

Governor Newsom Launches New Initiative to Protect Californians from Gun Violence

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SACRAMENTO – On National Gun Violence Awareness Day, Governor Gavin Newsom today announced a new campaign to make California schools and communities safer through a community-based outreach campaign to promote Gun Violence Restraining Orders also known as “red flag” laws.

“Gun violence is an epidemic – too many Americans are forced to live in fear because of inaction,” said Governor Newsom. “In California, we are taking action with common sense gun safety measures that get guns out of our communities and keep people safe.”

Red flag laws allow for the temporary removal of guns and ammunition from individuals who are at risk of harming themselves or others. They empower loved ones, or law enforcement, to intervene and temporarily prevent someone in crisis from accessing firearms.

California issued 3,007 Gun Violence Restraining Orders from 2016 to 2020. In 2020, the state issued 1,284 restraining orders, 15-times greater than the 85 issued in 2016.

This new \$11 million, 18-month campaign, administered through the Governor's Office of Emergency Services, will focus on outreach and education about California's red flag laws to communities most at risk for gun violence.

The campaign includes:

\$5 million in grants to local community-based domestic violence groups for community outreach.

\$5 million for statewide outreach to communities most at risk of gun violence including education efforts, research and multilingual outreach.

\$1 million for education and training for district attorneys and law enforcement groups.

The Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis Health last year released a study highlighting support for Gun Violence Restraining Orders and the need to raise public awareness around the issue.

Red flag laws are proven to be effective in reducing violence and death by guns. These laws can help de-escalate emergency situations. California is one of several states around the country that is increasingly emphasizing red flag laws as a common-sense way to help reduce gun violence.

"California has nation-leading gun safety laws," said Mark Ghilarducci, Director of the Governor's Office of Emergency Services. "Education and outreach about how to utilize red flag laws are critical to their success. This campaign will focus on educating families and law enforcement on the tools they have at their disposal to prevent gun violence."

Enacted in 2014 following the Isla Vista Shooting, California's red flag law authorizes law enforcement officers and others to file petitions for a civil court order called a Gun Violence Restraining Order to temporarily suspend a person's access to firearms when they are found to pose a significant risk to themselves or others by having legal access to firearms or ammunition.

Governor Newsom yesterday released a fact sheet detailing California's nation-leading record on gun safety. The Governor also thanked President Joe Biden for his leadership on gun safety and joined him in calling on Congress to pass gun safety legislation.