
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 604 Session of
2019

INTRODUCED BY CRUZ, McCLINTON, MADDEN, DONATUCCI, KINSEY AND
SHUSTERMAN, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, NOVEMBER 14, 2019

A RESOLUTION

1 Declaring gun violence a social epidemic that requires immediate
2 action and condemning the National Rifle Association's
3 increasingly extreme and inflammatory rhetoric.

4 WHEREAS, Loss of human life in any form is tragic; and

5 WHEREAS, When a death results from a preventable action, the
6 loss is that much more shattering; and

7 WHEREAS, Today, across the United States and this
8 Commonwealth, lives are unnecessarily lost at an alarming rate
9 due to gun violence; and

10 WHEREAS, Nationwide, nearly 40,000 individuals lost their
11 lives due to gun violence in 2017; and

12 WHEREAS, The gun homicide rate is 25 times higher in the
13 United States than in other similarly situated economies; and

14 WHEREAS, In 2017, gun violence caused more than 1,600 deaths
15 and countless injuries in this Commonwealth, leaving a
16 devastating impact across this Commonwealth; and

17 WHEREAS, Gun violence has tied car crashes as the leading
18 cause of death for children 17 years of age or younger in this

1 Commonwealth; and

2 WHEREAS, Youths exposed to gun violence can experience
3 lasting trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
4 and chronic stress; and

5 WHEREAS, Economic costs include decreased future earnings;
6 and

7 WHEREAS, Gun violence results in a significant number of
8 accidental deaths, deaths by suicide, deaths by homicide and, a
9 growing threat, a number of mass casualty events such as the
10 domestic terrorist incident at the Tree of Life synagogue in
11 Pittsburgh in October 2018; and

12 WHEREAS, With every death, it becomes increasingly apparent
13 that gun violence is not only a public health crisis or a
14 tragedy that desperately needs to be addressed but a social
15 epidemic that requires immediate action; and

16 WHEREAS, Despite the overwhelming support of the American
17 public, including Pennsylvanians, for reasonable reforms to
18 address gun violence and save lives, the current polarizing
19 political climate has made any action impossible; and

20 WHEREAS, The largest organization in the United States
21 currently opposing gun reform and directing its immense
22 political sway toward inaction and even obstruction is the
23 National Rifle Association (NRA); and

24 WHEREAS, The NRA was chartered in 1871 with a primary goal of
25 promoting marksmanship; and

26 WHEREAS, In addition to marksmanship, the NRA promotes gun
27 training, safety and responsible gun ownership; and

28 WHEREAS, The NRA supported the first Federal gun control law
29 passed in the United States, the National Firearms Act of 1934;
30 and

1 WHEREAS, The NRA supported the Federal Firearms Act of 1938,
2 which established the Federal firearms license program, and
3 supported most of the Gun Control Act of 1968; and

4 WHEREAS, Beginning in the 1970s, the NRA transitioned its
5 primary focus from promoting marksmanship to influencing gun
6 control policy by establishing its feared and powerful political
7 lobbying branch, the Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA)
8 and its persuasive political action committee, the Political
9 Victory Fund; and

10 WHEREAS, During this time, the NRA leadership was overtaken
11 by individuals whose ideals mirrored those of the New Christian
12 Right and the Moral Majority, conservative ideals invoking
13 rights from God and not man or government; and

14 WHEREAS, These beliefs are reflected in the terror-filled
15 narrative that the NRA uses to support its absolutist position
16 on the Second Amendment, that protection of the individual means
17 enacting violence to restore moral order as the state is unable
18 to do so; and

19 WHEREAS, The NRA can be labeled a domestic terrorist
20 organization by the ways in which it characterizes opponents as
21 monsters or evil and deploys highly publicized and potentially
22 damaging legislator report cards, NRA-ILA lobbyists and
23 Political Victory Fund donations during elections; and

24 WHEREAS, The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) defines
25 domestic terrorism as an offense perpetrated by individuals
26 and/or groups inspired by or associated with primarily United
27 States-based movements that espouse extremist ideologies of a
28 political, religious, social, racial or environmental nature;
29 and

30 WHEREAS, The FBI states that the threat of domestic terrorism

1 remains persistent, with actors crossing the line from
2 supporting First Amendment protections to committing crimes to
3 further a political agenda; and

4 WHEREAS, The increasing number of mass shootings, including
5 those in Dayton, Ohio, El Paso, Texas and Gilroy, California,
6 and Pittsburgh at the Tree of Life synagogue, are being
7 investigated as domestic terrorism; and

8 WHEREAS, The individuals who carried out these vicious
9 attacks were inspired by the NRA's extreme, inflammatory
10 rhetoric; and

11 WHEREAS, Even if the NRA is not a domestic terrorist
12 organization, its rhetoric and actions have inspired individuals
13 to perpetrate acts of domestic terrorism; and

14 WHEREAS, Gun violence is a devastating and complicated issue
15 faced by this nation; and

16 WHEREAS, The uniquely American epidemic of gun violence
17 traces back to the same rhetoric and actions that prioritized
18 fundamentalist ideology over the preservation of life and limb;
19 therefore be it

20 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives declare gun
21 violence as a social epidemic that requires immediate action by
22 elected officials at all levels of government; and be it further

23 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives condemn the
24 National Rifle Association's increasingly extreme and
25 inflammatory rhetoric which has exasperated the gun violence
26 epidemic and inspired domestic terrorists.