



Legislation Text

File #: 17-09, **Version:** 1

Clerk 09/07/2017

A RESOLUTION calling on lawmakers to take meaningful action to address
firearm tragedy.

WHEREAS, firearm tragedy is one of the leading causes of premature death in the United States,
Washington State and King County, and

WHEREAS, the number of Americans who die each year from firearms, which was 36,247 in 2015,
exceeds the number of babies who die each year during their first year of life, which was 23,215 in 2014, or
people who die from HIV/AIDS, which was 6,465 in 2015, and will soon exceed the number of Americans who
die in traffic related causes, which was 38,818 in 2015, and

WHEREAS, lawmakers pass protective measures for other threats to the public's health and public
safety, such as seat belt laws and distracted and impaired driving laws, childhood vaccinations and regulations
around the safety of our drinking water, food and other products, and

WHEREAS, in 2015, 716 Washington State residents died as a result of firearms, and

WHEREAS, in 2015, 147 King County residents died as a result of firearms including six children
under age eighteen, and an additional 95 residents were hospitalized due to non-fatal firearm injuries including
9 children under age 18, resulting in an estimated \$200 million in medical costs and lost productivity in King
County alone, and

WHEREAS, firearm suicide accounts for 75 percent of firearm deaths in Washington State, being 535
of the 716 deaths in 2015, and

WHEREAS, of all the women killed by intimate partners in the United States between 2001-2012, 55

percent were killed with firearms, and

WHEREAS, in 2015 an estimated 21 percent of King County adults, which is 340,000 people, reported firearms present in their homes, including an estimated 150,000 King County adults who reported keeping at least one firearm unlocked, and

WHEREAS, during the 2015-16 school year, the Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction reported 130 incidents involving a gun on school premises, transportation systems or school facilities, and

WHEREAS, according to the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the total value of firearms reported stolen in Washington State in 2016 was \$3,312,794, and along with data on unsafely stored firearms and firearms going to schools, there is an urgent public health and public safety concern with unsafely stored firearms, and

WHEREAS, there are some known strategies that can markedly reduce firearm tragedy that our lawmakers can explore but more funding and research is needed to develop additional public health and public safety prevention strategies, and

WHEREAS, mental health services, education and economic opportunity must also be a priority to reduce both suicide and homicide rates;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Health of King County:

A. The Board of Health calls on federal, state and local lawmakers to take meaningful action to address firearm tragedy including funding for already passed prevention legislation including ESHB 1840 (2014), SHB 1501 (2017) and Initiative 1491 (2016), and

B. The Board of Health commits to supporting efforts to reduce firearm tragedy and increase mental health services, prevention and early intervention services in schools, and with community and business.

C. The Board of Health supports the implementation of a regional system for uniformly processing civil protection orders as recommended by the Domestic Violence - Firearms Panel.