The Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids

A REPORT ON THE FEBRUARY 22, 1995 STATEWIDE VIDEOCONFERENCE
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Cover Photographs:
(L-R): Lynn Hawkins, Founder, Drive-By Agony; Senator Barbara Boxer, U.S.
Senate; Dr. Nancy Snyderman, Medical Correspondent, ABC's Good Morning
America; California Assemblyman Richard Katz; Mayor Miguel Pulido, City of
Santa Ana; Los Angeles Live Panelists (L to R) Dr. Nancy Snyderman; Chief
Wesley Mitchell, L.A. Unified School District Police Department; Bong Hwan
Kim, Executive Director, Korean Youth and Community Center; Dr. Gano Tellez,
Trauma Surgeon, San Francisco General Hospital; Lois Salisbury, Executive
Director, Children Now; George Rodriguez, Special Agent, Bureau of Alcohol,
Tobacco and Firearms; Reverend Ronnie J. Lilly, Executive Director, Southern
Aros Clergy Council; The Honorable Donna Shalala, United States Secretary of
Health and Human Services; Emme Garcia and Kalinda Price, Oakland
Youth Panelists
On February 22, 1995, over 1,500 California opinion leaders participated in the Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids videoconference. In 18 cities across California and in Washington, DC, elected officials, healthcare providers, law enforcement officials, firearm policy experts, educators, religious leaders, advocacy workers, business and youth leaders took part in this historic event which focused on the leading killer of California kids — handgun violence. The videoconference featured Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala, U.S. Senators Barbara Boxer and Bill Bradley, California Congresswomen Maxine Waters, Lucille Roybal-Allard, Lynn Woolsey and other prominent national and community leaders as well as leading firearms policy experts, Dr. Garen Wintemute, Director of the Violence Prevention Research Program at the University of California at Davis, and Stephen Teret, Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research.

The videoconference was broadcast from three satellite interactive sites: Los Angeles, Sacramento and Washington, DC and down-linked to 16 sites across California. Dr. Nancy Snyderman, Medical Correspondent from ABC's Good Morning America, moderated the 90-minute discussion from Los Angeles. The audience heard from a wide range of California leaders. In Los Angeles, Lorna Hawkins, Founder of Drive-By Agony, shared her pain over the death of her two sons killed in street shootings and her reasons for becoming involved in the issue of handgun violence. In Sacramento, California Assemblyman Louis Caldera cited a California Research Bureau report which documents the enormous costs associated with firearm injuries — from direct medical care for gunshot victims to the indirect costs incurred by employers for training to lost tourism revenues. This study estimates that handgun violence is costing California billions of dollars per year.

The videoconference was designed to educate the public about four policy options to reduce access to handguns. The policy options were recommended by a survey of opinion leaders and received wide support in a statewide poll. The four options are: Banning Saturday Night Specials, Establishing Home Rule for Handgun Regulation, Increasing the Penalty for Carrying a Loaded Concealed Weapon and Regulating Handguns as a Consumer Product.
Experts on firearms and firearm policies discussed the four policy options in detail and attested to their viability. Dr. Wintemute presented highlights from his “Ring of Fire” study, which exposes the six Southern California handgun manufacturers who are responsible for producing 80 percent of all handguns classified as Saturday Night Specials in the country.

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<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Founder</th>
<th>Year</th>
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<tr>
<td>LORCIN ENGINEERING</td>
<td>Jim Watson, Bruce's high school friend, 1989</td>
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<td>DAVIS INDUSTRIES</td>
<td>George's daughter, Gal. &amp; husband, Jim Davis, 1982</td>
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<td>JENNINGS FIREARMS</td>
<td>George's son, Bruce, 1978</td>
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<td>RAVEN ARMS</td>
<td>George Jennings, 1970</td>
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Professor Teret explained why the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution does not prevent government from banning Saturday Night Specials or enacting other gun control laws. California Assemblyman Richard Katz used stunning visual aids to point out the illogical discrepancy between the treatment of carrying concealed brass knuckles as a possible felony penalty, while carrying a concealed handgun without a permit can only be charged as a misdemeanor. Joan Claybrook, President of Public Citizen, and Senator Bill Bradley talked about the need for federal legislation to impose the same safety regulations on handguns that are imposed on other less lethal consumer products like teddy bears.

Panelists had the chance to hear from leaders across the state and respond to live questions phoned in from several of the down-link sites. Immediately following the televised broadcast, attendees at each site met to review the four policy options and to discuss ways in which local communities can actively work to reduce handgun violence in their cities and neighborhoods. Although each community discussion was unique, one common sentiment could be heard across California and Washington, DC — the senseless handgun violence against kids must end.

