

DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF LANE COUNTY

Platform Committee

4/19/2018

RESOLUTION 2018.6

A resolution of the Democratic Party of Lane County

Relating to treating gun violence as a public health problem

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Democratic Party of Lane County, according to the DPLC Platform of 2018, to “Support research on gun violence, including by the CDC, to be made available to the public, and educate the public regarding safe handling and storage of firearms & ammunition” and to “Preserve the Second Amendment, subject to reasonable regulation designed to prevent guns from falling into the hands of criminals, children, and those deemed a danger to themselves or others”; and

WHEREAS, most gun owners support responsible gun ownership, including safe and secure storage and use of guns, but nevertheless, guns are used to kill more than 30,000 Americans and cause more than 60,000 injuries each year; and

WHEREAS, gun violence is a major public health problem facing the people of the United States - the leading cause of death, 18% of all deaths, for U.S. young people ages 15 through 24¹; and

WHEREAS, we agree with the American Public Health Association (APHA) that “a comprehensive public health approach to addressing this growing crisis is necessary... The issue of gun violence is complex and deeply rooted in our culture, which is why we must take a public health approach to ensuring our families and

¹ Much of this resolution follows the gun violence policy adopted by Health Care for All Oregon-Action, and that document with supporting references can be found at http://www.hcao Eugene.org/uploads/5/2/8/2/5282420/hcao_action_gun_violence.pdf

communities are safe. We must place a renewed emphasis on improving gun injury and violence research. Ongoing work is needed to ensure firearms do not fall into the wrong hands..."; and

WHEREAS, racial disparities in how guns kill are stark: about 80% of gun deaths to white Americans are suicides, while 80% of gun deaths to African Americans are homicides. Gun violence in communities of color and low income communities is a significant source of stress, too often untreated due to lack of access to care, with consequent self-medication through alcohol and other drugs in turn contributing to increased violence; and

WHEREAS, public health research suggesting increased access to guns might lead to increased violence precipitated the Dickey amendment to the 1996 omnibus spending bill, which effectively stifled public health research into gun violence; and

WHEREAS, despite a lack of research, initial scientific evidence supports a few conclusions - safe storage laws reduce firearm injuries and deaths among children, background checks reduce firearm suicides and homicides, prohibitions on purchase or possession of firearms by those who have been involuntarily committed reduces violent crime; and

WHEREAS, treating automobile accidents as a public health issue has led to laws and policies that have reduced deaths per mile driven by a factor of 8 since 1946, even though each safety improvement was resisted by the automobile industry. While automobile usage and ownership is heavily regulated, NRA leaders may be surprised that many law-abiding people in the U.S. still use cars, and the government has not inappropriately confiscated them; and

WHEREAS, In the Supreme Court decision declaring that the second amendment protected the rights of individuals, *District of Columbia v. Heller*, Justice Antonin

Scalia was very clear that substantial gun regulation was constitutional;

THEREFORE, the Democratic Party of Lane County resolves:

SECTION 1: To treat gun violence as the serious public health crisis that it is.

SECTION 2: The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), as our nation's leading public health entity, shall fund gun violence research.

SECTION 3: Oregon should increase support for public health, including efforts to reduce gun violence.

SECTION 4: To support the efforts of young people in the U.S. who are working to get politicians to seriously address gun violence as the leading cause of death for those in their age group.

SECTION 5: To support the continuing efforts of others working to help prevent gun violence.

SECTION 6: To advocate for laws and regulations that will protect against gun violence and are expected to be deemed constitutional.

**Resolved by the Central Committee of the Democratic Party of Lane County,
Assembled in Eugene, Oregon, April 19, 2018**