



**City of Philadelphia  
Office of the City Controller**

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## **Office of the City Controller Releases Report on Economic Impact of Gun Violence**

*City Controller Rhyhart, joined by community leaders and elected officials, calls for implementation of evidence-based strategies.*

**Philadelphia, PA** – Today, the Office of the City Controller released a report on the economic impact of gun violence, which analyzed the effect of a homicide on residential property sales in the immediate vicinity of the homicide. At the press conference announcing the report’s findings, City Controller Rebecca Rhyhart, joined by community leaders and elected officials, called for a strategic investment in violence reduction programs with a proven track record of success.

“Homicides in Philadelphia are at an 11-year high. While other cities have seen their murder rates decline in recent years, Philadelphia’s has continued to rise. This senseless violence has to stop – as a city, we must take action,” said City Controller Rhyhart. “Other cities have been successful at reducing homicides. It took a collective sense of urgency, a commitment to programs that work, and a coordinated effort, but it was possible. This report lays the groundwork for action around specific evidence-based strategies that will save lives in Philadelphia.”

Congressman Dwight Evans, D-Philadelphia, said, “The tragic, outrageous shootings last weekend of an 11-month-old baby and a 2-year-old girl in Philadelphia are among a sad, long list of incidents of gun violence locally. The [victims and survivors have to live with the mental and physical health impacts, as well as the financial impact](#), long after the news moves on to the next shooting. Senator Casey and I have introduced the [Resources for Victims of Gun Violence Act](#) to help them. The U.S. House passed common-sense gun reforms in February that would help to reduce gun violence, and eight months later, I am renewing my call for the Senate to act on these bills, H.R. 8 and H.R. 1112. Universal background checks and closing the Charleston loophole would save lives! I have been speaking out about the devastating impact of gun violence for many years and am deeply committed to protecting our communities. I want to thank Controller Rhyhart for compiling this detailed report that outlines the huge impact of gun violence.”

The report updates a 2012 study by the Center for American Progress that examined the economic impact of reducing violent crime in eight cities, including Philadelphia. It identified property tax revenue from increased housing values as the largest source of potential savings for municipalities with the reduction of homicides. With that in mind, the Controller’s Office analyzed all homicides and more than 220,000 residential property sales that occurred between 2006 and 2018 in Philadelphia to quantify the effect of a single homicide on

residential sale prices and to estimate the potential increase in the City's property tax revenue associated with reducing homicides by 10 percent annually over five years.

The analysis found that homicides have a sizable effect on residential property values, indicating that a single homicide lowers sale prices by 2.3 percent in the immediate neighborhood (within 0.75 miles of the homicide). The analysis also showed that decreasing the number of homicides would have a positive impact on residential property values. Reducing homicides by 10 percent in a single year would translate into a \$13 million increase in property tax revenue, and \$114 million over five years with a 10 percent reduction in homicides annually.

Using the potential revenue that could be generated by reducing homicides as a leverage point, the report details several evidence-based violence reduction strategies that, when enacted together, have a proven track record of successfully reducing homicide rates in other cities. The strategies in the report are:

- Group Violence Intervention, which targets the individuals most likely responsible for shootings with both potential punishment and access to support services;
- Cure Violence, a public health approach to violence that uses community-oriented street outreach independent of law enforcement to intervene in street disputes; and
- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, a preventive strategy that seeks to improve decision-making among high-risk individuals.

The report shows that the City, through investing in these programs, could reduce homicides by a total of 35 percent over 2018 totals, saving 318 lives. Additionally, the report details that the potential tax revenue generated by reducing homicides would surpass the program costs by year two and at the end of five years, the City would see a cumulative gain of \$71 million after the cost of funding these programs is taken into account.

"On average, one person dies every day due to gun violence in Pennsylvania. Grandparents, parents, and children are dying in Philadelphia and their names are so often forgotten by all but those who loved them. This report shows how gun violence impacts all of us regardless of our zip code. We all must remain vigilant in fighting this epidemic of gun violence and I thank City Controller Rhyhart for her efforts in this area," said State Senator Anthony H. Williams.

City Controller Rhyhart added, "I want to thank the community leaders and elected officials for their support and for their work to fight gun violence in Philadelphia every day. I'd also like to thank Anthony Smith of Cities United, Dr. Ken Steif of the University of Pennsylvania, Dr. Caterina Roman of Temple University, and Dr. John Roman of NORC at the University of Chicago for reviewing and providing comments during the preparation of our report."

The full report is available online [here](#). The data and software used to complete the analysis can be viewed [here](#).