

Newsom signs historic tax on gun manufacturers to fund school safety and violence prevention programs

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A Top Priority for the National Gun Safety Movement, AB 28 Will Establish a Permanent Funding Source and Generate \$160 Million Annually to Prevent Gun Violence, Enhance School Safety, and Remove Guns from Domestic Abusers

Today, California Governor Gavin Newsom signed into law the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Act, a landmark measure that would tax the gun industry to create a permanent funding source for school safety and gun violence prevention programs in California.

Authored by Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel (D - Encino), Assembly Bill (AB) 28 will impose an 11 percent excise tax on the sale of guns and ammunition by gun manufacturers and dealers and is expected to generate \$160 million annually to fund school safety and violence prevention programs, including initiatives to prevent mass shootings, bolster firearm investigations, and remove guns from domestic abusers.

“AB 28 is based on a straightforward premise – that we should prioritize the safety of our kids over gun industry profits,” said **Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel**, the author of AB 28 and Chair of the Legislature’s Gun Violence Working Group. “It’s shameful that gun manufacturers are reaping record profits at the same time that gun violence has become the leading cause of death for kids in the United States. AB 28 will generate \$160 million annually to fund critical violence prevention and school safety programs that will save lives and protect communities across the State of California. I am deeply grateful to Governor Newsom for signing AB 28 and for his outstanding national leadership in addressing gun violence.”

AB 28 is a top national priority for the gun safety movement and was strongly supported by all of the major gun safety organizations, including Giffords, Moms Demand Action, Everytown, Brady, and March for Our Lives.

“Thank you to Governor Gavin Newsom, Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel, and thousands of community leaders across California for putting the safety of the people above the gun industry’s profits,” said **Former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords**. “This example of bold and effective leadership will fund the courageous and lifesaving efforts of violence intervention workers, enhance the health and safety of California’s children, and bolster the enforcement of California’s gun laws by keeping guns out of the hands of prohibited people, including domestic abusers.”

Since AB 28 was introduced at the beginning of the current legislative session, the United States has experienced hundreds of mass shootings, including horrific incidents in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay. With today’s signing by Governor Newsom, AB 28 will go into effect starting July 1, 2024.

Background on AB 28

With the signing of AB 28, California will continue as a national leader in the fight against gun violence. This legislation will generate approximately \$160 million annually, which would be allocated principally as follows:

\$75 million for the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) program, which has proven highly effective at reducing gun violence in communities across California;

\$50 million for school safety initiatives, including before and after-school programs eligible to receive funding under the *Bipartisan Safer Communities Act*;

\$15 million for a court-based firearms relinquishment program to safely remove guns from domestic abusers and convicted criminals, as well as others who are subject to civil or criminal restraining orders; and

\$15 million to help law enforcement improve firearm investigations in communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence.

Since 2020, children in the United States are more likely to die from guns than any other cause of death. A recent report by the American Academy of Pediatrics found that the firearm death rate for American children increased by 40 percent between 2018 and 2021.

In addition to its brutal human toll, gun violence also causes enormous economic harm, including fiscal burdens on state and local governments, along with taxpayers. A recent report by Everytown for Gun Safety found that gun deaths and injuries cost California billions annually, much of which is paid directly by taxpayers every year.

California has in recent years made significant investments to address the enormous harms that have flowed from gun violence, including funding for violence intervention initiatives that work to interrupt cycles of shootings, trauma, and retaliation. The state's investment in these programs, primarily through the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) grant program, has provided a critical lifeline to frontline violence intervention workers and has proven to reduce shootings and save lives in communities across California.

AB 28 establishes the Gun Violence Prevention and School Safety Fund, enabling California to make long-term investments in a variety of vital initiatives designed to prevent gun violence, enhance school safety, support critical firearm relinquishment, improve implementation and coordination of gun violence prevention activities, solve more murders and shootings, and promote justice and equal access to safety for all Californians.

AB 28 is not intended to penalize firearm sellers or otherwise discourage lawful firearm sales and commerce but instead will generate revenue to sustain programs that are targeted and effective at mitigating the harms that firearms and related products too often cause. AB 28 is intended to stop shootings, save lives, and make California a better and safer home for all its residents.