

The Society for Public Health Education Resolution
The Role of Health Education in Preventing Firearm Injury

Whereas, gun-related deaths are second only to motor vehicle-related deaths as a cause of injury death in the United States [1,2]; and

Whereas, there are approximately three nonfatal firearm injuries for every death associated with a firearm [3]; and

Whereas, firearms are involved in 70% of teen homicides [1]; and the risk of homicides is three times greater in households with guns [10,20]; and

Whereas, firearms are involved in 63% of teen suicides [1]; and the risk of suicide is five times greater in households with guns [10,19]; and

Whereas, more than 2.6 million youth have carried a firearm last year¹ for “protection or as a weapon” and 2.1% of students have carried a gun to school more than two or three times [23]; and

Whereas, 63% of gun owners and 75 % of the general public support government regulation of gun designs to increase the safety of guns and decrease the misuse [17]; and

Whereas, 83% of the public do not want concealed weapons carried in public places including stores, theaters, & restaurants [17]; and

Whereas, 88% of gun owners and the general public want new handguns designed so children can not fire them [17]; and

Whereas, 80% of American people feel gun owners should be responsible for injuries if a gun is not stored properly [17]; and

Whereas, 82% of gun owners and 85% of the general public believe mandatory background checks are a good idea [17]; and

Whereas, 67% of gun owners and 80% of the general public support mandatory background checks in private handgun sales, including gun shows [17]; and

Whereas, 75% of gun owners and 85% of the general public support mandatory registration of handguns [23]; and

Whereas, the Brady Law (from November 30, 1993 to November 30, 1998) prevented approximately 240,000 felons and other prohibited persons from purchasing guns, and during the time in which the law was in effect, aggravated assaults dropped 25%², the number of murders committed with a gun dropped 35.7% and the number of federally licensed firearm dealers (FFLs) decreased by 56% [5,12].

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that SOPHE

- I. Supports a national education campaign that operates free and clear of gun manufacturer’s influence and highlights firearm prevention as a public health threat and is designed to:
 - A. Educate the public on dangers associated with firearms and the need for firearm safety through:

¹ The Pride Survey was conducted during the 1998-1999 school year.

² From 1993 to 1997.

- 1) Development of a firearm safety education and school curriculum to reduce the potential for children and teens to be injured or killed in gunfire³.
 - 2) Educate parents and caregivers about the increased risk of injury caused by having a firearm in the home. Inform firearm owners about the problem of children's easy access to firearms and the importance of keeping firearms locked and inaccessible to children.
- B. Educate health professionals, teachers, coaches and other multidisciplinary professionals on firearm injury reduction issues and associated public health issues such as homicide and suicide.
- II. Urges Congress and States to restrict accessibility and availability of guns in society through enactment of the following legislation:
- A. Mandatory registration and licensing of firearms.
 - B. Restrict handgun purchases to one per month in order to prevent gunrunning.
 - C. Re-institute the five-day waiting period in the Brady Bill.⁴
 - D. Close the gun-show loophole by requiring background checks for all sales made at gun shows.
 - E. Urge the creation of a federal standard for age of possession and purchase of a firearm.
- III. Urges Congress to authorize the development of a national firearm injury reduction surveillance program that would:
- A. Allocate monies for a nonpartisan surveillance program to track fatalities and injuries from firearms. The surveillance program should include mandatory reporting of firearm injuries and fatalities by hospitals and health care centers, similar to the requirements for reporting certain communicable diseases.
 - B. Provide mandatory reporting of licensing and registration to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.
- IV. Urges SOPHE members, all SOPHE Chapter members, and SOPHE affiliates to help prevent firearm injury by:
- A. Participating in coalitions at the national, state and local levels that address reductions in firearm accessibility, improved firearm safety and implementation of a national firearm surveillance program.
 - B. Writing to elected representatives to communicate SOPHE's platform on the need for comprehensive firearm reduction legislation.
 - C. Tracking and supporting efforts by the Department of Justice and the State Attorneys General to hold firearm manufacturers accountable for firearm related injuries and deaths.
- V. Urges Congress to fund continued research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute of Health in the behavior and social sciences on intentional and unintentional injury, as well as technical research in the area of firearm safety, e.g. personalized firearms or fingerprint guns.
- VI. Charges the SOPHE advocacy committee to work with the resolutions committee to monitor the implementation of this resolution.

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References

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³ Center to Prevent Handgun Violence has developed Straight Talk About Risks (STAR), a curriculum guide for preK –12 to address the issue of preventing gun violence.

⁴ The “interim provisions” of the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act required a background check and a maximum 5-day waiting period before a licensed importer, manufacturer or dealer could lawfully transfer a handgun to a non-licensed person.

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