

1 The Business Committee of the Thirty-first General Synod has recommended this proposed resolution
2 be sent to a Committee of the General Synod.

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5 **ON RECOGNIZING AND STUDYING GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH**
6 **EMERGENCY**

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8 **A Resolution of Witness**

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10 **Submitted by the Council for Health and Human Service Ministries**

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13 **SUMMARY**

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15 This resolution urges the recognition of gun violence as a public health emergency and calls on
16 the Congress of the United States to lift its gun-research restrictions on the Centers for Disease
17 Control and Prevention (CDC). By allowing research on the increasing prevalence of gun
18 violence and death, the CDC can make recommendations regarding gun safety, training and
19 storage methods. These recommendations will then lead to a reduction in gun deaths, especially
20 for the marginalized population.

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22 **BIBLICAL, THEOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL RATIONALE**

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24 “Pilate asked him, ‘So you are a king?’ Jesus answered, ‘You say that I am a king. For this I
25 was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone who belongs to the
26 truth listens to my voice.’ Pilate asked him, ‘What is truth?’” (John 18:37-38). As followers of a
27 truth-seeking, truth speaking Christ, we have a responsibility to search for informed, reasoned
28 and rational solutions to the problems that plague our nation and world. People of faith and
29 goodwill cannot willingly avoid the best possible solutions when it comes to protecting ourselves
30 and our neighbors from the horrendous rates of gun violence.

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32 **TEXT OF THE MOTION**

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34 Whereas, in 1996 at the urging of the National Rifle Association, the Congress of the United
35 States has prevented federal money from being spent on researching gun violence and has
36 actively restricted the nation’s principal public health agency, the Centers for Disease Control
37 and Prevention from looking into why the United States has five times the rate of gun deaths per
38 year than most European countries; and

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40 Whereas, in October 2015 a group of 110 U.S. Representatives, led by U.S. Rep. David Price (D-
41 N.C.), called on House of Representatives leaders “to reject short-sighted and unnecessary riders
42 that freeze gun violence research,” and that the United States response to the increasing gun-
43 violence, while debated, “should be informed by sound scientific evidence;” and

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45 Whereas, in June 2016 the American Medical Association adopted a position that the United
46 States is facing a ‘public health crisis in gun violence’ that requires a comprehensive public

47 health response and solution and will actively lobby Congress to overturn the restrictions on the
48 CDC; and

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50 Whereas, the CDC has successfully led on research related to many non-medical public health
51 emergencies — such as automobile safety, safeguards related to children’s toys, and tobacco
52 education — that has resulted in significantly reduced rates of senseless death and injury; and
53 Whereas, the United Church of Christ as reaffirmed many times its longstanding commitments to
54 both social justice and public health,

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56 Therefore be it resolved, that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ
57 urges the recognition of gun violence as a public health emergency with gun deaths expected to
58 reach 15,000 by the end of 2016;

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60 Be it further resolved that the Thirty First General Synod encourages the Congress of the United
61 States to reinstate federal funding for scientific research of gun violence by the Centers for
62 Disease Control and Prevention and to openly debate methods to improve gun safety, training
63 and storage to reduce gun deaths;

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65 Be it finally resolved that the Thirty First General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges
66 members and other settings of the United Church of Christ to actively speak out against
67 restrictive legislation that seeks to silence or stifle the scientific and medical community from
68 providing sound methods to save and improve the lives of all of God’s people.

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70 **FUNDING**

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72 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall
73 mandates of the affected agencies and the funds available.

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75 **IMPLEMENTATION**

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77 The Collegium of Officers, in consultation with appropriate ministries or other entities within the
78 United Church of Christ, will determine the implementing body.

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