The Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 8 "Declaring Gun Violence a Public Health Crisis" amounts to little more than a crude tactic to legislate through the use of expanded emergency powers, in the same manner as the response to COVID 19. Such grand decrees fail to improve upon whatever problem the political class aims to solve and instead serves to exacerbate and inflame through misguided government intervention.

Politicians now predictably declare a “Crisis” but have all along turned a blind eye to meaningful solutions, while championing harsh measures aimed at the lawful working class. The two parties have constructed an unjust justice system and tasked it with the execution of wars on drugs and poverty, delivering to cities like Wilmington a toxic and violent social ecosystem. Yet, the authors and their colleagues that voted to pass this bill in the Senate offer nothing of substance for families that feel unsafe sitting on their porch in the evening.

Those most affected by SCR 8 will inevitably be law abiding citizens who only wish to protect themselves and their families, as the failing criminal justice system permits the black-market trade of stolen and illegally purchased firearms to thrive. Though it will have no legal impact on anything by itself, SCR 8 lays a foundation in the minds of Delawareans to accept gun violence as “public health crisis” as if it were a new strain of the Coronavirus rather than the predictable result of failed bipartisan policies.

Most concerning is that this declaration of crisis is based on statistics copied from a biased source and are misleading, disconnected, and largely non-specific to Delaware. The authors use cherry picked percentages to hide the real numbers, and ignore the disproportionate impact that can be attributed to the City of Wilmington.

The authors do not address the realities of firearm ownership in America. 426 million firearms are responsibly and lawfully owned. Citizens use them as tools to enhance their lives and to secure themselves and their families against possible outside aggression. The CDC reports that firearms are used significantly more in defense than aggression and that victims of crime that use a firearm defensively are far less likely to sustain injury. In two separate studies it is noted that approximately 1 million Americans must use a firearm each year for protection. The natural outcome of a public health declaration on gun violence will be unnecessary restriction and eventual criminalization of responsible gun owners.

Every homicide, gun related or not, is a tragedy. Every homicide that could have been prevented even more so. However, this is no acute and escalating firearms crisis. What violence exists, especially in places like Wilmington, is a simmering side effect of longstanding, failed government policies. To address gun violence in Delaware we must end the destructive war on drugs which directly encourages violence in our streets and we must ensure a streamlined and strict enforcement of laws against violent crime.

The political class has yet to meet a crisis it doesn’t seek to exploit. In the words of Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a crisis must not be wasted and is “an opportunity to do things that you think you could not do before.” We believe that the time of policy makers would be better spent dismantling the force of bloated, ineffectual government, not emboldening it with manufactured crises. We urge the members of the House to reject the expanded emergency powers outlined in SCR 8 as, like those powers employed during COVID 19, they are no substitute for unraveling the many-layered and interventionist government programs that have paved the way for gun violence in cities in the first place.