CITY OF EL PASO, TEXAS
AGENDA ITEM
AGENDA SUMMARY FORM

DEPARTMENT: Mayor and Council

AGENDA DATE: Tuesday, June 21, 2022

CONTACT PERSON NAME AND PHONE NUMBER:
City Representative Henry Rivera, District 7- 915.212.0007
City Representative Cassandra Hernandez, District 3- 915.212.0003
City Representative Peter Svarzbein, District 1- 915.212.1002

DISTRICT(S) AFFECTED: All Districts

STRATEGIC GOAL:
Goal 2 - Set the Standard for a Safe and Secure City

SUBJECT:
APPROVE a resolution / ordinance / lease to do what? OR AUTHORIZE the City Manager to do what? Be descriptive of what we want Council to approve. Include $ amount if applicable.

Discussion and action on a Resolution that the City Council of the City of El Paso stands in solidarity with the community of Uvalde, strongly urges and advocates for the Texas State Legislature to finally act responsibly to address the mass gun violence issue and prevent the continued horrific acts of violence from occurring in Texas cities, urges the Texas Governor to call for a Special Legislative Session to address gun violence, and directs the City Manager to work with the El Paso State Delegations, El Paso School Districts and other governmental agencies to enhance these efforts.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION:
Discussion of the what, why, where, when, and how to enable Council to have reasonably complete description of the contemplated action. This should include attachment of bid tabulation, or ordinance or resolution if appropriate. What are the benefits to the City of this action? What are the citizen concerns?

On May 24, 2022, an 18-year-old armed with an assault weapon murdered 19 innocent children and two teachers and injured 17 others during a mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

PRIOR COUNCIL ACTION:
Has the Council previously considered this item or a closely related one? Yes, on June 7th Council approved a resolution condemning the May 24th attack.

AMOUNT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING:
How will this item be funded? Has the item been budgeted? If so, identify funding source by account numbers and description of account. Does it require a budget transfer? N/A

**********************REQUIRED AUTHORIZATION**********************

RESOLUTION

CITY CLERK DEPT
2022 JUN 16 AM11:09

WHEREAS, on August 3, 2019, the community of El Paso and the community of Juarez, faced a horrific tragedy that shocked the city, state, nation and the world when a lone shooter walked into a Walmart store and shot 46 people, killing 23 and injuring 23; and,

WHEREAS, after this terroristic act of violence against our community, the Texas Legislature recognized the need to take action on mass violence prevention to prevent future tragedies from happening in Texas and established Mass Violence & Community Safety Committees in both the House and the Senate to address the issue of mass violence caused by mass shootings; and,

WHEREAS, before the first committee could even meet and within the same month of the El Paso mass violence attack, another horrifying act of mass violence occurred on August 31 in the Midland Odessa community, where one shooter killed seven people and wounded 25; and,

WHEREAS, on October 21, 2019 the Texas State Senate, convened a Senate Committee Hearing on Mass Violence & Community Safety in El Paso to address the issue of mass violence and heard from experts in their respective fields providing valuable information related to the ability to establish realistic risk indicators to help identify potential threats; how to make existing laws more effective and efficient; new legislation that will allow counties to add protocols on how to enforce protective orders that require the surrender of firearms; and the use and role of mental health professionals in identifying risk; and,

WHEREAS, before the House Committee could convene and before the year even ended, another senseless act of gun violence towards a Texas Community happened on December 29, 2019 in White Settlement where one shooter killed two people in a church; and,

WHEREAS, on January 9, 2020, the House Committee on Mass Violence & Community Safety also held a hearing in El Paso, once again hearing from experts on identifying ways in which future tragic events that happened in El Paso, could be prevented; and,

WHEREAS, despite the Committee hearings on the prevention of mass violence and promises by State leaders to protect Texas communities from mass shootings, only two bills were passed during the 2021 Legislative Session and no significant common-sense laws to address gun violence prevention were passed; and,

WHEREAS, on May 24, 2022, the deadliest school shooting to occur in Texas and the third deadliest in the nation, occurred in Uvalde where 19 children and two teachers were killed in Robb Elementary School and once again, shocked the city, state, nation and the world.

