



March 21, 2019

Mayor Donna Colson
Burlingame, CA

Re: Safe Firearm Storage Model Ordinance

Dear Mayor Colson,

On February 26, 2019, the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors adopted an ordinance requiring that all firearms in the home be safely stored using a safety device approved by the California Department of Justice such as a gun safe or trigger lock. While the ordinance approved by the Board of Supervisors only applies to firearm owners who live in unincorporated San Mateo County, it is our hope that this ordinance will serve as a model that all of the 20 cities within San Mateo County will adopt, resulting in consistent gun safety practices.

We urge you and your Council to introduce an identical or similar ordinance at your earliest convenience.

The issue of gun safety could not be more urgent. Having a loaded or unlocked gun in the home is associated with an increased risk of gun-related injury and death. According to a 2008 report published in the New England Journal of Medicine, living in a home where guns are kept increased an individual's risk of death by homicide by between 40% and 170%. Similarly, a 2004 national study determined that the presence of guns in the home increased an individual's risk of death by homicide by 90%.

Fourteen other California jurisdictions, including Sunnyvale, Santa Cruz, Saratoga, San Jose, Oakland, and San Francisco, have adopted similar safe storage ordinances. The City of San Carlos recently introduced a nearly-identical ordinance requiring the safe storage of firearms within its jurisdiction.

Like these cities, the County's safe storage ordinance is consistent with, and builds upon, existing state law which requires that safety devices, such as safes or trigger locks, accompany any firearms that are purchased or transferred by a licensed dealer. The County ordinance goes further than state law by requiring gun owners to actually use those safety devices when storing a firearm at home. The ordinance fills an

important gap in existing law and aims to reduce accidental gun shootings, gun-related homicides and suicides, and the theft of unsecured firearms.

In crafting the ordinance, we consulted with the Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, a leading national authority on local, state, and federal gun violence prevention laws. The Giffords Law Center has conducted extensive research regarding the constitutionality of the ordinance, the risks posed by unsecured guns in the home, and the impact in reducing gun theft. A letter of support from the Giffords Law Center is attached.

In addition, data collected through an anonymous survey conducted by the San Mateo County Citizens for A Gun Buy Back during two gun buy back events in 2018 demonstrate that many local gun owners are uninformed about ways to safely store their guns. Therefore, an important part of our commitment to this legislation is advocacy and public education to ensure that County residents are knowledgeable about the law and state-approved safety devices.

Again, we encourage all cities in San Mateo County to enact similar legislation. We have attached a sample staff memo, the ordinance adopted by the Board of Supervisors last month, and a support letter from the Giffords Law Center. We can also help organize a presentation to your Council if needed.

If you have any questions, please contact Linda Wolin in Supervisor Pine's office at (650) 363-4571 or via e-mail at lwolin@smcgov.org.

We thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dave Pine", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dave Pine
San Mateo County Supervisor, District 1

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David Canepa", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Canepa
San Mateo County Supervisor, District 5

cc: Lisa Goldman, City Manager

Attachments: Sample Staff Memo
San Mateo County Ordinance 4809, adopted 2/26/19
Letter from Giffords Law Center, dated 2/11/19