

# NEWS



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## FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE JOHN FRITCHEY

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION  
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## **Gun Violence Costing Chicago Billions of Dollars** *Each Shooting Estimated to Cost One Million Dollars*

CHICAGO –State Representatives John Fritchey and LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago), vocal critics of the efforts to deal with rampant gun violence in Chicago, spoke out today on the economic toll that homicides take on the Chicago economy as a whole, reaching far beyond just those individuals living in communities plagued by violence. The legislators said that findings that put the costs of violence in the billions of dollars are yet another reason why increased efforts must be made to crack down on the shootings.

Rep. Fritchey cited a 2009 University of Chicago Crime Lab report titled “*Gun Violence Among School-Age Youth in Chicago*”<sup>1</sup>, which states that the social costs that gun violence impose on Chicago exceed \$2.5 billion per year, which is roughly \$2,500 per Chicago household. According to previous research by Crime Lab member Philip Cook of Duke University and Crime Lab Co-director Jens Ludwig of the University of Chicago (Cook and Ludwig, 2000; Ludwig and Cook, 2001), every crime-related gunshot wound imposes costs on society on the order of \$1 million.

“Too many Chicagoans are of the mindset that the gun violence doesn’t impact them if it doesn’t happen in their neighborhood,” stated Rep. Fritchey. “The research makes it clear that there are real and tangible economic costs associated with homicides and gun violence, and that every one of us is paying the price for the rampant shootings and murders that take place in our city.”

The average medical cost per shooting is \$21,500, with nearly half of those medical costs paid for by taxpayers<sup>2</sup>. But in addition to the shooting-related costs of hospitalization, treatments, and incarcerations, the report examines such other factors as the adverse impact of violence on existing businesses and potential economic investment as well as population decline caused by individuals leaving the city because of violence. The cost associated with each fatal shooting is higher than any other type of fatal injury or any of the four leading causes of death<sup>3</sup>.

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Through April of this year, Chicago's homicides are up over 8 percent from the same time period last year. So far this year, there have been at least **209** homicides in Chicago, over 80% of which have been from a gunshot.

"Obviously, businesses cannot survive in areas where people are afraid to walk down the street. Similarly, property values in these areas are a fraction of what they could be," stated Rep. Ford. "These types of factors create a drag on the city's overall economy and are just another reason why more needs to be done to get the violence under control as soon as possible."

The two lawmakers, who have previously called upon Governor Quinn, Mayor Daley and Superintendent Weiss to discuss supplementing police patrols with Illinois National Guardsmen, renewed their call for additional resources to reduce the number of shootings.

"We have repeatedly stated that in the long run, the solution rests in better educational and job opportunities, greater parental responsibility, and ending the code of silence and culture of complacency that allows these killings to continue," stated Rep. Fritchey. "But in the short run, we need an increased law enforcement presence as well as increased funding for proven violence reduction strategies. Every tool in the shed needs to be put to use."

In closing, Rep. Fritchey said, "(t)his is not just a south side issue; this is not just a west side issue; these shootings and homicides have an economic effect on all of us, regardless of where we live in Chicago. All of us, from every part of Chicago, need to come together and say enough."

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1. Ander, R., Cook, C., Ludwig, J., & Pollack, H. (2009, March). Gun violence among school-age youth in Chicago. *The University of Chicago: Crime Lab*. Retrieved from [http://crimelab.uchicago.edu/pdf/Gun\\_Violence\\_Report.pdf](http://crimelab.uchicago.edu/pdf/Gun_Violence_Report.pdf)
2. Cook, P., Lawrence, B., Ludwig, J., & Miller, T.R. (1999, August 4). The medical costs of gunshot injuries in the United States. *Journal of American Medical Association*, 281(5): 447-454. Retrieved from <http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/282/5/447>. (Note: Average medical costs are adjusted for inflation)
3. Max, W., & Rice, D.P. (1993, Winter). Shooting in the dark: estimating the cost of firearm injuries. *Health Affairs*. Retrieved from <http://content.healthaffairs.org/cgi/reprint/12/4/171.pdf>