



TO: Elizabeth Pauli, City Manager
FROM: Claire Goodwin, Council Assistant on behalf of Council Member Lillian Hunter, City Council
COPY: City Council and City Clerk
SUBJECT: Resolution—Gun and Youth Violence Reduction – November 12, 2019
DATE: November 7, 2019

SUMMARY:

A Resolution directing the City Manager to review existing gun and youth violence reduction groups in Tacoma; convene a workgroup to review best-practices for Tacoma to address gun and youth violence reduction; present fiscal analyses to include costs of expanding current programs and fiscal impact of any future firearms and ammunition tax on local gun vendors and manufacturers and share findings with Council and appropriate Council Committees within 30 days of passage of this Resolution.

COUNCIL SPONSORS:

Deputy Mayor Conor McCarthy
Council Member Lillian Hunter
Council Member Robert Thoms

STRATEGIC POLICY PRIORITY:

- Strengthen and support a safe city with healthy residents.
- Encourage and promote an efficient and effective government, which is fiscally sustainable and guided by engaged residents.

BACKGROUND:

According to the Pew Research Center, 39,773 people died from gun-related injuries in 2017 (2017 is the most recent year for which complete data on gun violence in the United States is available). Three quarters of all murders and about half of all suicides involved a firearm. Additionally, every year, 600 American women are shot to death by intimate partners, which accounts for half of all women shot to death by others in the United States. Basic research and prevention programs can reduce long-term costs and save lives, but often need funding to get started. Due to successful efforts by gun lobbyists, funding for research into the causes of gun violence has been blocked at the federal level since 1996.

At the October 22, 2019 City Council meeting, Mayor Woodards, Council Member Mello and Council Member Ushka introduced the first reading of an Ordinance amending the Tacoma Municipal Code by creating a new Chapter 6A.120, Firearms and Ammunition Tax, that imposes a tax on firearms and ammunition to consist of \$25.00 per firearm, \$0.02 per round of ammunition .22 caliber or less, and \$0.05 per round of other ammunition sold at retail to raise revenue for funding programs that help offset the impacts and costs of gun violence in the city.

The Resolution before you is in response to the Firearms and Ammunition Tax proposed Ordinance.

ISSUE:

The number of criminal offenses involving firearms has increased 37 percent in Tacoma between 2014 and 2018. Of the 22 homicides that have occurred in Tacoma in 2019, 19 involved firearms. Gun and youth violence is an issue in the City of Tacoma and well-vetted recommendations on how to address these important issues need to be established. The Resolution before you would direct the City Manager



to review existing gun and youth violence reduction groups in Tacoma; convene a workgroup to review best-practices for Tacoma to address gun and youth violence reduction; present fiscal analyses to include, but not limited to, costs of expanding current programs and fiscal impact of any future firearms and ammunition tax on local gun vendors and manufacturers. The proposed Firearms and Ammunition Tax Ordinance under consideration was also not subject to the careful review of the appropriate standing committee nor were the fiscal impacts to local businesses fully explored. The potential revenue estimates of the proposed Ordinance are questionable.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may choose to support, modify, or not approve an Ordinance that imposes a tax on firearms and ammunition sold in the City of Tacoma that includes or excludes parts and components and where the revenue generated may be used for a gun buyback program, in addition to the option of annually reviewing the impacts of the tax.

The Resolution before you is the strongest option in response to the Firearms and Ammunition Tax proposal because it directs the City Manager to engage in due diligence by reviewing the current efforts in the City that address gun and youth violence reduction supported by public dollars; convenes stakeholders regarding effective policies and best-practices in Tacoma that reduce gun and youth violence; present fiscal analyses to include, but not limited to, costs of expanding current programs and fiscal impact of any future firearms and ammunition tax on local gun vendors and manufacturers and share findings with Council and appropriate Council Committees within 30 days of passage of this Resolution.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the City Council approve the proposed Resolution that directs the City Manager to engage in due diligence by reviewing the current efforts in the City that address gun and youth violence reduction supported by public dollars; convene a workgroup that will include representatives from Tacoma Public Schools, Tacoma-based firearms manufacturers and retailers, community partners, and City of Tacoma staff which includes representatives from the Police Department, to assess best-practices in Tacoma that reduce gun and youth violence; present fiscal analyses to include, but not limited to, costs of expanding current programs and fiscal impact of any future firearms and ammunition tax on local gun vendors and manufacturers and share findings with Council and appropriate Council Committees within 30 days of passage of this Resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

The fiscal impact will be determined once review and engagement processes are established by the City Manager. Fiscal impacts may include staff time, administrative support, and resources to conduct community meetings.