



OFFERED BY COUNCILOR ED FLYNN

CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION DECLARING GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

WHEREAS: Gun violence is a leading cause of death and injuries in this country, causing harm to not only the individual, but also to communities that experience gun violence in their neighborhoods; *and*

WHEREAS: Gun violence is not only a public safety issue, but it is also a public health issue. It is often described as an “epidemic”, and many public health professionals see gun violence as a public health crisis, with the American Medical Association and the American Public Health Association calling gun violence a public health issue, and Center for Disease Control Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky called gun violence a “serious public health threat” in 2021; *and*

WHEREAS: More than two decades after Congress banned the CDC from funding research into gun violence, the CDC is finally funding research into firearm violence prevention in 2021, which allow public health researchers to study ways to reduce firearm deaths and injuries; *and*

WHEREAS: According to data from the CDC, injuries and death from firearms are a serious public health problem, as there were 45,222 firearm-related deaths in the United States in 2020, which equates to about 124 people dying from a firearm-related injury each day; *and*

WHEREAS: In Boston, there have been 21 fatal shootings and 120 non-fatal shootings so far this year, and recently, a 14 year old boy was shot and killed in a double shooting, less than a week after a high school student was shot and wounded by another student; *and*

WHEREAS: These recent incidents of gun violence remind us that there is significant work to address in terms of gun violence prevention and intervention, and recognizing gun violence as a Public Health Emergency will help to raise public awareness and elevate this issue to facilitate the attention and urgency required, and allow our dedicated city departments and the Boston Public Health Commission to work together to develop strategies to reduce and prevent gun violence; *and*

WHEREAS: At a recent Boston City Council Public Safety and Criminal Justice committee hearing where Councilors discussed youth violence, public health services, and public safety, declaring and treating gun violence as at Public Health Emergency were brought up as a way address the issue; *and*

WHEREAS: Treating gun violence as a Public Health Emergency and looking at it through a public health lense will allow researchers to study the patterns of gun deaths and injuries closely, and thus better understand the cause of gun violence and come up with prevention strategies for firearm deaths and injuries; *and*

THEREFORE BE IT ORDERED:

That the Boston City Council declares gun violence as a Public Health Emergency, and that the relevant Boston city departments work together with the Boston Public Health Commission to develop strategies that would reduce gun violence in the City of Boston.

Filed in Council: October 19th, 2022