

By: Blanco

S.C.R. No. 1

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, Gun violence has reached record levels across the
2 United States; and

3 WHEREAS, Data from the Centers for Disease Control and
4 Prevention shows that incidents involving a firearm are the leading
5 cause of death for Americans from 1 to 18 years of age; 3,219 such
6 deaths occurred in 2020; and

7 WHEREAS, Nearly 49,000 Americans lost their lives to gun
8 violence in 2021, according to an analysis by the Johns Hopkins
9 Center for Gun Violence Solutions; between 2019 and 2021, homicides
10 involving guns increased by 45 percent, compared to just 6 percent
11 for other murders; the alarming spike parallels a surge in gun
12 purchases during the pandemic, including an increase in sales to
13 first-time owners; moreover, tens of thousands of individuals
14 suffered nonfatal but life-changing gun injuries; and

15 WHEREAS, In Texas, someone is killed with a gun every two
16 hours, and the state's rate of nonfatal gun injuries is 27 percent
17 higher than the national rate; guns make domestic violence
18 incidents far more likely to end in fatalities, and more than
19 60 percent of intimate partner homicides involve a firearm; and

20 WHEREAS, Firearms have vast potential to amplify violence,
21 and Texas has experienced some of the nation's worst mass shootings
22 in recent years; the 2017 Sutherland Springs church shooting
23 claimed 26 lives and left 20 people wounded; the next year, a
24 17-year-old student killed 10 and injured 13 at Santa Fe High

1 School; 2019 brought even more devastation, when a single month saw
2 both the massacre at an El Paso Walmart that left 23 dead and 25
3 wounded and the shooting spree in Midland-Odessa that resulted in 7
4 dead and 25 injured; in 2022, an 18-year-old gunman shot his
5 grandmother before attacking Robb Elementary School, where 21
6 perished and 17 suffered injury; and

7 WHEREAS, Survivors of gun violence may experience severe
8 long-term consequences, ranging from paralysis and other physical
9 disabilities to problems with memory, thinking, and emotions, as
10 well as chronic mental health conditions such as post-traumatic
11 stress disorder; even in the absence of physical injury, exposure
12 to such violence can have enduring negative effects on child health
13 and development, and the effects of firearm violence extend beyond
14 victims and their families; mass shooting incidents can affect the
15 sense of safety and security of entire communities and impact
16 everyday decisions; the National Center for PTSD estimates that
17 28 percent of people who have witnessed a mass shooting develop the
18 condition, while about a third develop acute stress disorder;
19 incidents of mass violence have an enormous behavioral health
20 impact on most people, whether they are survivors, witnesses, or
21 exposed through mass media; moreover, active shooter drills in
22 schools, implemented widely in response to mass shootings, are
23 associated with increases in depression, stress, anxiety, and
24 physiological problems among students, their teachers, and their
25 parents; and

26 WHEREAS, From 2019 to 2021, rates of gun-related suicide rose
27 by 10 percent, even as suicides by other means decreased by about 8

1 percent; over 26,300 Americans died in suicides involving firearms
2 in 2021, a record high; research has shown that access to a gun in
3 the home increases the risk of suicide death by 300 percent; as the
4 most lethal method of suicide, firearms account for just 5 percent
5 of attempts, but more than half of all suicide deaths; the vast
6 majority of people who survive an attempted suicide do not try
7 again, but only about 10 percent of those who attempt suicide by
8 firearm live to get the help they need; and

9 WHEREAS, Contrary to some media narratives, a study from The
10 University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston concludes that
11 there is insufficient evidence to infer that gun violence is caused
12 by mental health issues; furthermore, research shows that adults
13 with mental illnesses experience violence at high rates, and they
14 are more likely to be victims, not perpetrators, of community
15 violence; and

16 WHEREAS, While the human toll of gun violence is the most
17 wrenching, the economic consequences are immense as well, reaching
18 \$557 billion in an average year, comparable to 2.6 percent of
19 U.S. gross domestic product; gun violence imposes myriad burdens on
20 society, including work loss, medical and mental health care,
21 emergency transportation, police and criminal justice activities,
22 insurance claims processing, employer costs, and decreased quality
23 of life; and

24 WHEREAS, Gun violence is not inevitable, as shown by other
25 wealthy nations with gun homicide rates vastly lower than ours; the
26 United States has a deeply rooted culture of gun violence that has
27 not received the same sustained, data-driven attention and

1 government investment as other public health problems, including
2 motor vehicle accidents and HIV/AIDS; in addressing those threats,
3 scientific research informed a comprehensive public health
4 response that dramatically shifted their trajectory; and

5 WHEREAS, The size, complexity, and grave social and economic
6 consequences of the gun violence epidemic demand a similarly
7 comprehensive, science-based approach; now, therefore, be it

8 RESOLVED, That the 88th Legislature of the State of Texas
9 hereby declare gun violence a public health crisis.