

Resolution urging a multi-faceted community, legislative, and policy response at the local, state, and federal level, and committing Franklin County resources and action to address the scourge of gun violence in our community and across the nation. (Board of Commissioners)

WHEREAS, gun violence destroys lives, devastates families, and cripples communities; and

WHEREAS, there were 45,222 total gun deaths in the United States in 2020, which is the highest yearly number of gun deaths ever recorded¹; and

WHEREAS, gun violence affects people of all ages and races, but it has a disproportionate impact on young adults, males, and racial and ethnic minorities, with the largest increase in firearm homicides between 2019 and 2020 among Black people (39 percent), and the largest increase in firearm suicides among American Indian and Alaska Native people (42 percent); and²

WHEREAS, guns are used in the highest percentage of suicide attempts in the United States, and attempts of suicide by gun result in death 85 percent of the time, making access to guns a focal point in risk reduction and life-saving strategies³; and

WHEREAS, in each year from 2013 through 2018 the suicide rate for Veterans was 1.5 times the rate for non-Veteran adults, and firearms were used in a majority of cases⁴; and

WHEREAS, homicide is a leading cause of injury-related deaths among pregnant and postpartum people and most maternal homicides are committed by an intimate partner with a gun⁵; and

¹ National Vital Statistics System – Mortality Data (2020). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

² "Firearm Deaths Grow, Disparities Widen." Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Vital Signs. <https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/firearm-deaths/index.html>

³ "The Truth about Suicides and Guns." Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. <https://brady-static.s3.amazonaws.com/Brady-Report-Suicide-and-Guns.pdf>

⁴ 2020 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention.

⁵ Wallace M, Gillispie-Bell V, Cruz K, Davis K, Vilda D. Homicide During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period in the United States, 2018-2019. *Obstet Gynecol.* 2021 Nov 1;138(5):762-769.

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WHEREAS, from 2017 to 2021, there were 1,066 total recorded deaths by firearm among Franklin County residents and the mortality rate for gun-related death increased from 16.1 to 20.6 deaths per 100,000 residents⁶; and

WHEREAS, the gun-related mortality rate among Franklin County residents age 20-24 is highest among any age group, at 37.3 deaths per 100,000 residents, followed by residents age 18-19 with 30.7 deaths per 100,000⁷; and

WHEREAS, from 2017 to 2021, there were an additional 2,541 gunshot injuries among Franklin County residents treated in emergency departments and urgent care settings⁸; and

WHEREAS, there are many factors that can contribute to gun violence, including economic instability, education, social and community environments, childhood trauma, lack of adequate mental health resources, and inadequate gun safety policies, each of which should be further researched and studied to inform additional policy responses; and

WHEREAS, this Board of Commissioners applauds the recent passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, a historic and meaningful step forward in changing the trajectory of gun violence in our communities, and supports President Biden's Safer American Plan; and

WHEREAS, members of the United States Congress have the ability and duty to do more to create better and more effective protections for our children, residents, schools, community institutions, places of worship, and neighborhoods; and

⁶ "Gun Violence in Franklin County, Ohio." Franklin County Public Health, Health Systems and Planning Epidemiology.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ EpiCenter 3.5.24 Health Monitoring System. (2017-2021). Franklin County, OH - Gunshot. Health Monitoring. epicenter.hmsinc.com/epicenter/

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WHEREAS, members of the Ohio General Assembly must urgently align with federal efforts and heed the call to do something to reduce gun violence in our state; and

WHEREAS, coordinated and comprehensive policy action is needed at every level of government to reduce gun-related violence and promote safe neighborhoods and families; and

WHEREAS, it is incumbent upon all elected policymakers to develop workable policies and protections which balance one's right to own a firearm with another's inherent and inalienable right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; and

WHEREAS, consistent with Resolution No. 0421-18, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners remains committed to community safety and security and continues to prioritize investments in addressing the deep-seeded challenges which can lead to violence including programs which focus on restorative justice, mental health care, addiction recovery, workforce development and early childhood education; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS, FRANKLIN COUNTY, OHIO:

1. That this Board urges further federal legislative action and calls upon the Ohio General Assembly to reverse course and align with local and federal efforts to emphasize and enforce lawful, responsible, and safe gun ownership practices, such as:
 - Universal background checks
 - Extreme risk laws to prohibit firearm access by high-risk individuals, such as perpetrators of violent crime and domestic violence
 - Prohibitions on assault weapons and dangerous hardware

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- Enhanced firearm safety education and training requirements, including child safety features for every gun and enhanced safe storage requirements
 - Funding for gun violence prevention research
2. That this Board will continue to:
- Prioritize a systematic, data-driven focus on reducing poverty and addressing racial inequities in our community through the implementation of the Rise Together Blueprint for Reducing Poverty
 - Invest in our community's comprehensive continuum of mental health and addiction related services, including in crisis services, partnerships with veteran-serving organizations, and the CredibleMind platform
 - Support crisis intervention training among direct service and first responder personnel
 - Fund year-round youth employment, afterschool, and engagement activities to give our youngest residents alternatives to the social isolation and mental stress that can pose risks to their safety and wellbeing
 - Support outreach programs to ensure all residents are connected to services and supports ability to improve their wellbeing
 - Partner with social program staff in the Franklin County Sheriff's office and other justice system partners to ensure job skills, life skills, health and re-entry supports are available to individuals in our Franklin County corrections centers
 - Support community and economic stabilization through workforce development and training programs such as Building Futures, Driving Futures, and County Futures
3. That this Board calls upon County Administration and staff leadership to form a work group to identify additional policies, programs, and strategies within the authority of the county and/or our partners to

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reduce gun violence through the delivery of human and social services, economic development, youth development and public safety measures. Task this working group with:

- Soliciting community input on actions that can be taken within Franklin County's authority
 - Identifying opportunities to support and align with community-led violence prevention and intervention efforts
 - Engaging with other local governments in Franklin County to align and strengthen our collective efforts
 - Consulting with subject-matter experts from across the country to examine best practices in counties across the country working to address gun violence, including through community violence prevention and intervention programs, education, conflict resolution, hospital-based interventions, mentorship, violence interrupters, restorative justice, trauma informed care, and behavioral health interventions
 - Recommending additional areas of opportunity for action, investment, research, and evaluation
 - Identifying opportunities for investment through the Franklin County Office of Justice Policy and Programs to support nonprofit agencies addressing gun violence and crime prevention
4. That this Board will seek new partnerships with public, private, nonprofit and community groups that work to reduce gun violence through prevention, intervention, and education.
 5. That this Board supports all additional efforts in Franklin County, the State of Ohio, and nationwide to reduce gun violence by researching and deploying prevention strategies that address the underlying physical, social, economic, and structural conditions that increase firearm homicide and suicide risks.

Resolution No. 0655-22

September 06, 2022

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Prepared by: Lauren Rummel

SIGNATURE SHEET FOLLOWS