

Resolution on Gun Violence Affecting Libraries, Library Workers, and Library Patrons

A resolution about the subject of gun violence was passed at the Membership Meeting at ALA Orlando 2016. In accordance with ALA procedures, when the resolution came to ALA Council, they directed the Committee on Legislation and the Intellectual Freedom Committee to establish a working group to continue to work on the resolution.

In September and November 2016, the working group developed several discussion drafts. The working group then invited all ALA members to provide it with feedback on its discussion drafts. The working group reviewed all the comments, and used them to help frame the working group's discussions as it prepared a draft resolution to substitute for the original resolution.

In crafting the substitute resolution, our intent was to identify and articulate those concerns which are shared across the membership and produce a consensus resolution that speaks to and for all of us.

The revised resolution (below) passed.

Revised Resolution on Gun Violence Affecting Libraries, Library Workers, and Library Patrons

Whereas the safety and security of library workers and the people they serve across the United States are threatened by unexpected and potentially lethal gun violence;

Whereas libraries disseminate information about topics of interest to their communities and serve as safe spaces for open inquiry and discussion;

Whereas the ALA Council passed the Resolution on Gun Violence (ALA Annual 2015 CD#45) stating that ALA:

- deplores the gun violence that materially affects libraries in the communities we serve;
- will work with state chapters and affiliates to support legislation that allows the prohibition of the carrying of guns in or near libraries and other educational institutions;

Whereas the ALA Council passed the Resolution Calling Upon Libraries to Build More Inclusive Communities (ALA Annual 2016 CD#44) stating that ALA:

- urges libraries, librarians, and library workers to cultivate more inclusive communities by actively engaging their communities to defuse and deescalate a culture of violence based on hatred, discrimination, and bigotry;

Whereas many public-service associations, such as: the American Medical Association, American Public Health Association, American Psychological Association, American Educational Research Association, National Parent Teacher Association, Student National Medical Association, Association of American Universities, National Association of School Psychologists, American Nursing Association, and the National Association of Social Workers have publicly stated the need for additional research into the causes of gun violence in our communities;

Whereas the 1996 Congressional report language commonly known as the “Dickey

Amendment” (110 STAT 3009-244) limits expenditures only as follows: “That none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention may be used to advocate or promote gun control;”

Whereas the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2012 (125 STAT 1085) and subsequent legislation limits expenditures only as follows: “None of the funds made available in this title may be used, in whole or in part, to advocate or promote gun control;”

Whereas non-political, comprehensive research is not prohibited by any germane statutory language; and

Whereas a FY1997 House Appropriations report acknowledged “The CDC may need to collect data on the incidence of gun related violence, but the... Committee expects research in this area to be objective and grants to be awarded through an impartial peer review process.”ⁱⁱ

Therefore be it:

Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) on behalf of its members:

1. Grieves with the families and friends of all those victimized by gun violence;
2. Calls upon the Directors of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to:
 - publicly announce that their respective agencies will resume funding non-political, comprehensive research on causes and effects of gun violence in the United States; · ensure that such research, and any uses to which such research is put by the NIH or CDC, does not violate the letter of the “Dickey Amendment” prohibition on the advocacy or promotion of gun control; and
 - sponsor robust research for the dual purposes of “preventing firearm injuries” and identifying “ways to prevent firearm deaths . . . without encroaching on the rights of legitimate gun owners”ⁱⁱⁱ;

3. Encourages libraries to collaborate with appropriate local agencies to provide training and education for library workers related to the presence of guns in the workplace; and

4. Encourages libraries to support community discussions around all aspects of guns in society.

ⁱ Federal Bureau of Investigations, US Department of Justice. (2013.09.16) A Study of Active Shooter Incidents in the United States Between 2000 and 2013. <https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/office-of-partner-engagement/active-shooterincidents/a-study-of-active-shooter-incidents-in-the-u.s.-2000-2013>

ⁱⁱ H.Rept. 104-659, to accompany H.R. 3755, making FY1997 appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education, and Related Agencies, July 8, 1996, p. 49 *as cited in* Krouse, William J. (2016.11.09) Gun Control: FY2017 Appropriations for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and Other Initiatives. Congressional Research Service: Washington, DC. <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R44686.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Dickey, Jay and Mark Rosenberg. (2012.07.27) We won't know the cause of gun violence until we look for it. *The Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/we-wont-know-the-cause-of-gun-violenceuntil-we-look-for-it/2012/07/27/gJQAPfenEX_story.html