



State of New York

Executive Chamber

Proclamation

Whereas, the scourge of gun violence in the United States is a growing threat to the safety, freedom, and sanctity of our lives, and New Yorkers are horrified by the steady rise in gun violence and frequency of shootings this year as, in the first five months of 2021 alone, there have been 243 mass shootings in the United States and more than 18,280 deaths due to gun violence; many incidents involved significant losses at work locations and public places, such as the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority in San Jose, the FedEx facility in Indianapolis, the King Soopers grocery store in Boulder, and several spas and massage parlors in Atlanta and Acworth where Asian women were the specific targets of attacks; and

Whereas, last year brought COVID-19 with its vast toll on human life, immense fear and stress for individuals and families under stay-at-home orders, and untold damage to our economy; the pandemic spread amid increasing racial, social, and civil unrest – all of which contributed to a sharp increase in firearm sales and gun-related crimes and shootings, making 2020 the deadliest year in the history of our country; and

Whereas, according to the Gun Violence Archive, a nonprofit research group that has been recording gun shootings and firearm-related incidents in the United States since 2013, levels of gun violence and gun crime in 2020 far exceeded the year-end totals for each year from 2014 to 2019, with over 19,400 gun deaths, over 33,430 injuries, and more than 600 mass shootings – incidents where four or more people are shot, resulting in either death or injury – this number represents the most mass shootings over the previous five years, and nearly a 50% increase from 2019; and

Whereas, each day in our nation, more than 100 people die from injuries caused by gunshots and, among many victims over the years is Hadiya Pendleton who, in 2013, was killed at the age of 15 while standing in a Chicago park, a week after performing at President Obama's second inauguration; in the wake of her death, Hadiya's friends wore orange in her honor and asked all people to "Wear Orange" in support of National Gun Violence Awareness Day, observed the first Friday in June – this year on June 4th – a few days after what would have been Hadiya's 24th birthday, on June 2nd; and

Whereas, New Yorkers share the vision of a better world for all humankind and we are committed to making our communities safer places to live – where crime, violence, and hatred have no place; five years ago, on June 12, 2016 in Orlando, Florida, our nation was stunned by a terrorist attack that targeted the lesbian, gay, bi-sexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community, resulting in loss of 49 precious lives to senseless gun violence; in the wake of this mournful tragedy, New York State created an official New York State Memorial, dedicated in 2018, honoring all victims of hate, intolerance, and violence, along with New York State's fight for equal rights and respect for the LGBTQ community; and

Whereas, New York State leads the nation in passing tough gun safety laws to protect and save lives – the *SAFE Act*, the *Red Flag Law*, and legislation to ban bump stocks and extend the waiting period to conduct thorough background checks of potential gun-owners; these measures reduce the potential lethality of firearms by keeping guns out of the hands of convicted felons and persons that pose a danger to themselves or others, ensuring stringent screening of gun buyers, banning high-capacity magazines and assault weapons, and strengthening criminal penalties for illegal gun use; in addition, the state has allocated millions of dollars to support gun violence prevention and intervention programs, such as the *Gun Involved Violence Elimination (GIVE)* initiative and *SNUG Street Outreach Program*, among others; and

Whereas, we join in reaffirming the fundamental belief of all free and civilized societies that any act of violence committed by one person against another cannot, and will not, be tolerated; National Gun Violence Awareness Month focuses on the intensifying crisis of gun violence in our country and the need to enact smarter, stricter, and safer gun laws, calling upon our federal, state, and local government and community leaders to unite in achieving this goal;


Now, Therefore, I, Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York, do hereby proclaim June 2021 as


GUN VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

in the Empire State.



Given under my hand and the Privy Seal of the State at the Capitol in the City of Albany this first day of June in the year two thousand twenty-one.


Governor


Secretary to the Governor
Melissa DeRosa