

City of Minneapolis
Request for Committee Action

To: Intergovernmental Relations
Date: 2/25/2016
From: Intergovernmental Relations Department
Prepared by: Gene Ranieri
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File type: Action
Subcategory: Policy Position

Subject: Amendment to City of Minneapolis FY 2015 Federal Policies Agenda

Description: Amend the Federal Policies Agenda to include a policy position recommending that the federal Center for Disease Control be authorized by Congress to conduct research on firearms safety and violence prevention.

The proposed amendment follows:

On page 7 of the FY2015 Federal Policies Agenda, after the Youth Violence Prevention policy statement, insert the following:

Centers for Disease Control: Funding for Firearms Safety and Gun Violence Prevention Research Since 1996 the Centers for Disease Control has been directed by Congress not to use any of its appropriation for injury prevention and control to advocate or promote gun control. An amendment to the 1997 Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations bill imposing the ban was offered by Rep. Jay Dickey (R-Arkansas) and has become a part of the annual CDC appropriation since 1997. Although the amendment did not specifically ban research on gun violence, the 1997 appropriation for gun violence research was reallocated and the CDC has not funded a gun violence research project for the last 20 years. As a result, private as well as public research on gun violence has been difficult to fund.

Major support for the amendment has come from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and similar organizations while public health and medical associations have supported federally sponsored research on the topic. The amendment's supporters contend that the research would advocate gun control and that the research topic is not within the CDC's mission. Advocates for funding contend that scientific research can lead to policies and programs that can assist in preventing firearms violence. Federally funded research, for example, has contributed to a reduction in motor vehicle accident deaths, and lead poisoning incidents.

Attempts to restore research funding have failed despite efforts of the White House, support from advocates and Congressional attempts to eliminate the appropriation limit. Among those publicly supporting federally supported research is former Representative Dickey. In 2012 he penned an op-ed that appeared in the Washington Post stating in part that "scientific research should be conducted into preventing firearms injuries and that ways to prevent firearms death can be found without encroaching on the rights of legitimate gun owners." He has repeated his call for research in a December 5, 2015, letter to the chair of the Democratic task force on gun violence prevention.

Recommendation: The City of Minneapolis recommends that Congress to pass and the President to sign legislation that authorizes and fund firearms safety and gun violence prevention research so that information can be gathered to best prevent firearms deaths

and injuries.

Previous Actions:

Federal Policies Agenda adopted on August 15, 2014

Amended on October 31, 2014

Amended on December 12, 2014

Background/Analysis:

Supporting Information. Prior to 1996, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) financially supported research of firearms related violence. The CDC proposed as part of its Fiscal Year 1997 budget \$2.5 million for firearms related violence. In the House of Representatives opposition to several CDC research programs led to an amendment that has limited firearms research by the CDC.

Since 1996 the Centers for Disease Control has been directed by Congress not to use any of its appropriation for injury prevention and control to advocate or promote gun control. An amendment to the 1997 Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations bill imposing the ban was offered by Rep. Jay Dickey (R-Arkansas) and continues to be a part of the annual CDC appropriation. Although the amendment did not specifically ban research on gun violence, the 1997 appropriation for gun violence research was reallocated to another purpose. As a result of the Congressional action, the CDC has not funded a firearms safety and gun violence research project for the last 20 years. The lack of CDC funding has made it difficult to conduct public as well as private research on firearm related violence.

Major support for the amendment has come from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and similar organizations while public health and medical associations have supported federally sponsored research on the topic. The amendment's supporters contend that the research would advocate gun control and point to studies completed prior to 1996 and recent studies that they consider to be biased. In an article published in December, 2015, a NRA executive wrote that "the NRA supports research that would encourage the safe and responsible use of firearms and reduce the number of firearm-related deaths." The author also noted that safety has been at the core of the NRA's mission but warns that the call for gun violence research will result in research biased towards gun control. In discussing opposition to the research request, some Congressional leaders noted that the proposed research is not a disease and, therefore, should not be completed by the CDC.

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Attempts to restore research funding have failed despite efforts of the White House, support from advocates, Congressional attempts to eliminate the appropriation limit and the author of the original amendment. The restoration efforts are often included in proposed policies and programs that correspond with the national reaction after a mass shooting event.

In 2013 the President outlined several policy proposals including funding for research and an executive direction to the Department of Health and Human Services to conduct such research. However the CDC has not initiated any studies citing limited resources. More recently several members of Congress, medical professionals and scientists urged Congress to allow funding for research. At a press conference held on December 2, 2015, Doctors for America presented a petition signed by 2000 physicians requesting an end to the research ban.

Legislation to fund gun violence and safety was introduced in June 2015 by Rep. Carolyn

Maloney (D-NY) and Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA). The House bill (HR261) has 34 co-sponsors while the Senate bill (S 1473) has 15 cosponsors. The bill would authorize funding to the CDC for conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention. The bill has not been heard and an effort to attach the funding request to the FY 2016 appropriations bill was not successful.

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