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SJR-20 Gun violence: research. (2015-2016)

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 20

CHAPTER 82

Relative to gun violence.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 07, 2016.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 20, Hall. Gun violence: research.

This measure would urge the Congress of the United States to lift an existing prohibition against publicly funded scientific research on the causes of gun violence and its effects on public health, and to appropriate funds for the purpose of conducting that research.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Every day, gun violence destroys lives, families, and communities; and

WHEREAS, From 2002 to 2013, inclusive, California lost 38,576 individuals to gun violence, of which 2,258 were children; and

WHEREAS, In 2013 alone, guns were used to kill 2,900 Californians, including 251 children and teenagers, and hospitalized another 6,035 Californians for nonfatal gunshot wounds, including 1,275 children and teenagers; and

WHEREAS, There were over 350 recorded mass shootings in the United States in 2015; and

WHEREAS, Since 1996, Congress has adopted annual policy riders, known as the "Dickey Amendment" and "Rehberg Amendment," that effectively prohibit the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other agencies under the federal Department of Health and Human Services from conducting publicly funded scientific research on the causes of gun violence or its effects on public health; and

WHEREAS, The author of the original Dickey Amendment, former Representative Jay Dickey (R-AR), has stated repeatedly that he regrets offering the amendment and thinks it should be repealed; and

WHEREAS, Despite Representative Dickey's comments and President Obama's executive action in 2013 directing the CDC to resume gun violence research, Congress has provided no funding, and the restrictive language remains in place; and

WHEREAS, Since 1996, the federal government has spent \$240 million per year on traffic safety research, which has saved 360,000 lives since 1970; and

WHEREAS, During the same period there has been almost no publicly funded research on gun violence, which kills the same number of people every year; and

WHEREAS, Recently, 110 Members of the Congress of the United States signed a letter urging the leadership of the House of Representatives to end the longstanding ban on federal funding for gun violence research, and over 2,000 doctors in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia did the same; and

WHEREAS, Although Members of Congress may disagree about how best to respond to the problem of gun violence, we should be able to agree that a response should be informed by sound scientific evidence; and

WHEREAS, Whether it is horrific headline-generating massacres or unseen violence that occurs every day — the innocent child gunned down in crossfire, the mother murdered during a domestic dispute, or the young life cut tragically short during the heat of a petty argument — the call to action is now clear; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of California, jointly, That a comprehensive evidence-based federal approach to reducing and preventing gun violence is needed to ensure that our communities are safe from gun violence; and be it further

Resolved, That federal research is crucial to saving lives, having driven policy to save lives from motor vehicle accidents, sudden infant death syndrome, lead poisoning, and countless other public health crises; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature urges the Congress of the United States to promptly lift the prohibition against publicly funded scientific research on the causes of gun violence and its effects on public health, and to appropriate funds to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other relevant agencies under the federal Department of Health and Human Services to conduct that research; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the author for appropriate distribution.