

MOTION:

**January 7, 2020
Regular Meeting
Res. No. 20-**

SECOND:

RE: URGE MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN VIRGINIA BY PASSING GUN SAFETY LEGISLATION; URGE MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION AND INCREASED FUNDING FROM THE COMMONWEALTH FOR MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING AND SERVICES THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH; MODIFY 2020 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

ACTION:

WHEREAS, Section 15.2-1522, VA Code Ann., requires every elected officer in the Commonwealth to qualify for office by taking the following oath prescribed by the Code of Virginia Section 49-1: "I do solemnly swear that I will support the Constitution of the United States, and the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Virginia, and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge all the duties incumbent upon me as an elected member of the Board of County Supervisors according to the best of my ability, so help me God"; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Section 15.2-915, VA Code Ann., the Prince William Board of County Supervisors has no legislative, regulatory, or enforcement authority related to "the purchase, possession, transfer, ownership, carrying, storage or transporting of firearms, ammunition, or components or combination thereof" and has no authority over the independent execution of the duties of the constitutional officers involved in law enforcement; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors wishes to express its commitment to the rights of law-abiding citizens of Prince William County to legally keep and bear arms; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors is concerned about the passage of any law that restricts or prohibits our County citizens and tourism industry from participating in historical or traditional activities; and

WHEREAS, twelve years since the mass shooting at Virginia Tech and a few months since the mass shooting at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center, we continue to face the ongoing epidemic of mass shooting gun violence in our state and our nation; and

WHEREAS, in 2017, more than 39,000 Americans – including 1,028 Virginians – died as a result of gun violence, 674 were by suicide; and

WHEREAS, Virginia is one of 17 states where more people are killed annually due to gun violence than die in car accidents; and

WHEREAS, in Virginia, women are killed with guns by intimate partners at a higher rate than the national average; and

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WHEREAS, suicide rates in Virginia are slowly increasing, with handguns being the cause of death in suicides in almost 60 percent of cases; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William Board of County Supervisors recognizes that violence in our community has a significant impact on our core responsibility to create a safe and resilient County for every resident, worker, and visitor to Prince William County; and

WHEREAS, the Prince William County Police Department, like other local law enforcement departments, is often the first to be called upon to address those with mental illness who engage in behaviors that impact personal and/or public safety; the department is committed to assisting individuals in Prince William County who are experiencing an emotional crisis; the department has trained nearly 200 County police officers in the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) program to improve the nature of police interactions with people living with mental illness; and in 2018, the Police Department transported 555 emotionally disturbed patients to various medical facilities throughout the state encompassing approximately 7,551 staff hours;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors urges the members of the Virginia General Assembly to address gun violence prevention in Virginia by passing gun safety legislation including:

- Support legislation, while preserving due process, to properly allow an appropriate court of law to temporarily limit an individual's access to firearms when they are deemed a threat to themselves or others;
- Eliminate potential background check loopholes by requiring background checks for all gun purchases through a Federal Firearms License;
- Support laws to limit child access to firearms to reduce adolescent suicides and accidental adolescent shootings;
- Additional funding from the Commonwealth for firearms safety education across the Commonwealth;
- Waiving sales tax on gun safes and gun safety locks to help promote such safe gun handling practices; and
- Strong penalties for adults that allow unsafe access to firearms by children; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors urges the members of the Virginia General Assembly to support legislation and increased funding from the Commonwealth for mental health screening and services throughout the Commonwealth; and

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BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby modifies its 2020 legislative agenda to include the provisions of this Resolution and directs the Clerk to the Board to provide copies of the approved resolution to our State Senators, our State Delegates and the Governor.

Votes:

Ayes:

Nays:

Absent from Vote:

Absent from Meeting:

ATTEST: _____

Clerk to the Board