

State of North Carolina

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

March 14, 2023

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 279

ESTABLISHING THE NORTH CAROLINA OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION

WHEREAS, violence has resulted in the tragic loss of life in North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, an average of five (5) North Carolinians die per day from a firearm injury and rates of firearm violence and injury are increasing in North Carolina and nationally; and

WHEREAS, injuries from firearms have surpassed motor vehicle crashes as the leading cause of death for children; and

WHEREAS, rural communities and communities with higher social vulnerability, such as poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, and lower educational levels, have higher rates of firearm injuries and deaths; and

WHEREAS, communities of color are disproportionately impacted by firearm violence and Black North Carolinians are almost twice as likely as white North Carolinians to die by a firearm; and

WHEREAS, more than half of intimate partner homicides involve a firearm and the presence of a firearm in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%; and

WHEREAS, more than half of firearm related deaths are suicides and American Indians, non-Hispanic white adults, and veterans have higher rates of firearm suicides than the general population; and

WHEREAS, violence is a significant public health issue, not only because of injury and death but also because of the fear and trauma caused to families and communities; and

WHEREAS, effective strategies to combat violence and a coordinated approach across state and local government, law enforcement, public health, health care, and community organizations are needed to stop violent crime; and

WHEREAS, a public health approach to violence and firearm misuse relies on data and best practices and involves four steps: defining and monitoring the problem; identifying risk and protective factors; developing and testing prevention strategies for the different types of firearm violence and misuse; and assuring widespread adoption of prevention strategies; and

WHEREAS, several state agencies and organizations including the Governor's Crime Commission, the North Carolina Department of Justice, the North Carolina Department of Public

Safety, and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, have initiatives and programs that address violence prevention and firearm misuse; and

WHEREAS, the Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice recommended state government support for communities in developing violence prevention programs and adopted a resolution supporting the creation of a statewide office of violence prevention in fulfillment of its recommendations; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina communities have been leading the way through innovative programs and practices, including the Office of Violence Prevention in Mecklenburg County and community-based and hospital-based violence intervention programs across the state; and

WHEREAS, North Carolina state government can promote local success in violence prevention by enhancing coordination across state agencies, improving data collection and sharing, offering technical assistance to local officials, promoting collaboration and sharing of best practices between localities, and managing grant programs to pursue and direct available federal funding to law enforcement and community-based organizations focused on reducing gun violence; and

WHEREAS, the Governor is committed to building safer, more prosperous communities in North Carolina and stopping violent crime; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Article III of the North Carolina Constitution and N.C. Gen. Stat. §§ 143A-4 and 143B-4, the Governor is the chief executive officer of the state and is responsible for formulating and administering the policies of the executive branch of state government; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 147-12, the Governor has the authority and the duty to supervise the official conduct of all executive and ministerial officers.

NOW, THEREFORE, by the authority vested in the undersigned as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of North Carolina, **IT IS ORDERED**:

Section 1. Office of Violence Prevention

A. Establishment and Purpose

The North Carolina Department of Public Safety is hereby directed to establish the North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention (“Office”). The Office shall be established within the Department of Public Safety. The mission of the Office shall be to reduce violence, harm from violence, and firearm misuse in North Carolina by coordinating efforts across state agencies and partnering with local communities to support and deploy evidence-based and promising programs and strategies.

The Office shall work closely and coordinate with other state agencies, including the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services’ Division of Public Health (“Injury and Violence Prevention Branch”), to ensure a whole-of-government and public health approach to reducing violence.

The Office may engage in activities that align with its mission, such as: offering training and technical assistance; issuing best practice guidance and model processes; facilitating cross-jurisdictional information sharing; conducting public awareness campaigns; sharing data and collaborating with research institutions; and identifying and applying for funding from federal and philanthropic sources.

The Office will be led by an Executive Director. The Executive Director will develop the Office’s strategic plan and performance objectives in coordination with the Injury and Violence Prevention Branch and the Community Violence Advisory Board established herein.

B. Community Violence Advisory Board

The Office will collaborate with a broad range of stakeholders, including public health professionals, law enforcement, community-based organizations, and survivors of violence. To facilitate this collaboration, the Community Violence Advisory Board (“Advisory Board”) is hereby established. In consultation with the Governor’s Office, the Office will manage the Advisory Board. The Executive Director shall ensure that the membership of the Advisory Board consists of individuals dedicated to the mission of the Office. The Advisory Board will provide guidance to the Executive Director, including on the development of the Office’s strategic plan.

C. Report

The Office shall deliver to the Office of the Governor and publish a public report describing the Office’s activities and recommendations annually by December 31st of each year.

Section 2. Effective Date


This Executive Order is effective immediately and shall remain in effect until March 31, 2025, unless rescinded or superseded by another applicable Executive Order.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name and affixed the Great Seal of the State of North Carolina at the Capital in the City of Raleigh, this 14th of March in the year of our Lord two thousand and twenty-three.



Roy Cooper
Governor

ATTEST:



William Toole
Deputy Secretary of State

