

Senator Eddie Melton
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Committees:
Appropriations RMM
Education and Career Development
Health and Provider Services
Rules and Legislative Procedure
School Funding Subcommittee

Dear Governor Holcomb,

I write to you today to express my deep concerns about the safety of my community as we head into summer. I'm terrified for the lives of Gary's youth and citizens. This past Sunday, families in Gary met to celebrate one of our 2022 graduating classes and enjoy the special occasion with loved ones. The event, held at the Railcat baseball stadium, ended with several individuals opening fire outside. Three people were injured. Thankfully no one was killed—this time.

As a public servant elected to serve my community to the best of my ability, I cannot sit back while gun violence threatens those looking to lead safe lives and work toward a better future. We're at a point where families cannot even attend a graduation ceremony without nursing the legitimate fear that it will erupt in senseless gun violence.

Over the years, I've worked to advance policies to reduce gun violence and crimes across our state with few successes. One of the key hold-ups to protecting residents from preventable gun violence is the General Assembly's inability to pass sensible gun safety measures. But we must get it done. We know that expanded background checks, gun storage and strong red flag laws help reduce gun violence along with other proven measures, and we must work to get these common-sense and widely-popular policies on the books.

Right now, we are moving in the wrong direction with respect to decreasing gun violence. On July 1, permitless carry will go into effect in our state. With it, I fear that the gun violence we're already working to eliminate will only increase, with young lives paying the price.

As a youth growing up in Gary, I have personally experienced gun violence, and I know the traumatic impact it can have on a family and community. I also know that communities of color across the state already see an uptick in gun violence during the summer months. Permitless carry legislation will only worsen the number of fatalities that are already expected to rise.

That's why I'm writing to invite you to my district for a collaborative discussion about preventing the impending increase in gun violence. I know it would mean a lot to the Gary community to have you included with key stakeholders in this critical conversation.

In an effort to prevent increased gun violence and loss of lives, **I also respectfully urge you to call a special session to repeal the permitless carry law approved this session.** We must act immediately to proactively protect our youth from senseless violence.

Last week, Pro Tem Bray and Senator Crider visited my district and joined me in meeting with the Baptist Ministry Conference of Gary and Vicinity to discuss violence prevention efforts and other pertinent issues. Reducing 18-year-olds' ease of accessing guns as well as providing

students with activities and opportunities during summer are two actions we can take to reduce the increased gun deaths we see during the summer months. I would like to work with you and your administration to identify funding opportunities to expand existing summer programs within Gary as well as include a summer jobs initiative.

I know that protecting children from gun violence is a goal we both share, and I hope that this common ground can be the launching board for a productive discussion on how we can reduce gun violence across Indiana and in my district.

I'm confident that we can find real solutions to address this critical issue, and I truly hope that you will join us in Gary as you have on several occasions to discuss economic efforts. Your presence would reassure Gary residents that their safety is just as important to your administration as economic progress, and I look forward to discussing this urgent matter with you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Eddie Melton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eddie Melton
Indiana State Senate
Senate District 3