

*Adopted Amended KMA Gun Violence and Firearm Safety Work Group Report to the 2023 House of Delegates in Lieu of Resolution 33*

2023-33

RESOLUTION

Subject: Addressing the Gun Violence Public Health Epidemic Through Education, Advocating for Evidence-Based Remedies, and Collaboration with Task Forces

Submitted by: Greater Louisville Medical Society

Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, the prevalence of adult gun ownership in Kentucky is over 50%, placing Kentucky in the top 15 states with the highest adult gun ownership rates<sup>1</sup>; and

WHEREAS, Kentucky has the 14 highest rate of gun deaths in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, from 2012 to 2021, Kentucky had a 43% and 118% increase in gun suicide rates and gun death rates, respectively<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that, in Kentucky, 61% of gun deaths were by firearm suicide, with an average of 502 deaths per year<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, suicide affects all age groups in Kentucky and is the second leading cause of death in individuals aged 25 - 34<sup>3</sup>; and

WHEREAS, child access prevention laws<sup>4,5</sup> and extreme risk protection laws<sup>6,7</sup> are effective measures in preventing gun-related deaths<sup>8</sup>; however, Kentucky has no such laws in place<sup>9</sup>; and

WHEREAS, in a recent WATE/Emerson College poll of 900 Kentuckian voters, 70.6% of respondents found Kentucky gun laws “just right” and 17.9% found them “too strict”<sup>10</sup>, despite the increasing gun death rates in Kentucky<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, gun violence in the state of Kentucky costs \$2,155 per person per year, which is the 17th highest in the nation<sup>2</sup>; and

WHEREAS, the Gun Violence Prevention Committee, a task force at the University of Louisville School of Medicine, has developed objectives to advance gun violence prevention and promote gun violence awareness in collaboration with state-level organizations such as the Kentucky Medical Association; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that KMA amend its Gun Violence policy by addition and deletion as follows:

“KMA **acknowledges that violence by the use of guns is a public health epidemic, and** supports efforts that:

- ~~Label violence caused by the use of guns as a public health epidemic;~~
- Fund appropriate research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to evaluate the causes and evidence-based remedies of this epidemic;
- Increase funding for school- **and workplace-**based mental health services related to trauma and violence prevention; and
- Evaluate in concert with law enforcement, educators and social services, the most appropriate responses to this epidemic. (*Res 2018-7, 2018 HOD*); and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA advocate for an educational campaign on the public health crisis of gun violence in concert with educators, local public health departments, and other issue-specific advocacy groups to educate the Commonwealth of Kentucky and to promote more responsible use and storage of firearms; and be it further

RESOLVED, that KMA advocates for evidence-based solutions to reduce the impact of the gun violence epidemic.

## References:

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- 1 Schell TL, Peterson S, Vegetable BG, Scherling A, Smart R, Morral AR. State-level estimates of household firearm ownership. Santa Monica, CA: RAND; 2020.
- 2 Everytown Research - EveryStat. EveryStat.org. (n.d.). <https://everystat.org/#Kentucky>
- 3 *Suicide Data: Kentucky*. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP). Retrieved from <https://aws-fetch.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com/state-fact-sheets/2022/2022-state-fact-sheets-kentucky.pdf>
- 4 DeSimone, J., Markowitz, S., & Xu, J. (2013). Child access prevention laws and nonfatal gun injuries. *Southern Economic Journal*, 80(1), 5-25.
- 5 Kivisto, A. J., Kivisto, K. L., Gurnell, E., Phalen, P., & Ray, B. (2021). Adolescent suicide, household firearm ownership, and the effects of child access prevention laws. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*, 60(9), 1096-1104.
- 6 Kivisto AJ, Phalen PL. Effects of Risk-Based Firearm Seizure Laws in Connecticut and Indiana on Suicide Rates, 1981–2015. *Psychiatr Serv*. 2018;69(8):855–62. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ps.201700250>.
- 7 Swanson, J. W., Norko, M. A., Lin, H. J., Alanis-Hirsch, K., Frisman, L. K., Baranoski, M. V., ... & Bonnie, R. J. (2017). Implementation and effectiveness of Connecticut's risk-based gun removal law: does it prevent suicides?. *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 80(2), 179-208.
- 8 *Gun safety policies save lives*. Everytown Research & Policy. (2023a, May 8). <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/>
- 9 *Kentucky*. Everytown Research & Policy. (2023, January 4). <https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/state/kentucky/>
- 10 Hantla, C. (2023, April 12). *Are Kentucky Republicans satisfied with gun control and school safety laws? here's what we found*. WATE 6 On Your Side. <https://www.wate.com/news/kentucky/wate-emerson-poll-ky-republican-gender-divide-on->

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