



Proclamation No. 23-0663

A Proclamation Declaring June 2nd as the 9th Annual National Gun Violence Awareness Day, June 3-4 as Wear Orange Weekend and June as Gun Violence Awareness Month

WHEREAS, some 45,000 Americans are killed annually by guns – an average of about 120 each day - and at least 85,000 more are shot and wounded every year; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. accounts for only 4% of the world's population, but 35% of global suicides, and Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed with guns than people in other high-income countries; and

WHEREAS, Black Americans number 14% of the U.S. population but are victims of 54% of homicides, most of those being firearms related; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, 78 percent of firearm deaths are suicides, and nearly half of all suicide deaths in Colorado involve the use of a firearm, which is the most common method of suicide death in the state; and

WHEREAS, in an average year, in Colorado, 850 persons die from gun violence – equal to one gun death every 10 hours – and another 466 are injured. Suicides claim 633 lives and homicides another 182, with the majority of those dying from gun violence being between 25 and 44 years of age. Colorado has the 15th-highest rate of gun suicides and gun suicide attempts in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, the rate of gun deaths increased 41% from 2011 to 2020, compared to a 33% increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased 28% and gun homicides increased 103% compared to a 12% increase and 70% increase across the U.S.; and

WHEREAS: Guns are the leading cause of death among children and teens in Colorado. In Colorado, an average of 69 children and teens die by guns every year, of which 54% of these deaths are suicides and 42% are homicides. In the US, 35% of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides and 60% are homicides

WHEREAS, in 2022, in Denver, 92 people died by homicide with 73 of those committed by firearm; another 293 people were shot but survived their injuries; and

WHEREAS, In 2022, there were 13 mass shootings in Colorado, leaving 80 people dead or injured. The Denver metropolitan area continues to suffer the devastating legacy of mass shootings at Columbine High School in 1999 and the Aurora movie theater in 2012. There were 695 mass shootings in the U.S. last year, in which 762 people died and another 2,902 were wounded.; and

WHEREAS, research indicates there have been more lives lost from gunfire in America than in all the wars in which U.S. troops have been engaged since our nation's founding; and

WHEREAS, in January 2013, Hadiya Pendleton, a teenager who marched in President Obama's second inaugural parade and was tragically shot and killed just weeks later, should be now celebrating her 21st birthday; and

WHEREAS, to help honor Hadiya – and the 110 Americans whose lives are cut short and the 230-plus survivors who are injured by shootings every day – a national coalition of organizations designated the first Friday in June, as the 4th National Gun Violence Awareness Day; and

WHEREAS, the idea was inspired by a group of Hadiya’s friends, who asked their classmates to commemorate her life by wearing orange, choosing this color because hunters wear orange to announce themselves to other hunters when out in the woods; and

WHEREAS, anyone can join this campaign by pledging to Wear Orange on the first Friday in June every year, to help raise awareness about gun violence; and

WHEREAS, by wearing orange on June 2-4 2023 Americans will raise awareness about gun violence and honor the lives of gun violence victims and survivors; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT PROCLAIMED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER:

Section 1. That the Council of the City and County of Denver declares the first Friday of each year – this year, June 2, 2023 - to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day, June 3-4 to be Wear Orange Weekend and the entire month of June to be National Gun Violence Awareness Month. We renew our commitment to reduce gun violence and pledge to do all we can to keep firearms out of the wrong hands and encourage responsible gun ownership to help keep our children safe, and encourage all citizens to support their local communities’ efforts to prevent the tragic effects of gun violence and to honor and value human lives.

Section 2. That the Clerk of the City and County of Denver shall attest and affix the seal of the City and County of Denver to this proclamation and a copy be transmitted to Everytown USA.

PASSED BY THE COUNCIL May 22, 2023

COUNCIL PRESIDENT