



Legislation Text

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Preconsidered Res. No. 1619

Resolution expressing grief and sorrow for the victims and their families and for all those affected by the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and calling upon the President of the United States, the United States Congress, State and Local legislators, and all Americans to work together to reduce needless gun violence by making meaningful changes to gun control laws that will ensure that we are all kept safe from gun violence.

By The Speaker (Council Member Quinn) and Council Members Williams, Cabrera, Vallone, Garodnick, Fidler, Arroyo, Chin, Comrie, Dickens, Eugene, Ferreras, Gennaro, Gentile, Gonzalez, Greenfield, James, King, Koppell, Koslowitz, Lander, Mark-Viverito, Mealy, Mendez, Palma, Reyna, Sanders Jr. and Van Bramer

Whereas, On Friday, December 14, 2012, a gunman tragically took the lives of twenty elementary school children and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut; and

Whereas, The New York City Council honors those who lost their lives and those who exhibited exceptional courage and heroism at Sandy Hook Elementary School; and

Whereas, The New York City Council expresses its sorrow, unites in solidarity with the families of Newtown during these difficult days, and endeavors to ensure that the lives lost will forever be remembered; and

Whereas, This horrific event is another tragic reminder that more must be done to protect the lives of innocent Americans from senseless gun violence; and

Whereas, There is no one simple solution to this problem, however, it is important for all Americans to join together to ensure that no more innocent lives are lost to gun violence.

Whereas, As President Obama said, "If there is even one step we can take to save another child, or another parent, or another town, from the grief that has visited Tucson, and Aurora, and Oak Creek, and Newtown, and communities from Columbine to Blacksburg before that -- then surely we have an obligation to

try”; and

Whereas, Just as President Obama pledged to use the power of his office to engage all citizens “from law enforcement to mental health professionals to parents and educators -- in an effort aimed at preventing more tragedies like this,” so too must the United States Congress and all levels of government work together at regulating the types of weaponry available to the average United States citizen in order to reduce gun violence; and

Whereas, The gunman who entered Sandy Hook Elementary School was heavily armed with a semi-automatic assault rifle, two handguns, and high-capacity ammunition magazines, all of which enabled him to wreak havoc on multiple innocent lives in a short period of time; and

Whereas, Semi-automatic assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition magazines allow for the discharge of many rounds of ammunition without the need to stop to reload between shots or for long periods of time, and for that reason they are intended for military purposes rather than civilian use; and

Whereas, Yet, it remains lawful in some states for an individual to purchase both semi-automatic assault weapons and magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition; and

Whereas, Therefore, at a minimum, the availability of such high-capacity ammunition magazines and semi-automatic military-style weapons, which enable a person to endanger multiples lives in mere minutes without hesitation or interruption, should be restricted; and

Whereas, There is no need for a civilian to be able to fire a weapon more than 10-times without the need to reload a new ammunition magazine; and

Whereas, Semi-automatic military-style assault weapons fire multiple rounds almost as quickly as automatic weapons, however, automatic weapons have been tightly controlled since passage of the National Firearms Act of 1934; and

Whereas, Although there is no compelling need for high-capacity ammunition and although semi-automatic military-style assault weapons are capable of firing multiple rounds almost as quickly as automatic

weapons there are currently no nationwide restrictions on the sale or possession of this warzone weaponry; and

Whereas, In fact, such weaponry has wrought death and devastation in other mass shootings in America, such as those that took place both at schools like Virginia Tech and Columbine High School, and in public spaces such as a movie theater in Aurora, Colorado and a political constituent event in Tucson, Arizona; and

Whereas, Therefore it is vital for our federal government to immediately pass legislation that would ban the sale, possession, transfer, or manufacture of high capacity ammunition feeding devices and dangerous semi-automatic military-style assault weapons, as was done by portions of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which unfortunately expired in 2004 without being renewed; and

Whereas, These weapons are not the only source of gun violence in the country as evidenced by the mass shooting earlier in the year at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin and the shootings that take place every day in many areas throughout the country; and

Whereas, Therefore, solutions must be sought at all levels of government to ensure that proper regulations are in place to reduce gun violence in general; and

Whereas, While reasonable restrictions on certain weapon ownership will help mitigate the damage done when violence takes place, these restrictions alone will not eradicate violence in general; and

Whereas, In fact, the New York City Council's Task Force to Combat Gun Violence has examined the gun violence epidemic on a holistic level and will release a report indicating its findings and recommendations regarding the best solutions to ensure that all of our children have a safe and nurturing community in which to grow; and

Whereas, Consequently, it is important that we work together as a Nation to undertake proper preventative measures, which include determining the root causes that lead individuals to act in such an abhorrent manner; and

Whereas, There is a common thread running through the tragedies that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Virginia Tech, Aurora, Colorado, and Tucson, Arizona, in that each act was undertaken by a

young male with verifiable mental health infirmities; and

Whereas, It is imperative that our federal, state, and local leaders work together to ensure that proper mental health services are, and remain, readily available and affordable to all those who need assistance, regardless of their criminal history or lack thereof; and

Whereas, It is equally important that all Americans are properly educated and informed about the seriousness of mental health issues and the help available to those suffering from the same; and

Whereas, As a Nation, we all have a duty and a role to play in protecting the welfare of all Americans, while at the same time ensuring that all law abiding citizens retain their constitutional rights; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York expresses grief and sorrow for the victims and their families and for all those affected by the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut and calls upon the President of the United States, the United States Congress, State and Local legislators, and all Americans to work together to reduce needless gun violence by making meaningful changes to gun control laws that will ensure that we are all kept safe from gun violence.

CJG
12/17/12