



Nothing Is More American Than a 4th of July Parade

AIDS Foundation Chicago (AFC) issues a statement on the Highland Park shooting.

July 6, 2022 By John Peller

Nothing is more American than a 4th of July parade. And tragically, nothing is more American than a mass shooting with a high-powered rifle.

Our hearts go out to the families of the seven victims of the Highland Park 4th of July parade shooting. We hope the dozens of people injured have a speedy physical and emotional recovery. But in the wake of yet another horrific, high-profile mass shooting, we can't turn a blind eye to the grinding violence that Chicagoans — mostly Black and Latinx Chicagoans — see daily in their neighborhoods. As of [Monday morning](#), at least 57 people were shot in Chicago over the weekend, including nine who were killed.

As AFC stated in our 2016 [position statement](#) on gun violence and community violence, “gun violence is a public health crisis and social driver of new HIV infections, and therefore requires a comprehensive public health response and solution.” Shootings in Chicago disproportionately impact young Black and Latinx people, the population most-impacted by HIV. Gun violence is intersectional, like poverty, mass incarceration, gender-based violence, and homelessness. What we noted in 2016 is still true today: the neighborhoods with the highest rates of HIV in Chicago are also the ones most impacted by gun violence.

AFC has supported and will continue to support legislation in Springfield and Washington that will put in place common-sense gun control measures. Assault rifles and high-capacity magazines are weapons of war and should be banned. We will also support whole-heartedly efforts that increase funding for mental health services and community violence reduction programs. We urge everyone to register to vote for the November 8, 2022, election.

Read the AFC 2016 statement [here](#).

John Peller is president and CEO of [AFC](#).
