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Unity Walk Against Gun Violence: Memphians Speak Out Against Gun Violence and Permitless Carry Law

By Aarron Fleming

Local leaders and community members from Frayser and the greater Memphis area gathered Saturday beneath a cloudy sky to take a collective stance against gun violence in Memphis.

The event, named the Unity Walk Against Gun Violence, was the third one of its kind that has been held since November. It has followed a rise in gun violence in the city, including a new record homicide rate that it set last year. Leaders present at the walk also spoke out against the permitless carry bill recently signed by Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee, arguing that it will only add to the violence in the city.

“If it rains this morning, we’ll keep walking,” said District Attorney General Amy Weirich. “Why? Because they shoot in the rain, they kill in the rain.”

Weirich, along with Mayor Jim Strickland; DeAndre and Vanessa Brown – founders of Lifeline to Success – a Frayser-based organization aimed at helping former felons

reintegrate back into society; Stevie Moore – founder of Freedom from Unnecessary Negatives – an organization that seeks to steer urban youth in a positive social direction; and others expressed their passion for fighting gun violence in the city as well as their disappointment in Gov. Lee for signing the bill.

Moore, who organized the walk, in an interview with WMC-5, said that he wants people to be just as passionate about ending violence within the Black community as they are about ending the external violence perpetrated against it by members of law enforcement.

“We get upset when law enforcement does something to our people, but what do we do to our people? What we claim is so bad about law enforcement, we kill our own people and nobody’s upset about it,” Moore said.

The walk came just days after Gov. Lee visited Memphis, where he toured Hanley Elementary and discussed education and the pandemic.



PHOTO BY AARRON FLEMING

A man holds up a sign for child victims of gun violence. One of the victims of the city’s 87 homicides this year was a 4-year old child.