



General Assembly

February Session, 2022

Raised Bill No. 5397

LCO No. 2883



Referred to Committee on PUBLIC HEALTH

Introduced by:
(PH)

***AN ACT DECLARING GUN VIOLENCE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS
AND ESTABLISHING THE OFFICE OF GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION
AND ADVISORY COUNCIL ON GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND
INTERVENTION.***

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly convened:

1 Section 1. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) It is hereby declared that gun
2 violence constitutes a public health crisis in this state and will continue
3 to constitute a public health crisis until the goal set forth in subsection
4 (b) of section 2 of this act is attained.

5 Sec. 2. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) There is established an Office
6 of Gun Violence Prevention, which shall be within the Department of
7 Public Health.

8 (b) The Office of Gun Violence Prevention shall work toward the goal
9 of substantially decreasing the level of gun violence in the state,
10 including, but not limited to, by (1) collecting data on gun violence in
11 the state, (2) making such gun violence data publicly available, (3)
12 making recommendations to decrease the effects of gun violence on
13 public health, (4) implementing evidence-informed, community-based

14 programs and strategies to reduce gun violence in the state, and (5)
15 coordinating funding for such collection and dissemination of data and
16 implementation of such programs.

17 (c) Not later than January 1, 2023, the Commissioner of Public Health
18 shall appoint a director of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention and
19 designate the staff necessary to carry out the responsibilities of the office
20 set forth in this section.

21 (d) (1) The Office of Gun Violence Prevention shall establish and
22 administer a grant award program to provide grants to organizations to
23 conduct evidence-informed, community-based initiatives for gun
24 violence prevention and intervention and mental health aftercare for
25 gun violence survivors. To be eligible for a grant award, an organization
26 shall demonstrate the ability to conduct such initiatives in an effective
27 manner, as determined by the director. The office shall prioritize
28 awarding grants to organizations that conduct such initiatives with
29 individuals and in communities identified as having the highest
30 occurrence of gun violence and victimization as the result of gun
31 violence.

32 (2) An organization that receives a grant awarded pursuant to
33 subdivision (1) of this subsection shall incorporate strategies into its
34 initiatives that are evidence-informed and have demonstrated
35 effectiveness at reducing gun violence without contributing to mass
36 incarceration. Such initiatives may include, but need not be limited to, a
37 hospital-based violence intervention program, a group violence
38 intervention program, an evidence-based street outreach program, a
39 violence interruption and crisis management program, gun violence
40 survivor outreach, mental health aftercare for gun violence survivors
41 and any individualized wraparound services to prevent or deal with the
42 aftermath of gun violence. A grant award recipient shall conduct regular
43 evaluations of each initiative it conducts, including, but not limited to,
44 facilitating community input on and engagement in such initiative. As
45 used in this subdivision, "group violence" means the use of violence by
46 people who identify themselves as members of a group, whether such

47 group is transitory or has a more permanent identity, against another
48 group or set of individuals to achieve political, economic or social
49 objectives.

50 (3) The Department of Public Health may promulgate rules necessary
51 for the administration of the grant program, including grant application
52 procedures, criteria for determining the amount and duration of the
53 grant awards and reporting requirements for organizations that receive
54 grant awards.

55 (4) In administering the grant program, the Office of Gun Violence
56 Prevention shall collaborate with stakeholders as the director deems
57 necessary to ensure equity in the distribution of grant awards. The office
58 shall consult with the Advisory Council on Gun Violence Prevention
59 and Intervention established under section 3 of this act to develop grant
60 priorities, set criteria for determining the amount and duration of grant
61 awards, select grant award recipients and determine reporting
62 requirements for grant award recipients.