The videoconference received extensive media attention. Over 20 news articles were featured in California newspapers, such as The Oakland Tribune, The Sacramento Bee, The San Francisco Chronicle, The Stockton Record, The Fresno Bee, and The Orange County Register. In several cities, excerpts from the local videoconference were featured during prime time news hours. Extensive radio coverage included a San Francisco Bay Area KCBS radio special editorial endorsing the videoconference's four policy options. California cable stations, such as Contra Costa Cable Access in Richmond and Continental Cable in Pomona, have re-broadcast the videoconference at the request of viewers.

In response to the videoconference, the Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids has stimulated statewide and community action on the issue of handgun violence. In Santa Cruz County, Supervisors Mardi Wormhoudt and Fred Keeley have urged the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors to consider the devastating effects of handgun violence and to review the videoconference's four policy options. Riverside, San Diego and Fresno have organized local committee meetings to continue the discussion and gather support from local leaders.

This report provides highlights of what happened at each site. Please read it and join other community leaders to help stop this epidemic of handgun violence against California kids.
The Yearning for Less Violence: Do Californians Really Want More People Packing Guns?

The Los Angeles Times Editorial
Thursday, February 23, 1995

"Why are the gun manufacturers exempt from consumer protection laws — their products are killing our children, and they should be held accountable."

Debbie Ahn
Business Developer
Korean Youth and Community Center

Over 150 people participated in the videoconference at the downtown Los Angeles uplink site. The audience was fortunate to witness the live panel discussion, which included the featured participants listed below. The statewide satellite discussion gave the audience ample information to participate in the local discussion, which focused on the four policy options. During the live broadcast, Susan Seamans, City Councilwoman from Rolling Hills Estates, asked a question concerning the Home Rule policy option. Los Angeles City Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg, who was a member of the audience, commented that if cities adopted Home Rule, they could decide the amount of gun ammunition they would allow into their community. In the discussion which followed, participants heard from a wide range of community leaders, including Los Angeles City Councilmembers Richard Alatorre and Mike Hernandez, who discussed giving more control of handgun regulation to local government.

Featured Participants:
Bong Hwan Kim, Korean Youth and Community Center
Reverend Ronnie J. Lilly, Southern Area Clergy Council
Chief Wesley Mitchell, L.A. Unified School District Police Department
George Rodriguez, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Lois Salisbury, Children Now
Dr. Geno Tellez, Trauma Surgeon, San Francisco General Hospital
and The California Wellness Foundation Academic Fellow
Fighting Back Against Guns — Teleconference Draws Experts

The Sacramento Bee, Thursday, February 23, 1995

When California Assemblyman Richard Katz held up a handgun and brass knuckles during the live broadcast, audiences from San Diego to Eureka gasped at the Assemblyman’s shocking visual aid. Over 100 people from the Sacramento community participated in the videoconference. During the local 30-minute discussion, Sacramento City Councilwoman Deborah Ortiz served as the moderator to a lively and concerned audience. Geraldine Esposito, Executive Director of the California Society for Clinical Social Work, talked about the importance of getting to the root cause of handgun violence and why kids consider themselves “predator and prey.” The audience was astonished when Dr. Garen Wintemute, Director of the Violence Prevention Research Program at UC Davis, revealed that 85 to 95 percent of the medical costs of treating gunshot wounds in Sacramento County come from public money. Suzanne Swendiman, Vice Principal at Florin High School, commented on the importance of getting to the primary cause of handgun violence and helping change the minds of young people who believe that handguns are a solution to their problems.
“The coming together of so many people from so many different organizations was very impressive to me.”
Michael Beard, President, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

In Washington, DC, 85 Capitol Hill staff members, advocacy group leaders and violence prevention experts took part in the videoconference. After viewing the live broadcast, Washingtonians talked about ways in which advocacy groups can work together to inform Members of Congress about policy options. Specifically, several participants wanted to know if it was possible to challenge the rigorous efforts of the gun lobby. Susan Glick, from the Violence Policy Center, encouraged Washington participants to inform Members of Congress about legislation affecting the four policy options. Attendees called for action and discussed upcoming legislative debates, where it will be important for Members of Congress to hear from their constituents. Robert Bisi, Washington, DC Bureau Director of Children's Express, recommended that audience members read the book Voices From The Future, a compilation of writings from children on current issues affecting kids. Mr. Bisi suggested the book could be used as a point of reference for organizations that want a young person’s perspective on issues such as handgun violence. Matthew Kagan, Legislative Aide to Senator Barbara Boxer, answered several questions regarding federal regulation laws. Mr. Kagan informed participants that he expected the Brady Bill to be challenged in Congress’ 1995 Crime Bill.

