automatic, assault style rifles;
- Allow local jurisdictions to regulate the public carry of semi-automatic assault style rifles;
- Prohibit the sale or possession of ammunition magazines containing more than 10 rounds; and
- Increase penalties for illegally allowing minors unsupervised access to firearms.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The Council directs the City Manager to take the following steps to support the mission of ending gun violence:

- Identify funding to continue the safe storage education and gun lock distribution campaign;
- Prepare funding to implement the gun violence prevention strategies identified, including, but not limited to, expanding the number of FTEs allocated to the Office of Violence Prevention;
- Explore the feasibility of collecting local data relating to the purchase of ammunition and comparing this information to a database of convicted felons or others belonging to a federally prohibited category; and
- Support data sharing across the City to inform the Office of Violence Prevention in identifying and tracking the causes, impacts, and intervention of community violence as it relates to populations most impacted by gun violence; and
- Support and encourage efforts by the Offices of the City, Travis County, Travis County District Attorney, Travis County Attorney, and the Travis County Sheriff to collaborate in targeted efforts to reduce gun violence.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:

The City Manager is directed to provide status updates and outcomes for all gun violence prevention items from Council passed since 2015 and to report back by September 30, 2022.

ADOPTED: June 16, 2022

ATTEST:


Myrna Rios
City Clerk