

**Introduced by Senator Hall**

January 15, 2016

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Senate Joint Resolution No. 20—Relative to gun violence.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SJR 20, as introduced, Hall. Gun violence: research.

This measure would urge the Congress of the United States to lift an existing prohibition against publicly funded scientific research on the causes of gun violence and its effects on public health, and to appropriate funds for the purpose of conducting that research.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, Every day, gun violence destroys lives, families,
- 2 and communities; and
- 3 WHEREAS, From 2002 to 2013, inclusive, California lost
- 4 38,576 individuals to gun violence, of which 2,258 were children;
- 5 and
- 6 WHEREAS, In 2013 alone, guns were used to kill 2,900
- 7 Californians, including 251 children and teenagers, and hospitalized
- 8 another 6,035 Californians for nonfatal gunshot wounds, including
- 9 1,275 children and teenagers; and
- 10 WHEREAS, There were over 350 recorded mass shootings in
- 11 the United States in 2015; and
- 12 WHEREAS, Since 1996, Congress has adopted annual policy
- 13 riders, known as the “Dickey Amendment” and “Rehberg
- 14 Amendment,” that effectively prohibit the federal Centers for
- 15 Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other agencies under
- 16 the federal Department of Health and Human Services from

1 conducting publicly funded scientific research on the causes of  
2 gun violence or its effects on public health; and

3 WHEREAS, The author of the original Dickey Amendment,  
4 former Representative Jay Dickey (R-AR), has stated repeatedly  
5 that he regrets offering the amendment and thinks it should be  
6 repealed; and

7 WHEREAS, Despite Representative Dickey’s comments and  
8 President Obama’s executive action in 2013 directing the CDC to  
9 resume gun violence research, Congress has provided no funding,  
10 and the restrictive language remains in place; and

11 WHEREAS, Since 1996, the federal government has spent \$240  
12 million per year on traffic safety research, which has saved 360,000  
13 lives since 1970; and

14 WHEREAS, During the same period there has been almost no  
15 publicly funded research on gun violence, which kills the same  
16 number of people every year; and

17 WHEREAS, Recently, 110 Members of the Congress of the  
18 United States signed a letter urging the leadership of the House of  
19 Representatives to end the longstanding ban on federal funding  
20 for gun violence research, and over 2,000 doctors in all 50 states  
21 plus the District of Columbia did the same; and

22 WHEREAS, Although Members of Congress may disagree  
23 about how best to respond to the problem of gun violence, we  
24 should be able to agree that a response should be informed by  
25 sound scientific evidence; and

26 WHEREAS, Whether it is horrific headline-generating massacres  
27 or unseen violence that occurs every day — the innocent child  
28 gunned down in crossfire, the mother murdered during a domestic  
29 dispute, or the young life cut tragically short during the heat of a  
30 petty argument — the call to action is now clear; now, therefore,  
31 be it

32 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*  
33 *California, jointly*, That a comprehensive evidence-based federal  
34 approach to reducing and preventing gun violence is needed to  
35 ensure that our communities are safe from gun violence; and be it  
36 further

37 *Resolved*, That federal research is crucial to saving lives, having  
38 driven policy to save lives from motor vehicle accidents, sudden  
39 infant death syndrome, lead poisoning, and countless other public  
40 health crises; and be it further

1     *Resolved*, That the Legislature urges the Congress of the United  
2 States to promptly lift the prohibition against publicly funded  
3 scientific research on the causes of gun violence and its effects on  
4 public health, and to appropriate funds to the Centers for Disease  
5 Control and Prevention and other relevant agencies under the  
6 Department of Health and Human Services to conduct that research;  
7 and be it further

8     *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of  
9 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United  
10 States, to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, to the  
11 Majority Leader of the Senate, to each Senator and Representative  
12 from California in the Congress of the United States, and to the  
13 author for appropriate distribution.