Featured Participants:
Michael Beard, Coalition to Stop Gun Violence
Senator Bill Bradley, U.S. Senate
Joan Claybrook, Public Citizen
Diane Doherty (Moderator), Children's Safety Network
Matthew Kagan, Office of Senator Barbara Boxer
Stephen Teret, The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research
Congresswoman Lynn Woolsey
In San Diego, 135 community leaders, advocacy workers, law enforcement officials and concerned citizens participated in the videoconference. During the local discussion, Dr. Michael Sise, Director of the Trauma Division at Mercy Healthcare, explained the importance of the community, as a whole, taking responsibility for the problem of violence and working together to develop real solutions that will help stem the tide of violence against youth. Barbara Justiani, whose nephew Willie Jones was murdered outside Lincoln High School in 1994, shared with the audience the reasons why she is so compelled to be involved in the issue of handgun violence. Andrea Skorepa, who works at Casa Familiar, discussed the negative impact violence has on the community. Ms. Skorepa said that the community is in serious trouble when people are afraid to leave their homes for fear of being a victim of random handgun violence. Dr. Robert Ross, Director of the San Diego County Office of Education, encouraged conference participants to get involved in this issue and offered to organize a follow-up meeting at the San Diego County Office of Education. The February 22 event received extensive coverage on local television, and a follow-up meeting was held March 15 with 28 people in attendance.

Featured Participants:
Laurie Davis, San Diego Police Department
Thomas Haine, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms
Dr. David Hoyt, UCSD Medical Center
Dr. Kenji Imo, San Diego State University
Barbara Justiani, Family Member of Willie Jones
Dr. James Kyle (Welcome Address), Community Care, Sharp Healthcare
Dr. Robert Ross, San Diego County Department of Health Services
Andrea Skorepa, Casa Familiar
Councilman George Stevens, San Diego City Council
More than 70 people from Escondido and surrounding San Diego communities came together to participate in the videoconference held at Escondido High School. Encinitas City Councilman Elmer Cameron welcomed the audience and Judy Eberhart, Dean of Counseling at Palomar College, moderated the 30-minute local discussion. The local discussion, which mainly focused on the four policy options, also gave rise to a discussion about parents taking more responsibility for their children’s behavior. Manny Medrano, Director of Cross Cultural Services at EYE Counseling and Crisis Services, commented that parents should be held accountable when their children bring handguns to school. Councilman Cameron adamantly disagreed with state laws restricting local governments from designing their own solutions to the problem of handguns.
Community leaders from throughout Orange County met at Rancho Santiago Community College in Santa Ana to participate in the statewide videoconference. Santa Ana Mayor Miguel Pulido welcomed the crowd of over 100 Orange County opinion leaders and community activists. Mayor Pulido commended conference participants for being involved and for their willingness to do something about handgun violence. During the local meeting, Santa Ana Police Department Captain Dan McCoy discussed his work with youth and the Police Department’s commitment to working with the community on this issue. Dr. Robert Wesley, Associate Professor of Medicine, and several medical students from UC Irvine’s Physicians for Social Responsibility, participated in the videoconference. UC Irvine’s chapter of Physicians for Social Responsibility has over 50 medical students committed to helping reduce handgun violence. They have started a campus campaign to pressure handgun manufacturers to stop the production and manufacture of Saturday Night Specials. Another highlight in Santa Ana was community activist Jeannie Costales, who displayed a handgun-death quilt which lists the names of victims lost to handgun violence in Orange County.
Videoconference Targets Need for Gun Control

The Press Enterprise, Thursday, February 23, 1995

Thanks to the help and support of the staff at Riverside Community College, the local videoconference turned out a crowd of over 70 Riverside community leaders, educators and students. City Councilman Ascenion "Sam" Torres welcomed the Riverside audience and encouraged participants to write to their elected officials and organize against the widespread increase of handgun violence against kids. During the local 30-minute discussion, Captain Mike Smith from the Riverside Police Department urged the community to support Riverside Police Chief Ken Fortier's efforts to crack down on fly-by-night handgun dealers. Many of the Riverside Community College students who participated said they were shocked at the frightening statistics and wanted to know what they could do to help stop the senseless violence. Linda Dunn, Executive Director of the Inland Agency, urged videoconference participants to get involved and to mobilize as a community to end handgun violence. A follow-up meeting, organized by Ms. Dunn, was held, with 45 members of the community in attendance.

