

Testimony – CONGRESSWOMAN ROBIN KELLY

Staff: Charles – Remarks: Charles

Date & Time: Thursday (9/26) at 12pm

Location: Rayburn 2237

Role: YOU are testifying in front of the Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

Chairwoman Bass, Ranking Member Ratcliffe and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for holding this important hearing on urban gun violence.

I wish that I was here to talk about a more positive topic but, sadly, I'm here to talk about an epidemic sweeping through the United States.

Gun Violence is an epidemic that kills nearly 100 Americans each and every day and forever changes the lives of 250 others, not every year, not every month or week but each and every single day. And this epidemic, like so many others, has a disproportionate impact on the African American community.

I'm proud to represent the great City of Chicago and like all cities, we have our share of challenges.

Gun violence is one. But in Chicago, we don't ignore problems – we face them, head on, and look for real solutions.

Chicago is a city of pride and humility, that has been unfortunately overshadowed by the lack of community investments and resources for those most in need.

We are also a city awash in illegal guns that are transported over our borders from Indiana, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Missouri. All of which are states with weak or nonexistent gun safety laws.

A patchwork system is unworkable; we need a national solution to this national problem.

To date, Chicago has lost 341 people to gun violence. That is 341 sons, daughter, mothers and fathers whose lives were cut short due to Congressional inaction.

In my district, I hear from young people, some of whom are numb to the pain. Others feel a sense of urgency.

More than half of all guns used to commit crimes in Chicago come from outside Illinois. We can't be an oasis of commonsense surrounded by states beholden to the gun lobby.

We are a nation, not a patchwork. We need strong, **federal** laws against straw purchases and gun trafficking because these commonsense ideas are proven to save lives.

Every gun violence death is a preventable death. Every one.

We could save more than 30,000 American lives every single year – if our Republican colleagues, especially in the Senate, could find the courage to stand up to the NRA.

We know the facts.

A recent study shows that states with stronger gun safety laws have 35 percent lower rates of gun deaths for children and teenagers.

These laws, like universal background checks, are supported by more than 90 percent of Americans and **save lives**, specifically the lives of our nation's young people.

These bills before you today are also important next steps toward combatting gun violence. As is the bill I recently introduced, H.R. 4116, the Prevent Gun Trafficking Act which would make straw purchases a federal crime. Straw purchases are not just a problem in Chicago, every urban community is challenged with guns used in crimes that are purchased illegally.

We've reached a point in our country where most Americans have been affected by gun violence, either directly or through a close neighbor, friend, co-worker or family member. Gun violence happens everywhere, in every community and sadly to nearly all families.

At this very moment – we're at a pivotal crossroads. We're seeing a Reform Movement sweep across America – in big cities and small towns.

In actuality, we're seeing many movements converging together, demanding profound change — much like the 1960s.

They're made up of concerned citizens standing up and speaking out for their fellow Americans.

Hundreds of thousands of people are taking to the streets every few months.

Just yesterday, young people from Chicago and thousands of young people from across the U.S. came to D.C. to demand action. All of them — marching shoulder-to-shoulder for common sense gun laws.

Our young people in Chicago have been speaking out for years.

Now they are joined by the students of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and thousands of other young people who are galvanizing the nation.

Young people are rising up, speaking out and demanding action. I couldn't be prouder of them!

These young people are energizing our movement.

The movement was already there — all of us here have been soldiers in that movement for many years.

These young people are the reinforcements that we've always needed!

Our numbers keep growing. Every day, more and more people are realizing their safety and security is eroding.

More and more people are joining the fight for common sense gun reform.

I'm certain that together, our passion to save lives will win the day.

Thank you, Madam Chair.