

Talking Points: HF3020/SF2834  
Lee/Hayden Trauma-Informed  
Gun Violence Reduction Bill



**This bill would create a pilot program to address trauma –  
an underlying cause and result of gun violence.**

Gun violence takes different forms in different parts of our state, but often results from the same cause: trauma. Research has shown that perpetrators of gun violence are often victims of gun violence themselves, or have experienced forms of gun-related trauma. This bill creates a pilot program to address gun violence-related trauma by providing training, resources, and education to individuals, organizations, and the wider community.

#### SUMMARY OF THE BILL

- 1) The bill directs the Commissioner of Health to establish a pilot program to aid in the reduction of trauma resulting from gun violence, and address the root causes of gun violence.
- 2) The pilot program will make resources available to professionals and organizations who work with victims, witnesses, or perpetrators of gun violence occurring in a community, domestic or other settings.
- 3) These resources include:
  - training in recognizing trauma as both a cause and effect of gun violence;
  - skill development for practitioners and investment in community-based organizations that provide services to those who have experienced trauma;
  - replication and expansion of successful community-based gun violence prevention initiatives;
  - education campaigns and outreach materials to educate communities, organizations, and the public about the relationship between trauma and gun violence.
- 4) The pilot program will address the traumatic effects of gun violence exposure holistically; materials will be prepared multiple languages for those with limited English language proficiency.
- 5) An advisory panel will be formed to develop protocols and program guidelines.
- 6) A report on the progress of the pilot program will be submitted by November 15, 2019.
- 7) \$100,000 in fiscal year 2019 is appropriated from the general fund for the purposes of the trauma-informed gun violence reduction pilot program.

#### NEED FOR TRAUMA-INFORMED RESPONSE TO GUN VIOLENCE

Trauma, defined as the result of experiencing or witnessing chronic and sustained violence, or specific violent events, can have lasting impact on individuals and communities.

Each exposure to trauma is like receiving a dose of toxin. The more doses received, more toxins ingested, and the greater the negative impact.

Exposure to **gun violence** is more “toxic” than all other forms of violence, making it a strong contributor to school failure, alcohol and drug abuse, anger, depression, anxiety, chronic illness, and aggression.

Domestic abuse that involves threats and intimidation with firearms is often overlooked as a source of trauma for both the person threatened and children living in the home.

Research consistently links gun violence exposure with outcomes that predispose individuals to be less likely to be healthy and raise healthy children, less likely to live in safe communities, less likely to complete their schooling and maintain employment, and more likely to behave violently.

#### *Trauma in urban communities*

- Individuals living in communities where violence is prevalent are at increased risk for a broad range of negative health and behavior outcomes—including being violent themselves.
- People of color and youth living in poor urban communities experience gun violence at higher rates than other Americans, and are proportionately more traumatized by it.
- Whether or not an individual experiences gun violence personally, living in violent communities compromises residents’ ability to break intergenerational cycles of violence.
- Without effective interventions, a neighborhood becomes unable to protect itself against the perpetuation of a violent culture. There is no “post” in the post-traumatic stress experienced by many.
- Studies have consistently shown that community-based violence prevention initiatives that focus on the treatment of trauma are some of the most effective means of reducing urban gun violence.

#### *In Greater Minnesota*

- Those living in rural areas are subject to less obvious, but still harmful, forms of trauma.
- Isolation, unemployment, depressed economies, and weather-related crop failures all contribute to a hidden epidemic of trauma-related gun violence in rural communities.
- Nearly 80% of gun deaths in Minnesota are suicides, which take place disproportionately in Greater Minnesota.
- Farmers are 3-5 times more likely to die by suicide than other Minnesotans.
- Deaths by suicide devastate families and can traumatize whole rural communities, thus perpetuating the cycle. At the same time, there are often fewer trauma-informed mental health services available in rural communities.