

**A RESOLUTION OF THE WILLISTOWN TOWNSHIP BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
URGING STATE AND FEDERAL LAWMAKERS TO ENACT STRONGER PROTECTIONS
AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE**

WHEREAS, it is recognized that events of mass shootings in schools, public event spaces and places of work are continuing across the US and

WHEREAS, the Willistown Township Board of Supervisors recognizes the Second Amendment and the rights therein, it also recognizes that said rights are not unlimited and support reasonable measures to ensure greater safety in the ownership, procurement and use of guns in our society; and

WHEREAS, Willistown Township Board of Supervisors is charged with securing the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Willistown Township, yet lacks authority to enact laws limiting ownership, sale or keeping of firearms and

WHEREAS, the citizens of Willistown Township have a common interest to help prevent further public shootings, and

WHEREAS, the Willistown Township Board of Supervisors supports its police force in its ability to protect the safety of the citizens, and visitors to, the Township, *and*

WHEREAS, this resolution has been considered and passed by multiple local governments in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Willistown Township Board of Supervisors believes additional gun violence prevention measures are needed to protect the safety and health of our residents and urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly and the United States Congress to enact laws to reduce gun violence, including but not limited to these aspects:

1. Preventing known and suspected terrorists, those convicted of hate crimes and those convicted of domestic abuse or assault crimes from buying guns.
2. *Funding research into the causes and prevention of gun violence and into innovations in gun safety technology.*
3. *Developing methods for public education on the responsibility of gun owners to assure guns are stored safely and preventing access by non-owners including under age children and teens living in the home.*
4. *Raising the minimum age to legally acquire a gun.*
5. Meaningful restrictions on access to assault-style weapons *(to be defined in specific consensus legislative language)* by non-military and non-law enforcement personnel.
6. Reducing the number of permissible cartridges in a clip or magazine.
7. *Addressing access to and acquisition of firearms by high risk individuals through research on how to better identify and treat mental illness and social/behavioral disorders.*
8. *Consider developing licensure requirements for gun ownership with, for example, training in the safe handling and use of each type of firearm being acquired.*

This Resolution shall be distributed to current elected individuals:

The President of the United States
The Speaker of the House of Representatives
The U.S. Senate Majority Leader
The Governor of Pennsylvania
Congressman Ryan Costello
Congressman Patrick Meehan
State Senator Thomas McGarrigle
State Representative Duane Milne

Summary on citizen input and response to proposed Resolution on Gun Violence Prevention
Received by Board of Supervisors of Willistown Township

Since the introduction of a citizen's proposal for a Resolution to express the interests of our township to state and federal legislatures regarding gun violence prevention, the Board of Supervisors has received a range of written and spoken comments. These comments are greatly appreciated by the Board as it seeks to consider the request for such a Resolution and as we move forward in the community dialogue about how the township as a community could also enhance our local public and personal safety.

The Board has received comments that fall into several general categories which are summarized here along with some examples of particular contributions/ideas where available. The Board welcomes the perspectives and positions of the multiplex of its citizenship. To move forward toward actions and decisions, the Board is asking for thoughts and ideas for actions that citizens can/would support (if any) in:

1. The proposed Resolution (current version posted on Willistown Township website)
2. The ideas previously offered for additional actions to be explored in the township (summarized below)

Comments received to date fall into several general categories:

1. Measures to address firearms law are not within the authority of local townships and thus the Board of Supervisors ought not to pass any Resolution on the subject. *(note of clarification: the Resolution is not an ordinance creating Resolution, rather is a non-binding statement of interests of the township)*
Pennsylvania statute Title 18, § 6120. Limitation on the regulation of firearms and ammunition.
(a) General rule.--No county, municipality or township may in any manner regulate the lawful ownership, possession, transfer or transportation of firearms, ammunition or ammunition components when carried or transported for purposes not prohibited by the laws of this Commonwealth.
2. Resolutions addressing issues that are beyond those that affect only Willistown (national, state, county) should not be considered by the Supervisors as this is outside the responsibilities and role of township governance.
 - a. *From the Township Supervisors Handbook: "The municipal government speaks for the community to the outside world. This includes state and federal administrative agencies, as well as in the state legislature and Congress"*
3. Gun violence prevention, especially of mass public shootings, is important to the citizens of Willistown and therefore a Resolution that urges state and federal legislators to pass reasonable measures to research and prevent further gun violence is warranted/supported.
 - a. *See current version of Resolution for specific measures proposed as important for law makers to address.*

4. The introduction of this Resolution has revealed deeply held convictions that seem to divide the community; this could be an opportunity to invite opposing view holders to participate in a guided discussion to better understand one another. Finding common ground and basis for mutual respect could be objectives for such a dialogue.
 - a. *Several citizens described possible "citizen led" mechanisms for this dialogue; e.g. a version of the Quaker 'peace table', small group meetings led by experienced mediators.*

5. The township should identify and support specific actions to improve our local public safety.
 - a. *Take advantage of county, state or federal programs with free gun locks and programs of public education on safe handling and storage of guns.*
 - b. *Consider addressing new initiatives in our schools , e.g.*
 - A) *Armed Defenders and Positive Student/Personnel Access Control. take steps to effectively keep people/students out of our schools who do not belong there and ensure sufficient armed defenders/resource officers/police are inside the schools. The presence of armed defenders is all the more important for schools that do not have or cannot afford effective student and personnel access control. Perhaps these armed support personnel could include retired police, veterans, or other appropriately vetted and trained individuals (if needed to support existing police and sheriffs)*
 - B) *Keep those who are a threat and those who do not belong out of the Schools. - A more effective disciplinary policy for those who make threats and have other serious behavioral issues needs to be implemented to keep them out of the schools and route them to the appropriate alternative facility or other help.*