



City of Chicago



R2013-754

Office of the City Clerk

Document Tracking Sheet

Meeting Date:	9/11/2013
Sponsor(s):	Balcer, James (11)
Type:	Resolution
Title:	Call for hearing(s) on strengthening our sentencing laws for crimes committed with firearm
Committee(s) Assignment:	Committee on Public Safety

Public Safety

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The scourge of gun violence has contributed to immeasurable loss and suffering in our City and across the Nation, as demonstrated most recently by the 443 Chicagoans murdered with firearms in 2012, the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Ct., and the Center for Disease Control estimate that 20,000 people annually commit suicide with a gun; and

WHEREAS, We have a duty as citizens, officials, and compassionate persons to speak out against the senseless destruction caused by guns, which destroy families, cripple promising lives, devastate communities, and endanger our Nation's collective health; and

WHEREAS, In light of these challenges and obligations, crimes committed with a firearm are especially heinous and troubling, even if the offender does not cause "great bodily harm" per the language of 730 ILCS 5/3-6-3; and

WHEREAS, National recidivism rates are appallingly high among those convicted of weapons-related crimes – over 70%, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics – a number that reflects state reports indicating that those arrested on gun charges are more likely than others to commit repeat offenses after serving their sentences, and in doing so inject further anguish into their communities; and


WHEREAS, Every death of a mother, son, daughter, father, or friend and loved one from a bullet is unacceptable, and a cause for great sadness in our City, especially when the perpetrator was released early from prison before serving a full sentence for a prior offense; and

WHEREAS, Studies published at Florida State University and by the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, among others, indicate that "truth in sentencing reforms" lead to lower rates of recidivism, therefore demonstrating that minimum sentencing requirements are effective in keeping dangerous criminals in prison and off the streets of our cities; and

WHEREAS, Illinois should strengthen its sentencing laws so that people who commit crimes with firearms face tougher sentencing requirements; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, That we, the Mayor and Members of the City Council of the City of Chicago, do hereby urge the Illinois General Assembly to take action, in the interest of public safety, by passing legislation that strengthens our sentencing laws for those crimes committed with a firearm, requiring that 85 percent of each sentence be served regardless of the "bodily harm" inflicted; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be delivered to the Governor of the State of Illinois, the President of the Illinois Senate, the Minority Leader of the Illinois Senate, the Speaker of the Illinois House of Representatives, and the Minority Leader of the Illinois House of Representatives as a testament to the urgency of the issue and our shared commitment to protect the People of Illinois.


James Balcer
Alderman, 11th Ward