

## Gun Violence Is A Public Health Crisis

We need to do more to break this cycle of violence and help communities heal

Gun violence is disrupting families and sending shockwaves through community after community in Ontario. The sharp increase in gun violence we are seeing in several communities is a warning sign of the deeper, underlying causes and long-term impacts that are not being addressed. It adds a sense of urgency for governments at all levels to do more and work together.

Ontario should be a leader in community safety and well-being. That's why I introduced **Bill 129: The Safe and Healthy Communities Act (Addressing Gun Violence), 2019**.

My bill would do the following:

1. Declare gun violence as a public health issue.
2. Ensure that Ontario has hospital-based violence intervention programs. This will mean trauma-informed counselling for survivors and others affected by gun violence paid for by OHIP.
3. Allow all Boards of Health to develop programs and services for reducing gun violence and for increasing the capacity of the community to assist survivors and others affected by gun violence.

[My bill has been endorsed by the Toronto Board of Health](#), which underscores the vital need for this legislation.

Every level of government has a role to play in addressing this issue. I agree it's also time for the federal government to ban handgun and ammunition sales, but I do support giving municipalities the power to opt out of that ban. We must adopt policies to combat this crisis in ways that make sense for individual communities.

It is time that we put the safety of our communities and neighbourhoods above politics and I have been pushing for real legislative change on this issue for some time. Last year, I introduced a private members bill calling on the provincial government to allow municipalities to ban the sale of ammunition within their boundaries. I am also calling on the provincial government to pass my Bill 129.

Trauma caused by gun violence can linger long after tragedies. We know it tears apart families and communities. That's why I'm proud Bill 129 has the support of Canadian Doctors for Protection from Guns, the Regent Park Mothers for Peace and many other anti-gun violence groups and advocates.