

Agenda Item #3V  
October 10, 2017  
**Introduction**

Resolution No.: \_\_\_\_\_  
Introduced: October 10, 2017  
Adopted: \_\_\_\_\_

**COUNTY COUNCIL  
FOR MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MARYLAND**

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Lead Sponsor: Councilmember Leventhal  
Co-Sponsor: Council President Berliner, and Councilmembers Elrich and  
Katz

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**SUBJECT:** Condemning acts of gun violence

**Background**

1. On October 1, 2017 more than 50 people were killed and more than 500 wounded in a mass shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada. This mass shooting impacted the lives of countless family members and friends of the victims, the residents of Nevada, and the nation.
2. The Firearms Owners' Protection Act of 1986 banned the possession and transfer of new machine guns. This law exempts machine guns manufactured prior to May 19, 1986 as well as machine guns possessed by or manufactured for governmental entities.
3. The Public Safety and Recreational Firearms Use Protection Act, also referred to as the Federal Assault Weapons Ban, was a 10 year ban on the manufacture for civilian use of certain semi-automatic firearms as well as certain "large capacity" magazines. The bill was signed on September 13, 1994 with a sunset date of September 13, 2004. Although there have been numerous attempts to renew the ban, none have been successful.
4. On October 3, 2017 United States Senator Dianne Feinstein introduced the Automatic Gun Fire Prevention Act. The intention of this bill is to close a loophole that allows semi-automatic weapons to be easily modified to fire at the rate of

automatic weapons. The bill currently has 38 co-sponsors, including Senators Chris Van Hollen and Ben Cardin.

5. On April 4, 2013 the Maryland General Assembly approved legislation imposing significant new restrictions on gun ownership which includes the sale of certain semi-automatic firearms defined as assault weapons, limits on magazine capacity and the requirement that handgun purchasers be fingerprinted and pass a training class to obtain a handgun license.
6. On November 17, 2016 Councilmember George Leventhal, Chair of the Council's Health and Human Services Committee, hosted a panel discussion with Congressman John Sarbanes, then Congressman-elect Jamie Raskin, and Dr. Georges Benjamin, Executive Director of the American Public Health Association, on Guns and the Public Health. The purpose of this panel discussion was to examine approaches to reduce firearm injuries and deaths.
7. In 2014 there were 15,872 homicides in the United States. A firearm was used in 11,008 of those homicides.<sup>1</sup> Of the 42,826 suicides in the United States in 2014, nearly 50 percent, 21,386 were committed using a firearm.<sup>2</sup> In 2015, 708 deaths in the State of Maryland were attributed to firearms. Firearm deaths that year were nearly a full percentage point above the national average.<sup>3</sup>
8. The Montgomery County Police Department recovered more than 1,000 firearms in 2016, which represents an 11.5% year-over-year increase. Nearly 50 percent of the firearms were recovered during incidents involving domestic violence (311), weapons offenses (115), or controlled dangerous substances (78).<sup>4</sup>
9. There were a total of 90 nonfatal shooting incidents in Montgomery County in 2016. Suspects in 53 of the incidents intended to do harm, resulting in 34 victims with nonfatal injuries. In the remaining incidents, including the 24 incidents with intent in which there were no bodily injuries, and the 29 incidents in which intent was never determined, there was generally property damage, including apartment/houses, vehicles, and fences. There were also 8 accidental discharges which resulted in 3 people struck.<sup>5</sup>
10. The County Council sits as the local Board of Health and as such is interested in all health-related, issues including the condition of eating and drinking establishments, safe buildings and water supplies, and the regulation of any nuisance or cause of disease that impacts the health of County residents.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/homicide.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fashats/suicide.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/maryland/maryland.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/MCPD%202016%20Annual%20Report\(1\).pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/MCPD%202016%20Annual%20Report(1).pdf)

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/MCPD%202016%20Annual%20Report\(1\).pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/POL/Resources/Files/MCPD%202016%20Annual%20Report(1).pdf)

11. The State of Maryland prohibits local governments from regulating the purchase, sale, taxation, transfer, manufacture, repair, ownership, possession and transportation of handguns, rifles, shotguns and ammunition under the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article Criminal Law Section § 4-209.

**Action**

The County Council for Montgomery County, Maryland approves the following resolution:

The Council condemns acts of gun violence and vows to work more collaboratively with health, social services, and criminal justice systems to address conditions that exacerbate gun violence and non-recreational firearm usage.

The Council also calls upon our legislators in the Maryland General Assembly, the United States House of Representatives, and the United States Senate to prevent access to firearms by persons with mental illness, limit the number of firearms that may be purchased per month, prevent conversion of semi-automatic weapons to automatic weapons, to take any other steps to limit access to firearms that serve no purpose other than to murder humans. We believe that these steps can be taken without infringing upon the use of firearms for legitimate hunting or other sporting purposes.

This is a correct copy of Council action.

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Linda M. Lauer, Clerk of the Council