63 (e) The Office of Gun Violence Prevention shall establish and
64 maintain a research repository for data, research and statistical
65 information regarding gun violence in the state. As part of maintaining
66 such repository, the office shall perform the following functions, in
67 consultation with an organization in the state that conducts gun
68 violence prevention research:

69 (1) Assist researchers seeking information about gun violence
70 prevention in the state;

71 (2) Collaborate with researchers to (A) identify gaps in available data
72 needed for gun violence prevention research and develop strategies to
73 improve relevant data collection in the state, (B) use any available
74 research to enhance evidence-based gun violence prevention tools and
75 resources available to communities in the state, and (C) improve the
76 understanding of the disproportionate barriers to safety from gun
77 violence by encouraging disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity
78 when such research is conducted;

79 (3) Promote relevant research regarding gun violence prevention
80 and, where possible, make such research accessible to the state's
81 research community and members of the public; and

82 (4) Provide technical assistance to all recipients of a grant award
83 pursuant to subsection (d) of this section.

84 (f) The Department of Public Health shall establish a violence data
85 dashboard, in collaboration with the Department of Emergency Services
86 and Public Protection, local law enforcement agencies and hospitals in
87 the state, to collect and disclose data on the scope of, frequency of and
88 locations and populations affected by violence, including, but not
89 limited to, data on the number of victims of gun violence, rates at which
90 and locations where gun violence occurs in the state and any
91 contributory factors to such violence. The dashboard shall also include
92 data on suicides with a gun.

93 Sec. 3. (NEW) (*Effective July 1, 2022*) (a) There is established an
94 Advisory Council on Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention. The
95 advisory council shall make recommendations to and advise the Office
96 of Gun Violence Prevention, established under section 2 of this act, on
97 the development of a public health and community-based strategy to
98 reduce gun violence. The advisory council may (1) consult with
99 community outreach organizations, victim services providers, victims
100 of community violence, as defined in section 17b-28j of the general
101 statutes, and gun violence, community violence and gun violence
102 researchers and public safety and law enforcement representatives
103 regarding strategies to reduce community violence and gun violence,
104 (2) identify effective, evidence-based community violence and gun
105 violence reduction strategies, (3) identify strategies to align the
106 resources of state agencies to reduce community violence and gun
107 violence, (4) identify state, federal and private funding sources for
108 community violence and gun violence reduction initiatives, and (5)
109 assist in the development of a public health and community
110 engagement strategy for the Office of Gun Violence Prevention.

111 (b) The advisory council shall be comprised of at least one member
112 from each of the following categories, who shall be appointed by the
113 director of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention: (1) Individuals
114 impacted by gun violence; (2) organizations with expertise in gun
115 violence prevention; (3) law enforcement; (4) communities of color, as
116 described in section 17b-857 of the general statutes, impacted by gun
117 violence; (5) researchers of gun violence; and (6) public health experts.

118 (c) The director of the Office of Gun Violence Prevention shall make
119 all initial appointments to the advisory council not later than thirty days
120 after the effective date of this section. Any vacancy shall be filled by the
121 director.

122 (d) A chairperson shall be elected by the advisory council members
123 from among the members of the advisory council for a one-year term.
124 The advisory council shall meet not less than bimonthly.

125 (e) The administrative staff of the Commission on Women, Children,
126 Seniors, Equity and Opportunity shall serve as administrative staff of
127 the advisory council.

128 Sec. 4. (*Effective July 1, 2022*) The sum of five million dollars is
129 appropriated to the Department of Public Health from the General
130 Fund, for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, for administering the
131 Office of Gun Violence Prevention established under section 2 of this
132 act.

This act shall take effect as follows and shall amend the following sections:		
Section 1	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 2	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 3	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section
Sec. 4	<i>July 1, 2022</i>	New section

Statement of Purpose:

To declare gun violence a public health crisis and establish an Office of Gun Violence Prevention and Advisory Council on Gun Violence Prevention and Intervention.

[Proposed deletions are enclosed in brackets. Proposed additions are indicated by underline, except that when the entire text of a bill or resolution or a section of a bill or resolution is new, it is not underlined.]