

SENATE, No. 63

STATE OF NEW JERSEY 218th LEGISLATURE

PRE-FILED FOR INTRODUCTION IN THE 2018 SESSION

Sponsored by:

Senator TROY SINGLETON

District 7 (Burlington)

SYNOPSIS

Requires University Behavioral Health Care of Rutgers University to undertake comprehensive study of firearms violence.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

Introduced Pending Technical Review by Legislative Counsel.



1 AN ACT requiring a study of firearms violence and supplementing
2 Title 2C of the New Jersey Statutes.

3

4 **BE IT ENACTED** by the Senate and General Assembly of the State
5 of New Jersey:

6

7 1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

8 a. Firearms violence is a public health crisis in New Jersey and
9 throughout the United States.

10 b. On average, 89 people die in the United States every day
11 from firearms violence.

12 c. According to FBI crime reports for 2013 and 2014, the most
13 recent years for which data are available, over 72 percent of
14 murders in New Jersey were committed using firearms.

15 d. Despite the inordinate number of deaths attributable to
16 firearms violence, very little scientific research has been performed
17 during the past two decades to identify effective ways of reducing
18 firearms violence, in part, as a result of federal legislative
19 provisions and a lack of federal funding.

20 e. In the face of this public health crisis, scientists have urged
21 Congress to facilitate research on firearms violence and prevention.
22 Recently, over 2,000 doctors in all 50 states and the District of
23 Columbia signed a petition urging Congress to remove barriers to
24 research that have existed for nearly 20 years, and provide annual
25 funding to identify causes of and ways to prevent firearms violence.

26 f. Obtaining scientific data about firearms violence and its
27 prevention is critical to effectively addressing the harm this public
28 health crisis inures on the citizens of this State.

29 g. In order to protect the citizens of New Jersey, a study should
30 be undertaken to identify the root causes of firearms violence and to
31 recommend effective firearms violence prevention policies and
32 programs.

33

34 2. a. University Behavioral Health Care of Rutgers, the State
35 University of New Jersey, shall conduct a comprehensive firearms
36 violence study to research firearms-related violence. Specifically,
37 the study shall examine the following:

38 (1) The nature of firearms violence, including individual and
39 societal determinants of risk for involvement in firearms violence,
40 whether as a victim or a perpetrator;

41 (2) The individual, community, and societal consequences of
42 firearms violence; and

43 (3) Prevention and treatment of firearms violence at the
44 individual, community, and societal levels.

45 b. The study shall utilize a variety of research methods with a
46 mission to provide the scientific evidence on which sound firearms
47 violence prevention policies and programs can be based. The
48 research shall extend to firearms violence as a form of terrorism.

1 c. University Behavioral Health Care shall work on a
2 continuing basis with policymakers in the Legislature and State
3 agencies to identify, implement, and evaluate innovative firearms
4 violence prevention policies and programs.

5 d. To assist in ensuring a long-term and successful effort to
6 understand and prevent firearms violence, University Behavioral
7 Health Care shall recruit and provide specialized training
8 opportunities for researchers, including experienced investigators in
9 related fields with expertise in firearms violence, investigators who
10 have completed their education, postdoctoral scholars, doctoral
11 students, and undergraduates.

12 e. In addition to any appropriations provided, University
13 Behavioral Health Care may also seek additional federal, State, and
14 private funding to be used to conduct firearms violence research
15 pursuant to P.L. , c. (C.) (pending before the Legislature as
16 this bill).

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18 3. This act shall take effect on the first day of the third month
19 following enactment.

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22 STATEMENT

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24 This bill requires University Behavioral Health Care (UBHC) at
25 Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, to undertake a
26 comprehensive firearms violence study to research firearms-related
27 violence. Specifically, the study shall examine the nature of
28 firearms violence, including individual and societal determinants of
29 risk for involvement in firearms violence, whether as a victim or a
30 perpetrator; the individual, community, and societal consequences
31 of firearms violence; and prevention and treatment of firearms
32 violence at the individual, community, and societal levels.

33 The study is to utilize a variety of research methods with a
34 mission to provide the scientific evidence on which sound firearms
35 violence prevention policies and programs can be based. The
36 research is to extend to firearms violence as a form of terrorism.

37 The bill requires UBHC to work with policymakers in the
38 Legislature and State agencies in performing the study and to
39 recruit and provide specialized training opportunities for
40 researchers, including experienced investigators in related fields
41 who work on firearms violence, investigators who have completed
42 their education, postdoctoral scholars, doctoral students, and
43 undergraduates.

44 The bill also provides that in addition to any appropriation that
45 may be provided to UBHC, the university is authorized to seek
46 additional federal, State, and private funds to conduct this research.