

Submitter: Shawn Forde  
On Behalf Of: Myself  
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary  
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB1015

Great afternoon, Chair Prozanski, Vice Chair Thatcher, and members of the Senate Committee...I appreciate this opportunity.

My name is Shawn K. Forde, and I am here to urge your support for Senate Bill 1015.

I am a present, intentional, and purposeful community member, who is also a son, brother, father, friend, artist, activist, and military (United States Marine Corps) combat veteran of almost two decades. I personally support this bill because unnecessary and perpetual violence, tragedy, and trauma appear to constantly intrude upon all aspects of seemingly every community now. Regrettably, gun violence (terror and violence in general) is currently (and consistently) intruding upon our public transportation (bus, trains, taxis, Ubers, etc.), our playgrounds (meant for our toddlers, young children, and adolescents), our preschools, elementary, intermediate, and high schools. Violence (and the threat of violence in all of its forms) is also intruding upon our colleges and universities, our malls, churches, supermarkets, and especially our neighborhoods, literally in front of our homes, where we live, love, thrive, rest, eat, sleep, nurture, and try to create the best moments and memories possible. Every personal experience I have had (with violence, especially gun violence), from my early formative years, to my current adult to elder evolution, remain eerily akin to many of my most gruesome and traumatic military combat experiences and memories. We no longer need hypothetical solutions, nor do we need more violence to counter the very violence we fear and abhor. We've tried (and failed) at this approach for far too long. Community Violence Intervention (and its funding) supports all of the curious and courageous members of these communities, who are leading and supporting on the ground, actively engaged (as experiential peers) and community leaders (intentionally working on their own optimal healing and health), and/or as part of groups and organizations trying to make real, positive, and sustainable change wherever it is needed.

When you consistently convey and demonstrate that you see (and have) value in communities, especially in the people who make up these communities (who literally breathe life into these inanimate spaces), it can tend to be as influential (singularly and collectively) as consistent conveyances and demonstrations that imply the exact opposite.

When the only consistent thoughts, language, behavior, laws, systems and options afforded any community are degrading, violent, hateful, deceitful, unhealthy, unjust, inequitable, and founded in terror, control, and manipulation, you breed and create the same consistent thoughts and behavior you've demonstrated, and subjected the community (ies) to.

All humans (who make up these communities) need and deserve consistent truth, healing, health, connection, love, joy, peace, creative artistic expression(s), wisdom,

equity, justice, purpose, legacy (and more). Regardless of the conditions in which a space (considered a community) is found, all communities deserve the opportunity to be reimagined, redeveloped and/or recreated, and passed on to newer generations better than it was found. This process and idea/ ideal needs to be normalized. And this is possible when healing and healthier community leaders are trusted, empowered, and invested in, to demonstrate, offer, and create new, and healthier options for interaction, coping with and/or healing trauma, knowing, loving, and understanding oneself (and others), conflict resolution, being a good human being, family member, friend, teammate, community member, even expressing oneself through language, and all forms of creative artistry (and more). I vehemently vote yes for Senate Bill 1015, and encourage you all to do so as well. Thank each and every one of you for your time, attention, care, and thoughtful consideration...

Shawn K. Forde