

**Subject: Questions about the Gun Tax Program**

February 11, 2016

---

To Seattle Mayor Ed Murray and Councilmember Tim Burgess:

Greetings, gentlemen!

On July 7, 2015, the *Seattle Times* ran a story on Seattle's proposed new gun tax that included this:

"Gun violence is very expensive," [Councilmember Tim] Burgess said, noting that the direct medical costs of treating 253 gunshot victims at Seattle's Harborview Medical Center last year surpassed \$17 million, with taxpayers covering more than \$12 million of that. "It's time for the gun industry to help defray those costs and this is a very reasonable way to do it."

From the same story:

The city's tax authorities have estimated that the proposed tax on gun sales would raise \$300,000 to \$500,000 annually, according to Burgess. That could fund a two-year gunshot-victim-intervention program and study at Harborview, says Fred Rivara, professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington and a core member of the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center.

Story link: <http://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/seattle-city-council-president-proposing-tax-on-gun-sales/>

Mayor Murray, you have said this:

Guns now kill more people in the United States than automobiles. Our community will not stand by as so many in our city, particularly young people of color, continue to pay the highest price for inaction on gun violence at the national and state level. For too long, we have had insufficient research and data on gun violence to help guide our response. We will now have critical funding to advance our work on gun violence research and prevention.

Source: <http://murray.seattle.gov/mayor-murrays-statement-on-court-decision-to-uphold-seattles-firearms-and-ammunition-tax/#sthash.a15K8Ddt.dpbs>

---

**Questions:**

1. Who at the City is in charge of managing this program?
2. What are the City's specific plans for spending the proceeds of this tax? Will the city be handing any of it over to Harborview Hospital to help "defray the costs" of treating gunshot injuries? If so, how much?
3. Have you set up any gun safety programs yet? Do you have any of those in the works? If so, how much are they projected to cost?
4. Given Mayor Murray's concern over how guns affect people of color, I assume any gun safety programs you set up will be targeted at minority communities. I'd like to know more about how you will handle that.
5. Finally, how much money was collected in January?

Feel free to turn these questions over to a staffer, but I'd appreciate an expedited response, because I'm going to be passing the results along to my blog readers.

Thank you.

Regards,

David Preston  
Seattle