

NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To Reduce Gun Violence, County Launches “Cutting-Edge” Effort to Remove Guns from the Hands of Felons, Stalkers

Redwood City – A coalition of top local elected and civic leaders today launched a new initiative to improve public safety by boosting efforts to remove guns from the hands of felons, stalkers, and other people prohibited from firearm possession.

The launch of the new San Mateo County Gun Violence Prevention Program comes with a pledge of \$2 million in funding over the next two years.

“This effort focuses on a proven approach to preventing violence and improving public safety: removing guns from the hands of those who are, by law, prohibited from possessing firearms,” said Don Horsley, president of the Board of Supervisors. “This effort creates collaboration between, and targets resources to, law enforcement and the courts.”

On hand for the [announcement](#) in the County’s Hall of Justice were Horsley; County Supervisor Dave Pine; Superior Court Judge Susan L. Greenberg; Stephen M. Wagstaffe, San Mateo County District Attorney; and representatives from multiple local law enforcement agencies and violence prevention organizations.

The campaign focuses on keeping guns out of the hands of individuals who are prevented by law from possessing firearms. This includes:

- Felons
- Convicted stalkers
- Individuals with active domestic-violence, gun violence, and other civil restraining orders against them
- Individuals convicted of hate crimes
- Individuals ordered by a court not to possess firearms as a condition of probation

“The County’s innovative program puts teeth behind specific investigations and facilitates better implementation of existing law,” Supervisor Pine said. “In so doing, we will get more firearms off the street and better protect victims, survivors, and the community at large.”

The program will fill a critical gap that can lead to tragedy. That gap, local officials say, exists because the criminal justice system does not have the resources to pursue specific cases.

“We are going to make an impact here,” Wagstaffe said. “It will save lives.”

Julia Weber, implementation director and domestic violence expert at Giffords Law Center, said, “San Mateo County's deep commitment to taking a comprehensive and countywide approach to reducing risk and increasing safety by dedicating resources to this issue is commendable and should serve as a model for communities across the state and the country. Fair and effective implementation of gun safety policies and procedures saves lives and we've been honored to be a part of the cutting-edge work being done in San Mateo County.”

How It Works

The San Mateo County Gun Violence Prevention Program brings multiple public agencies together for an urgent priority: keeping guns out of the hands of individuals who are deemed to be an immediate risk to themselves or others.

Building on several local initiatives already undertaken in the area of gun safety, two primary strategies are involved: (1) streamlining the processes for individuals to apply for and obtain a restraining order, and (2) removing firearms from prohibited persons.

Additionally, the program also seeks to expand training for law enforcement, improve communication and efficiencies among involved parties, and educate the public about applicable laws.

The first strategy – involving restraining orders which automatically include firearm restrictions – is led by the San Mateo County Superior Court.

The second strategy – removing firearms – is led by the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force spearheaded by the District Attorney’s office in cooperation with local San Mateo County law enforcement agencies. Initially, investigators from the San Mateo and South San Francisco police departments will work with the District Attorney’s Office to enforce applicable restraining orders countywide.

The program will include ongoing evaluation of performance metrics.

The program’s launch follows a March 11, 2022, summit hosted by Horsley and Pine that brought together numerous agencies and community groups to brainstorm ways to improve



public safety by keeping firearms out of the hands of individuals prohibited from possessing guns.

Following the summit, the Board of Supervisors pledged \$2 million toward the program over two years. Funds come from the local, voter-approved Measure K half-cent sales tax. In recent years, the Board has launched several gun-safety measures, including:

- A [Safe Storage ordinance](#), which applies to firearms owners in unincorporated areas
- A [Gun Dealer ordinance](#), which requires firearms dealers in unincorporated areas to acquire a locally issued license, among other measures
- Providing financial support for [gun buy-back events](#).

Video of the news conference can be viewed on the County's [Facebook](#) page.

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