



HR0551

LRB104 16236 ECR 29620 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

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WHEREAS, The State of Illinois, and particularly the City of Chicago and Cook County, have made measurable progress in reducing violent crime over the past several years, yet the rates of homicide and gun violence remain unacceptably high and continue to cause untold human and economic loss; and

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WHEREAS, According to the Chicago Police Department's 2024 year-end data, the city recorded approximately 617 homicides, marking a 12% decline from the prior year, yet this still represents more than one homicide every day within the city; and

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WHEREAS, In Cook County, over 90% of homicide victims are male, and approximately 80% are Black, with young Black men aged 15 to 34 representing both the overwhelming majority of victims and perpetrators of gun homicides, a tragic and disproportionate burden that devastates families and communities and demands urgent attention; and

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WHEREAS, The Illinois State Police and the Illinois Department of Public Health report that firearm homicide remains the leading cause of death for young Black men in the State, with rates more than 25 times higher than those of their white peers, underscoring the need for practical,

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1 evidence-based prevention strategies that reach youth before
2 violence occurs; and

3 WHEREAS, In 2025, the University of Chicago Press
4 published *Unforgiving Places: The Unexpected Origins of*
5 *American Gun Violence* by Professor Jens Ludwig, the Edwin A.
6 and Betty L. Bergman Distinguished Service Professor at the
7 University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and
8 Director of the University of Chicago Crime Lab; and

9 WHEREAS, *Unforgiving Places* has quickly become a major
10 contribution to the national conversation about public safety,
11 offering a timely and data-driven reframing of the gun
12 violence crisis, arguing that much of America's violence
13 arises not from organized criminal intent but from
14 split-second decisions made in environments of stress, fear,
15 or disrespect and that behavioral science and decision-skills
16 training offer a path forward that is both humane and
17 effective; and

18 WHEREAS, Professor Ludwig's research and that of his
19 colleagues have demonstrated that short, structured
20 cognitive-behavioral intervention (CBI) programs,
21 specifically those designed and evaluated to reduce violence
22 involvement among participants, can produce measurable
23 reductions in arrests and violent offending, improve academic

1 outcomes, and achieve these results at a fraction of the cost
2 of traditional law enforcement or incarceration; and

3 WHEREAS, Such programs include Becoming a Man (BAM),
4 operated by Youth Guidance in Chicago Public Schools, and
5 decision-making curricula implemented at the Cook County
6 Juvenile Temporary Detention Center (JTDC), which have reduced
7 violent offending by up to 45% in rigorous evaluations by the
8 University of Chicago Crime Lab and other researchers; and

9 WHEREAS, Illinois has already embedded Social and
10 Emotional Learning (SEL) into the State's Illinois Learning
11 Standards, including Goal 3: Demonstrate decision-making
12 skills and responsible behaviors, and the School Code requires
13 violence prevention and conflict resolution instruction under
14 Section 27-23.4, yet current guidance does not specify which
15 evidence-based programs meet those goals or direct school
16 districts toward validated, violence-reduction curricula; and

17 WHEREAS, Clarifying that evidence-based, decision-making,
18 and impulse-control curricula specifically demonstrated to
19 reduce violence involvement, including those validated by the
20 University of Chicago Crime Lab and other leading researchers,
21 qualify as approved SEL instruction would empower schools to
22 teach lifesaving skills using existing time, staff, and
23 resources; and

1 WHEREAS, Likewise, the Illinois juvenile justice system,
2 which includes the Administrative Office of the Illinois
3 Courts (AOIC), the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), and
4 county probation and diversion programs, has the authority to
5 require educational or counseling programs for youth under
6 supervision, but it lacks statewide guidance on validated,
7 violence-reduction curricula that can be implemented at
8 minimal cost; and

9 WHEREAS, Integrating such programs as a standard early
10 touchpoint for youth entering the justice system could help
11 young people develop reflection skills, reduce recidivism, and
12 rebuild community safety more effectively and humanely than
13 punitive measures alone; and

14 WHEREAS, The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS),
15 particularly through the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention
16 and the Reimagine Public Safety Act, and the Illinois Criminal
17 Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), particularly through
18 the R3 Program's violence prevention and youth development
19 initiatives, are leading state agencies in funding community
20 violence intervention programs focused on individuals at the
21 highest risk of firearm violence involvement and
22 victimization; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE
2 HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that
3 we urge the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to:

4 (1) Identify and publish a list of evidence-based,
5 decision-making, and impulse-control curricula that have
6 been demonstrated to reduce violence involvement;

7 (2) Make at least one free or low-cost curriculum
8 available statewide for optional integration into existing
9 Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) instruction;

10 (3) Encourage districts to implement these programs
11 using existing resources and staff development; and

12 (4) Develop, pilot, and rigorously test new
13 school-based, decision-making, and violence-prevention
14 curricula that can be easily adopted by ISBE and schools
15 statewide if proven effective in reducing violence; and be
16 it further

17 RESOLVED, That we urge the Administrative Office of the
18 Illinois Courts (AOIC), the Department of Juvenile Justice
19 (DJJ), and county probation and diversion programs to identify
20 and approve evidence-based, decision-making curricula
21 appropriate for minors under supervision, diversion, or
22 detention, to encourage their integration as standard early
23 interventions, and to implement these initiatives within
24 existing budgets and structures; and be it further

1 RESOLVED, That we urge the Illinois Department of Human
2 Services (IDHS) and the Illinois Criminal Justice Information
3 Authority (ICJIA) to coordinate with ISBE, AOIC, DJJ, and
4 local partners to align violence-prevention curricula and
5 community-based interventions across settings; and be it
6 further

7 RESOLVED, That we recognize Professor Jens Ludwig for his
8 groundbreaking research, leadership, and publication of
9 *Unforgiving Places*, and we acknowledge the contributions of
10 other scholars and organizations advancing behavioral
11 approaches to violence prevention, including Patrick H. Tolan,
12 John E. Lochman, the University of Chicago Education Lab,
13 Youth Guidance, Arnold Ventures, and others; and be it further

14 RESOLVED, That suitable copies of this resolution be
15 delivered to the Illinois State Board of Education, the
16 Administrative Office of the Illinois Courts, the Department
17 of Juvenile Justice, the Illinois Department of Human
18 Services, the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority,
19 Professor Jens Ludwig, and the Governor of the State of
20 Illinois.