

DENVER CITY COUNCIL



Proclamation No. 24-0752

A Proclamation Declaring June 7th as the 10th Annual National Gun Violence Awareness Day and June as Gun Violence Awareness Month

WHEREAS, more than 44,000 Americans are killed annually by guns – averaging more than 120 each day - and nearly 97,000 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 58% of homicides, most of those being firearms related; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, 71% 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, 951 persons die from gun violence – equal to one gun suicide death every 13 hours – and another 1,392 are wounded by guns. Suicides claim 679 lives and homicides another 258, making Colorado the 13th-highest rate of gun suicides and gun suicide attempts in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, in Colorado, the rate of gun deaths increased 48% from 2013 to 2022, compared to a 36% increase nationwide. The rate of gun suicides increased 23% and gun homicides increased 159% compared to a 18% 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 84 children and teens die by guns every year, of which 48% of these deaths are suicides and 47% are homicides. In Denver, in 2023 there were 12 deaths due to firearm of children aged 18 and younger and in Colorado, in 2022 there were 204 deaths due to firearm in children 24 and younger. In the US, 31% of all gun deaths among children and teens are suicides and 63% are homicides; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, in Denver, 88 people died by homicide with 71 of those committed by firearm; another 233 people were shot but survived their injuries; and

WHEREAS, in 2023, there were 16 mass shootings in Colorado, 5 of those in Denver, leaving 76 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 656 mass shootings in the U.S. last year, in which 597 people died and another 2,380 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 27th birthday; and

WHEREAS, to help honor Hadiya – and the 120 Americans whose lives are cut short and the hundreds of survivors who are injured by shootings every day – a national coalition of organizations designated the first Friday in June, as 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.

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 7, 2024 - to be National Gun Violence Awareness Day 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 June 10, 2024

PRESIDENT

