SENATE RESOLUTION

8646

By Senator Saldaña

WHEREAS, Elijah Lee Lewis was a beloved member of the Seattle community, born and raised in the Central District, and a proud alumnus of Rainier Beach High School; and

WHEREAS, Elijah dedicated his life to serving his community and empowering those around him, creating spaces for peace, growth, and justice, and was a fierce advocate for social justice, leading movements that challenged systemic racism, gun violence, and inequality; and

WHEREAS, Elijah further exemplified his skills in entrepreneurship by owning a local cleaning business and financial group and engaging with events designed to attract further Black business owners and diversify the Seattle economy; and

WHEREAS, Through community outreach, Elijah consistently planned events throughout the Central District and Rainier Valley, working with Black vendors, artists, poets, and entertainers; and

WHEREAS, Elijah's love of community drove him to stand up tall where adults failed and in 2018, as a senior in high school, he spoke in front of thousands of people at the Seattle March for Our Lives protest to call for change in light of government inaction towards gun violence and the unregulated proliferation of firearms and assault weapons in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Elijah was a significant community leader in the Black Lives Matter Protest Movement of 2020, protesting the criminal legal system's disproportionate impact on Black and brown Americans and systemic racism within the United States following the death of George Floyd; and

WHEREAS, Elijah's dedication to his community and his tireless work to promote social justice made him an inspiration to many making his leadership and activism evident in the student-led movement against gun violence, the Black Lives Matter protests, and his work with the Africatown Community Land Trust; and

WHEREAS, Lewis and other community leaders focused on ending gun violence and supporting well-being in Black communities and families globally came together around 17 shared principles called the Covenant with a shared goal of safety, harmony, and peace for all; and

WHEREAS, Elijah's tragic death at the hands of gun violence has left a profound void in the hearts of all who knew him, which reminds us of the devastating impacts of gun violence and the urgent need for meaningful action to prevent further loss of life; and

WHEREAS, Elijah's death at only 23 years of age is one of too many exemplifying the devastating impacts of gun violence in American culture and the disproportionate racial impacts gun violence has on our society. Black Americans are twice as likely as white Americans to die from gun violence and 14 times more likely than white Americans to be wounded;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate honor Elijah Lee Lewis for his remarkable contributions to our communities and his unwavering commitment to social justice; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate acknowledge the devastating impacts of gun violence and recognize the need for meaningful action to prevent further loss of life; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate urge Washingtonians to commemorate the life and legacy of Elijah Lee Lewis and recognize his immeasurable impact on our communities and continue Elijah's fight for racial equity, equality, and justice in the state of Washington, the United States, and our shared world.