

RESOLUTION

Board of Hennepin County Commissioners

RESOLUTION: 26-0018 R1

At a meeting of the Board of Hennepin County Commissioners, a motion was made by Commissioner Greene, and seconded by Commissioner Edelson, that the Resolution be adopted. The motion passed.

WHEREAS, gun violence is a complex and urgent public-health and safety issue that affects individuals, families, and communities across Hennepin County, contributing to trauma, destabilizing neighborhoods, and exacerbating disparities in health, education, housing, employment, and justice; and

WHEREAS, data from the Hennepin County Community Health Assessment (CHA) 2024-2028 and Minnesota vital statistics demonstrate that firearm-related deaths in Hennepin County increased by approximately 68%, from 79 deaths in 2014 to 133 deaths in 2023, with suicide comprising the majority of firearm deaths, followed by homicide, and with disproportionate impacts on youth, veterans, and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, the Hennepin County Community Health Assessment (2024-2028) identifies violence - including firearm violence - as a key driver of premature death, trauma, adverse childhood experiences, and negative long-term mental and physical health outcomes, particularly in communities already experiencing structural inequities; and

WHEREAS, gun violence constitutes a public health priority because it is predictable, preventable, and socially transmissible in its effects - spreading trauma, grief, and fear across generations; increasing adverse childhood experiences; and producing ripple effects on mental health, education, economic stability, and community cohesion; and

WHEREAS, Hennepin County's public-health framework recognizes that firearm violence can be prevented through coordinated, cross-sector efforts led by Public Health, Safe Communities, Behavioral Health, the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office (HCSO), the Hennepin County Attorney's Office (HCAO), the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR), and Hennepin Healthcare Systems Inc. (HHS); and

WHEREAS, the HHS Level I Trauma Center provides lifesaving medical care and hospital-based violence intervention (Next Step) and their medical teams play a critical role in treating survivors, connecting them to trauma-recovery support, and reducing retaliatory or repeat incidents of violence; and

WHEREAS, the Hennepin County Attorney's Office advances early-intervention prevention through the Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) law, empowering courts to temporarily restrict firearm access for individuals at risk of harm, while training law enforcement and community partners in its use; and

WHEREAS, the County recognizes the importance of public education as a prevention strategy,

including expanding awareness of safe-storage laws, ERPO processes, suicide-prevention resources, and school-based programs that foster connectedness and nonviolent conflict resolution; and

WHEREAS, the Hennepin County Attorney's Office plays a critical role in preventing firearm violence in myriad ways, including: training law enforcement and community members on Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)-which empower courts to temporarily restrict firearm access for individuals at risk of harm to themselves or others-and facilitating their use; prosecuting gun-related crimes with fairness and integrity to ensure accountability; partnering with Safe Communities to reduce group-involved shootings and homicides among young people through the Youth Group Violence Intervention strategy; partnering with Hennepin County Libraries and the Minnesota Department of Public Safety to distribute gun locks at libraries; supporting survivors and working to end cycles of violence through the Domestic Abuse Service Center and robust Victim Services responses; operating youth-focused primary prevention and early intervention efforts that help to reduce risk factors associated with violence and promote protective factors; addressing gun violence impacting 18-25 year olds through specialized Emerging Adult teams; and collaborating with law enforcement partners across the county through Behavioral Threat Assessment and Management teams and a new Intelligence and Investigation Division.

WHEREAS, designating gun violence as a public health priority affirms the County's commitment to addressing it through the same sustained, data-driven approaches applied to other leading causes of injury and death.

Resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners designates gun violence as a Public Health Priority requiring a coordinated, sustained, and equitable response across county departments and community partners; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners directs the County Administrator to establish a Gun Violence Prevention and Response Coordination Team with representation from the county departments of Public Health, Safe Communities, Behavioral Health, DOCCR, and HHS to align prevention, medical response, and recovery strategies and provide annual progress updates to the Board; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners directs the County Administrator to seek representatives to sit on the Gun Violence Prevention and Response Coordination Team from the Hennepin County Attorney's Office and the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners commits to:

- Advocating for expansion of State funded youth and school-based mental-health and trauma-recovery services.
- Supporting community-based violence-interrupters, mentorship, and restorative-justice programs.
- Expanding Victim and Witness support services for survivors and impacted families;
- Elevating education on ERPO laws, safe firearm storage, and suicide prevention through public campaigns and libraries.
- Advocating for policy and funding support for data-driven violence-prevention and recovery initiatives; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners further commits

to centering equity, healing, and community voice in all prevention strategies, prioritizing investments in neighborhoods most affected by firearm violence and trauma.

Recommendation from County Administrator: No Recommendation

RESOLUTION ADOPTED ON 1/27/2026

The question was on the adoption of the resolution with the votes as follows:

Aye: 7 Commissioner Fernando, Commissioner Goettel, Commissioner Lunde, Commissioner Greene, Commissioner Conley, Commissioner Edelson, and Commissioner Anderson

Maria Rose



Maria Rose