



Cedar Rapids, Iowa

June 22, 2016

By the Linn County Democratic Central Committee

#### A Proclamation

The Linn County Democratic Central Committee voted unanimously on May 25, 2016 to issue a proclamation endorsing 1 Strong, a community organization, asking the Cedar Rapids City Council to ask the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to investigate violence in the city as an epidemic. The group cited a study done by the CDC on Wilmington, Del., a city of 70,000 that saw a 45 percent increase in shootings from 2011 to 2013, according to a New York Times article. The CDC analyzed the violence increase from an epidemiological perspective.

Cedar Rapids had 29 incidents where someone was actually shot in 2015. This does not include any shootings outside of Cedar Rapids proper or any other types of violence.

In 2013 President Obama released his plan directing the CDC and other scientific agencies to conduct research into the causes and prevention of gun violence in Now Is the Time. The plan was in response to the worst school shooting in an elementary or high school in U.S. history. The plan also called for an expansion of CDC's National Violent Death Reporting System.

The violence in Cedar Rapids is not only a law enforcement issue, but also the symptom of a much larger social issue that must be addressed broadly and over the long term. But a lack of good data has left the many violence prevention and community building groups wishing to address this complex issue wondering how to begin or where to focus our efforts.

Researchers have identified a number of risk factors that increase a person's likelihood of committing a violent act, including: having been a victim of or witness to violence; unemployment; having a history of child protective services investigation or out of home placement; juvenile court involvement; school performance; social services involvement and school discipline, but the significance of each of these risk factors varies by community, depending on how common they are among the general population. The focus of public health is on the health, safety and well-being of entire populations. A unique aspect of the field is that it strives to provide the maximum benefit for the largest number of people.

The CDC also emphasizes input from diverse sectors including health, education, social services, justice, policy and the private sector. Collective action on the part of these stakeholders can help in addressing problems like violence.

We at Linn County Democratic Central Committee urge the city to contact the CDC and use the direct advantage of a clear protocol outlined from study to action.