



TERRA LAWSON-REMER
SUPERVISOR, THIRD DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO
2021 MAR 29 PM 2:21
CLERK OF THE BOARD
OF SUPERVISORS

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: April 6, 2021

25

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**AMENDING LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM TO SUPPORT LEGISLATION RELATED TO
BACKGROUND CHECKS ON FIREARM PURCHASES (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

Even amid the COVID-19 pandemic, shootings and firearm-related incidents in the United States reached a 20-year-peak in 2020 according to data from the Gun Violence Archive. The County Board of Supervisors voted to adopt a new legislative platform on January 13, 2021, to actively engage on legislation at the state and federal levels that “protects the safety of those in our community.” Given the ongoing crisis of mass shootings in America, we recommend that the Board direct the Chief Administrative Officer to update the County’s Legislative Program to affirm the County’s support for state and federal legislation that furthers gun reforms related to background checks for firearm purchases, budgetary commitments to invest in the communities most impacted by everyday gun violence, and/or new oversight and accountability measures for the gun industry. These are the priorities recently supported by a joint coalition of gun violence prevention organizations, including Brady United Against Gun Violence, the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, Community Justice Action Fund, Giffords, March For Our Lives, Newtown Action Alliance, States United to Prevent Gun Violence, and Survivors Empowered.-

More than 41,500 people died by gun violence in the United States in 2020, marking the first time since at least 1981 the number has surpassed 40,000, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This figure includes more than 23,000 individuals who died by suicide using a firearm.

Mass shootings, which are incidents where more than four people are injured or killed by a firearm, reached a five-year-peak last year, representing a nearly 50 percent increase compared to 2019 according to the Gun Violence Archive and the Britannia Group.

In keeping with this tragic trend, mass shootings have continued to roil the United States this year, prompting heightened calls for federal action to adopt common-sense gun regulations and greater awareness about the disproportionate impacts of firearm violence on communities of color. On March 16, 2021, a shooter killed eight people at three spa/massage parlor locations in the Atlanta,

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Georgia area. Six of the victims were Asian women. While the shooter has not been charged with a hate crime at the time of this writing, Asian American and Pacific Islander groups across the nation saw the incident as watershed moment that underscored the potentially violent consequences of racism directed against Asians during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Georgia shooting highlighted the inequitable impact mass shootings have on minorities. For example, Black Americans represent nearly 70 percent of homicide victims in big cities, many of which involve firearms, according to non-profit firearm reform advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety.

Following the Georgia mass shooting and another mass shooting in Boulder, Colorado on March 22, 2021, President Biden called for Congress to pass stronger background check laws.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed two bills on March 11, 2021, to address gun violence. H.R. 8 would close a loophole that allows private gun sales made by private unlicensed sellers, such as those online or at a gun show, to avoid background checks. H.R. 1446 would provide the FBI with more time to conduct background checks for gun sales, extending the period from three days to ten days.

Background checks are very popular according to polling. 92 percent of respondents in a 2018 Gallup poll supported universal background checks. A poll conducted by Everytown conducted after the 2020 election found 93 percent of Americans want universal background checks. 65 percent of Republicans and 67 percent of gun owners reported strong support in the poll.

Approval of this item would add this as a priority issue for the County's legislative platform, and authorize the County to support legislation, such as H.R. 8, H.R. 1446, or others, that support more robust gun background checks.

This action is consistent with the current County Legislative Program Priority Issues, as unanimously approved by the Board of Supervisors in January 2021, which states, "The County of San Diego will engage in legislation that protects the safety of those in our community" and "[i]t is vital not only that crime rates remain low, but that the community feels safe where they live, work, and play."

RECOMMENDATION(S)

SUPERVISOR TERRA LAWSON-REMER

Direct the Chief Administrative Officer to amend the Legislative Program Priority Issues and Guidelines to reflect the County's support for state and federal legislation that furthers gun reforms related to background checks for firearm purchases, budgetary commitments to invest in the communities most impacted by everyday gun violence, and/or new oversight and accountability measures for the gun industry.

FISCAL IMPACT

N/A

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BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

An effective program of legislative representation includes proactively advocating the legislative policies of the Board of Supervisors to members, committees, and staff of the State Legislature and United States Congress, to the elected, appointed officials, and staff of State and federal agencies, boards, commissions and other entities, and to the office of the Governor and President.

Occasionally it may be necessary to direct legislative advocacy activities toward or with local or regional governmental bodies. These governmental bodies include, but are not limited to: city councils, local tribal nations, bi-national partners, San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Metropolitan Transit System (MTS), North County Transit District (NCTD), the Regional Airport Authority, the Unified Port of San Diego, local school districts, and others.

The County's Legislative Policy establishes the parameters for the use of the annual Board adopted Legislative Program and provides direction to the Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs and the County's Sacramento and Washington, D.C. advocates. At times when advance notification and authorization of the Board is impracticable and where it is imperative that the County act quickly and proactively to ensure that the Board's established priorities are conveyed to the appropriate State and/or federal entities, this policy provides direction on how OSIA and outside advocates may advocate for the County's interests.

The current Legislative Program Priority Issues, as unanimously adopted by the Board on January 13, 2021, Item 14, states, "The County of San Diego will actively engage in legislation in the following areas at the state and federal level to ensure such legislation benefits County operations and the clients, customers, and constituents we serve.

Further, it states, "One of the most important roles of local government is ensuring the safety of the public. It is critical to keep all members of our community protected from crime and abuse. The aim of the County of San Diego is to advocate for policies that create a system that is equitable, fair, and just. It is vital not only that crime rates remain low, but that the community feels safe where they live, work, and play; and that includes fostering trust with members of the law enforcement community. Equally important is the County must have appropriate resources to respond to disasters and emergencies. The County of San Diego will engage in legislation that protects the safety of those in our community; provides necessary resources to our justice partners to provide training and rehabilitative programming; and provides services and supports to victims of crime, disasters, and emergencies."

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to amend the Legislative Program Priority Issues and Guidelines related to gun reforms for background checks supports the Safe Communities Strategic Initiative for Excellence in the County's 2021=2026 Strategic Plan by ensuring the safety of families in our community.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Terra Lawson-Remer', with a stylized, overlapping flourish.

TERRA LAWSON-REMER
Supervisor, Third District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED

Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

N/A

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

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N/A

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:

N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: Third District

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

CONTACT PERSON(S):

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