

CITY OF VINELAND

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-_____

RESOLUTION DESIGNATING THE MONTH OF JUNE AS
GUN SAFETY AND VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH.

WHEREAS, gun violence is a continually growing problem on the national, state, county, and municipal levels; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that the bordering State of New York, after a grassroots campaign that began at the local level, became the first state to officially recognize June as Gun Violence Awareness Month; and

WHEREAS, it is acknowledged that gun violence and gun-related incidents have an overall impact on the health, welfare and safety of New Jersey residents; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland County has an opportunity to collectively pledge a unified devotion, in all of its municipalities, to ending gun violence and gun-related incidents; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland County municipalities have a particular need for the implementation of gun safety and violence awareness programs because:

- a. Cumberland County has a large recreational hunting population;
- b. Cumberland County holds the 6th highest percentage of the total Firearm License Holders in New Jersey;
- c. Cumberland County was the 4th highest Youth Firearm License Holder county in New Jersey in 2011;
- d. Cumberland County has experienced an increase of fatal shootings and juvenile firearm possession between 2012 and 2014;

WHEREAS, Cumberland County should unite in promoting a positive program, in which its gun owners are educated on safe practices; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that preventing gun violence in Cumberland County is equally important as promoting gun safety; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland County and the municipalities therein recognize the power and necessity of a unified and coordinated campaign against gun violence in tandem with safe and responsible gun ownership; and

WHEREAS, recognition of the month of June as Gun Safety and Violence Awareness Month will provide an ongoing opportunity to educate residents on gun safety, foster meaningful dialogue amongst the community about gun violence, and identify much-needed solutions to gun-related crimes and incidents in Cumberland County; and

WHEREAS, Cumberland County's designation could provide an impetus for the designation of June as Gun Safety and Violence Awareness month across the State of New Jersey;

NOW BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the City Council of the City of Vineland declares the month of June as Gun Safety and Violence Awareness Month.

Adopted:

President of Council

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition

October 19, 2015

City of Vineland
640 East Wood Street
Vineland, NJ 08362-1508

Dear Mayor Bermudez and Council President Fanucci,

The Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition, hereafter referred to as CCPYDC, is a Cumberland County juvenile delinquency prevention effort, whose mission is:

To prevent youth from entering the juvenile justice system and those already associated with the criminal justice system from entering the adult system.

CCPYDC is a collaborative of community stakeholders working together to reduce juvenile delinquency and promote positive youth development in the county. It is the first county-wide juvenile delinquency prevention effort in the state. The Coalition consists of diverse participation from 85 agencies representing various municipal, county, and state agencies; social and youth serving organizations; faith-based institutions; and school districts

We are all too familiar with headlines like, "*3-Year-Old Accidentally Shoots and Kills Mother*," "*9-Year-Old Girl Accidentally Shoots and Kills Her Gun Instructor*," and "*Gun Seller Dad's 3-Year-Old Shot By 4-Year-Old Neighbor*." Gun fatalities, whether accidental or not, leave a wake of sorrow and unanswered questions—"How could we have prevented this tragedy?" "How did s/he get a hold of a gun?" "What is the community going to do about this issue?"

CCPYDC is ready to take on these questions. It has recently begun a Gun Safety and Violence Awareness effort and would like to designate the month of June as "Gun Safety and Violence Awareness" month for the county and all its municipalities, uniting Cumberland County in the effort to end gun violence. What a tremendous message this would send to have all of the County's municipalities, as well as the County itself, unified in combatting gun violence. Ultimately, CCPYDC would like to lead the charge to also receive this designation for the state. New York is the only state currently with such a designation.¹

Although Cumberland County does not have the amount of violence seen in other New Jersey counties, such as Camden and Essex, gun-related crimes and incidents are growing in our county. For example, the number of possession of firearm charges for juveniles increased by 44% in Cumberland County from 2013 to 2014 (18 in 2013 to 26 in 2014). In this same two-year span, fatal shootings increased by 45% county-wide and have claimed a total of 19 lives. During this time, there were a total of 98 shootings, both fatal and non-fatal in the county. Further, in 2013, the firearm death rate in New Jersey was higher than New York. These are just a few statistics demonstrating the gun issues in Cumberland County today. But these data points are much more than

¹ New York State is the only state in the nation to dedicate an entire month to the issue of gun violence prevention and awareness. In 2013, the first resolution unanimously passed the New York State Legislature naming June Gun Violence Awareness Month as part of a five year push to reduce gun violence across New York. The resolution was sponsored in the Assembly by former State Assemblyman Karim Camara and in the Senate by State Senator Ruth Hassell-Thompson. Similar resolutions and proclamations were issued in every major city in New York State, including New York City.

Cumberland County Positive Youth Development Coalition

statistics; they are tragedies for families across Cumberland County.

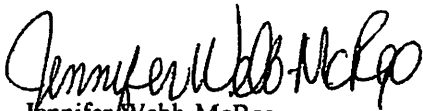
To decrease these devastating numbers, the Gun Safety and Violence Awareness effort wants to implement programs to educate the public on gun safety and bring awareness to the growing issue of gun violence. With this goal in mind, CCPYDC is also seeking a county-wide resolution to designate June as the Gun Safety and Violence Awareness Month, beginning in June 2016.

Attached is sample language for a resolution designating a Gun Safety and Violence Awareness Month. CCPYDC would like to request that the city of Vineland add us as an agenda item on your December 1, 2015 work session meeting for members of CCPYDC and a group of youth from the Boys and Girls Club to present information about the gun facts of Cumberland County and request a resolution designating June as Gun Safety and Violence Awareness Month. It is our hope that your Council will be able to vote on adopting this resolution at its next Council Meeting.

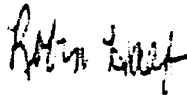
We will be reaching out to you soon for your decision. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us with any questions or to schedule your presentation right away:

Thank you in advance for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



Jennifer Webb-McRae
Prosecutor
Cumberland County
115 Vine Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
T: 856-453-0486 Ext. 23106
F: 856-451-1507
Email: jenniferwe@co.cumberland.nj.us



Robin Haaf
County Youth Services Administrator
Cumberland County Human Services
70-74 West Broad Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
T: (856) 459-3083
Email: robinha@co.cumberland.nj.us



Joe Derella
Freeholder Director
Board of Chosen Freeholders
Cumberland County
164 West Broad Street
Bridgeton, NJ 08302
T: (856) 453-2125
F: (856) 451-8243
Email: joede@co.cumberland.nj.us

Cc: Keith Petrosky, City Clerk