

The below represents a first draft of a potential resolution written by Commissioner Harvey Ward to be considered by the commission on March 1, 2018:

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FLORIDA REQUESTING THAT THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE RECOGNIZE GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY EMERGENCY AND THAT IT TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO PROTECT THE CITIZENS OF GAINESVILLE OR RELIEVE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON FLORIDA CITIES AND COUNTIES TO ALLOW US TO TAKE ACTION

WHEREAS, The tragic shooting deaths of fourteen students and three teachers and wounding of more than a dozen others at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School is the latest in a string of at least 63 school shootings since the Sandy Hook Massacre in 2012; and

WHEREAS, Floridians are still reeling from other public mass shootings including the Ft. Lauderdale Airport in 2017 and the Pulse Nightclub Massacre in 2016; and

WHEREAS, Mass shootings at churches in Texas and South Carolina and a concert in Nevada are still fresh in the minds and hearts of all Americans; and

WHEREAS, More than 300 mass shootings occurred in 2017 alone; and

WHEREAS, More than 21,000 Americans die by gun suicide every year, and approximately 90% of those who attempt suicide by gun will die as opposed to more than 90% of those who attempt suicide by other methods who will live and be unlikely to attempt suicide again; and

WHEREAS, Almost 4,000 children aged 0-17 years were killed or injured by guns in 2017 and more than 480 have already been killed or injured by guns in 2018; and

WHEREAS, Women in America are 16 times more likely to be killed with a gun than women in other high-income countries, making this country the most dangerous in the developed world when it comes to gun violence against women; and

WHEREAS, The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the likelihood of a woman dying fivefold; and

WHEREAS, Governments are not addressing gendered based violence adequately which leads to it being under reported; and

WHEREAS, Racial disparities in gun violence are drastic, with more than half of all gun homicide victims being African American; and

WHEREAS, We, the residents of Gainesville find ourselves weary of candlelight vigils and have offered all the thoughts and prayers we can muster; and

WHEREAS, Without action the next mass shooting might happen as easily in our city as any other; and

WHEREAS, This Commission believes the data clearly indicate that gun violence is a significant and present public health and safety hazard and that the tools to keep our residents safe have been denied our city; and

WHEREAS, the enactment of Florida Statute 790.33 preempts cities and counties from enacting any ordinance, rule or regulation related to firearms.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COMMISSION OF THE CITY OF GAINESVILLE, FL:

1. That the Commission demand that for the health and safety of the people of our city the Florida Legislature consider and pass emergency legislation that includes but is not necessarily limited to: A ban on semi-automatic and assault rifles, swift and thorough background checks for all firearm purchases, disarming and prevention from arming those convicted, under investigation, and reasonably suspected of gendered violence and review of mental health funding and appropriate measures to match access to gun ownership.
2. Failing to achieve number one above, that the Commission demand the Florida Legislature repeal Florida Statute 790.33 to allow the cities and counties of our state to enact ordinances, rules and regulations to give us the legal tools to keep our residents safe from gun violence.
3. That if the current legislative session is not enough time to consider and enact either items one or two above, the Governor establish a special session for this purpose.