

Resolution No. 562-2025

By Council Member Starr

FOR ADOPTION
April 28, 2025

AN EMERGENCY RESOLUTION

Declaring gun violence a public health crisis and pledging to work to reduce the pervasiveness of gun violence in the City of Cleveland.

WHEREAS, with 4.52 firearm homicides per 100,000 people in 2021, the United States ranked first for firearm homicides among high-income countries with populations over 10 million; and

WHEREAS, gun violence affects people of all ages and races in the United States but has a disproportionate impact on Black males and Black young adults; more than half - or 55% - of all Black teenagers aged 15-17 who died in the United States in 2022 were killed by a firearm and;

WHEREAS, in the United States and Ohio in 2022, firearms were the leading cause of death for children under the age of 17; and

WHEREAS, 59 percent of American adults, or someone they care for, including 71 percent of Black and Latino Americans, have experienced gun violence in their lifetime, demonstrating the reach and impact gun violence has in communities across America; and

WHEREAS, in Ohio in 2023, 1,800 people died due to firearms, which is approximately 15 firearm deaths per 100,000 people; about 40% of those deaths were a result of homicide, while nearly 60% were a result of suicide; nearly 600 more people were shot and wounded; and

WHEREAS, in 2021, Cuyahoga County had the highest rate of gun-related deaths in Ohio with about 20 firearm deaths per 100,000 people; 80% of all homicide victims were male and nearly 86% of all homicide victims were Black; and

WHEREAS, Cleveland has been in the top ten for Black homicides in the country for nearly a decade; and

WHEREAS, in Cleveland between 2019 and 2024, there were a total of 953 homicides, of which 825 or 86.57% were Black victims; also between 2019 and 2024, out of a total of 953 homicides, 756 of the victims were Black people killed by a firearm, and of those, 75% were Black children between ages 0 and 17; and

WHEREAS, in Cleveland in 2023, there were just over 102 emergency room visits because of a gun-shot wound per 100,000 residents; these gun-shot wound victims were predominantly Black male Cleveland residents between the ages of 18 to 24; and

WHEREAS, in the United States in 2022, Black male teens and young adults ages 15-34 represented 2% of the total U.S. population, but accounted for 34% of all gun homicides, which was 24 times higher than white males of the same age group; and

WHEREAS, in Ohio in 2022, Black males ages 15-34 represented 2% of the state's population, but accounted for 41% of all gun homicides, which was 30 times higher than white males of the same age group; and

WHEREAS, these findings demonstrate the prevalence of gun violence in the United States and the detrimental effects that gun violence has on all citizens, and paint a grim picture of the impact of gun violence nationwide and in Ohio, highlighting the need for continued efforts to address the root causes of gun violence and prevent future tragedies; and

Resolution No. 562-2025

WHEREAS, those exposed to gun violence are more likely to engage in future gun violence and such exposure can lead to a wide array of negative health behaviors and outcomes, including educational challenges, behavioral health issues, alcohol use, drug use, suicide, depression, anxiety, and mental illness; and

WHEREAS, gun violence affects people of all ages, from infants to the elderly, and is linked to many chronic diseases, including obesity and substance abuse, and has other serious physical, reproductive and mental health consequences; and

WHEREAS, this Council believes that gun violence in Cleveland is rooted in racial and health inequities and injustices experienced for generations by people of color and recognizes the need to provide positive and safe environments for adults and children through community programs as well as mental health services; and

WHEREAS, this Council understands it is vital for the residents of this City that public and private institutions develop an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying social, economic, and systemic factors that can lead to gun violence; and

WHEREAS, this Council is committed to collaborating and solidifying alliances with external partners to address minority health inequities, economic instability, education, social and community environment, neighborhood infrastructure, and other social determinants of health that impact gun violence and its effects on the delivery of human and social services, economic development, youth development, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, this resolution constitutes an emergency measure for the immediate preservation of public peace, property, health or safety, now, therefore,

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

Section 1. That this Council declares gun violence a public health crisis and pledges to work to reduce the pervasiveness of gun violence in the City of Cleveland.

Section 2. That the Clerk of Council is directed to transmit copies of this resolution to all members of Cuyahoga County Council, the Ohio House of Representatives, the Ohio State Senate, and Ohio Governor Mike DeWine.

Section 3. That this resolution is hereby declared to be an emergency measure and, provided it receives the affirmative vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to Council, it shall take effect and be in force immediately upon its adoption and approval by the Mayor; otherwise it shall take effect and be in force from and after the earliest period allowed by law.

RS:rns
4/28/2025

Res. No. 562-2025

REPORT
after second Reading

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READ FIRST TIME
and referred to

REPORTS

READ FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD TIME

CITY CLERK

READ SECOND TIME

CITY CLERK

READ THIRD TIME on APRIL 28, 2025

PRESIDENT

CITY CLERK

APPROVED

MAYOR