WHEREAS, on June 1, 2022, after the mass shooting in Uvalde, Governor Abbott called on the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor to each convene a special legislative committee to review what steps previous legislatures have enacted, what resources the State has made available to local school districts, and make recommendations to the Legislature and the Executive Branch so that meaningful action can be made on, among other things, the following topics to prevent future school shootings; and,

WHEREAS, although making schools safer is the Governor's primary focus of these special legislative committees since during the Governor's tenure two mass shootings at schools have occurred resulting

in 31 deaths and 30 injured, there should be a much broader focus on mass shootings since from the time the Governor assumed office, mass shootings have occurred in places other than school grounds, such as the 2016 Dallas mass shooting that killed five officers and injured 11 others; the 2017 Sutherland Springs shooting that killed 26 and injured 20, the August 2019 El Paso shooting that killed 23 and injured 24, and the August 2019 Odessa Midland shooting that killed 7 people and injured 25; and,

WHEREAS, these special legislative committees are similar to the special legislative committees established in 2019 after the El Paso mass shooting incident, where although hours of testimony was taken from the public and subject matter experts, when the Legislature met in the 2021 regular legislative session, no meaningful legislation was passed; and,

WHEREAS, the Governor must call a Special Session because the past has shown that convening special committees does not lead to meaningful legislation and the Governor must broaden the focus to include meaningful gun legislation that will protect people not only on school grounds, but everywhere;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF EL PASO:

That the City having gone through a mass shooting event sends its thoughts and prayers to the community of Uvalde and stands in solidarity and strength with the City and people of Uvalde and prays that although lives were shattered on May 24, and the community shocked, saddened and stunned, that the fabric of their community will not be torn.

That through the El Paso community's resiliency and strong sense of community and strength of community the City was able to endure the horrific event of August 3, 2019 and continue to stand strong despite the senseless attack of violence, and now stands ready to assist the community of Uvalde.

That the State Legislature must finally act responsibly to prevent the unimaginable pain caused by a senseless act of gun violence so that no other Texas community should have to endure such suffering.

That although the prevention of continued mass violence in our Texas communities is a complicated, complex issue with no simple answer, the Legislature must act to address the issue and prevent the continued horrific acts of violence from occurring in other Texas cities.

That the City strongly urges and advocates for the legislature to adopt extreme risk protection laws that allow family members or law enforcement to petition the court to temporarily remove firearms from an individual experiencing crisis; provides funding for community-based violence intervention programs; and adopts measures to protect women against gun violence from domestic abusers.

That the City strongly urges and advocates for the strengthening of existing legislation to provide stronger ways to more efficiently, effectively and consistently enforce existing laws or whether new legislation is needed along with new resources, are questions that must be answered and legislative action taken this session.

That the Governor call a Special Legislative Session to address gun violence in general, not just on school grounds.

That during the Special Session, the Legislature passes legislation that will:

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- Provide funding for specialized training either through the School Marshal program or other existing programs already available for the School Districts to hire law enforcement officer or peace officers.
- Provides a dedicated funding source for mental health services and community mental health programs
- Establish and fund statewide minimum standards and guidelines for school safety
- Adopt extreme risk protection laws that allow family members or law enforcement to petition the court to temporarily remove firearms from an individual experiencing crisis;
- Provides funding for community-based violence intervention programs; and adopts measures to protect women against gun violence from domestic abusers.
- Strengthens existing legislation to provide stronger ways to more efficiently, effectively and consistently enforce existing laws.
- Raise the minimum age to purchase firearms to 21.
- Require universal background checks for all firearm sales.
- Implement temporary red flag laws to allow temporary removal of firearms from those who are an imminent danger to themselves or others.
- Require a cooling off period for the purchase of a firearm.
- Regulate civilian ownership of high capacity magazines.

That the City Manager be directed to work with El Paso's State Delegation, El Paso School Districts and other governmental entities to enhance the above efforts.

That a copy of this Resolution be provided to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Texas Speaker, and other Texas cities and be included as a priority legislative initiative for the City.

PASSED AND APPROVED this _____ day of _____, 2022.

THE CITY OF EL PASO:

_____
Oscar Leeser, Mayor

ATTEST:

_____
Laura D. Prine
City Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

_____
Karla M. Nieman
City Attorney

APPROVED AS TO CONTENT:

_____
Tracey Jerome
Deputy City Manager