Photographs:
(Clockwise) Robert Nova; Theresa Wheeler; Captain Michael J. Smith

"The videoconference was an excellent way for community leaders to talk to others within the community about this important issue."

Dr. Barbara Poling
Alvord Unified School District

Featured Participants:
Councilman Ascenion (Sam) B. Torres, Perris City Council
Debbie Downey, 23rd District PTA
Linda Dunn, Inland Agency
Robert Nova (Moderator), University of California, Riverside
Dr. Herb Giese, Riverside Department of Public Health
Captain Michael Smith, Riverside Police Department
Videoconference Addresses Gun Control
San Gabriel Valley Tribune, Thursday, February 23, 1995

A diverse cross-section of over 100 community leaders from Pomona came together at California Polytechnic University to participate in the videoconference. Pomona Mayor Edward Cortez welcomed conference participants to the three-hour event. During the local discussion, videoconference participants heard from business leaders, educators, school teachers and members of the clergy. Professor Charles Kerchner, from The Claremont Graduate School, facilitated questions and comments from the audience.

Superintendent Linda Gonzales, of the Bassett Unified School District, talked about the importance of teaching young children about the damage handguns can inflict and called on parents to do their best in keeping handguns out of the hands of their children.

"If you asked me before the videoconference what's killing our children, I would have told you it's car accidents. It's really terrifying now to know that it's handguns."

Mayor Edward Cortez
City of Pomona

Featured Participants:
Mayor Edward Cortez (Welcome Address), City of Pomona
Frank Garcia, Pomona Unified School District
Dr. Linda Gonzales, Bassett Unified School District
Captain Charles Helfman, City of Pomona Police Department
Professor Charles Kerchner (Moderator), The Claremont Graduate School
Pastor Ricky Porter, Pomona Council of Churches
Edward Tessier, Pomona Central Business District Association
"A mother’s pain never goes away. Every day I am reminded of what happened to my son three years ago."

Marie Barker, Mother of teenager blinded by gunshot wound

Charles Drew University, located in the heart of South Central Los Angeles, was a down-link site for over 75 community leaders, experts, activists and concerned citizens. Jodi Brockington, Executive Director of Drew Community Wellness Promotion Coalition, delivered the welcoming remarks and Kevin Ross, Los Angeles County Deputy District Attorney, facilitated the local discussion. The local meeting gave videoconference participants a chance to voice their reactions to the videoconference and comment on the four policy options. One particularly moving statement came from Marie Barker whose son, Joey, was caught in the cross-fire of rival gang warfare and was subsequently blinded. Mrs. Barker eloquently expressed the pain parents experience when their children are innocent victims of senseless handgun violence.
"Society is playing a trick on young people's lives when it's a felony to carry a billy club but it's only a misdemeanor to carry a gun — that's absolutely insane."

Judge Roosevelt Dorn, Inglewood Juvenile Court Judge

The spiritual words from Judge Roosevelt Dorn’s opening prayer were a special highlight at the Inglewood site. Over 100 people from the community came together to take part in the discussion of handgun violence against kids. Los Angeles County Sheriff Department Chief Lee Baca showcased an assortment of handguns classified as Saturday Night Specials. Chief Baca said he brought the handguns to show people the poor quality and easy concealability of Saturday Night Specials. The 30-minute local discussion was moderated by KCBS-TV Health Correspondent Dr. Winnie King. Morningside High School Student Body President William Taylor talked about the importance of educating youth on handguns and involving them in the solution process.
The Fresno Convention Center was host to an audience of approximately 50 influential members of the Fresno community. During the live broadcast, Chris Schneider, Director of Central California Legal Services, asked whether the Home Rule option would allow local communities to pass irresponsible laws, for example, allowing more people to carry concealed weapons. Assemblyman Louis Caldera from Sacramento answered Schneider's question and explained that laws removing state preemption would contain provisions to prohibit local communities from having weaker handgun restrictions. During the local discussion, the audience heard powerful remarks from Dr. Steven Parks, Chief of Surgery at Valley Medical Center, who expressed his support for an outright ban of all handguns. The audience heard equally moving remarks from Homer Leija, who currently serves on President Clinton's National Commission on Youth and Crime. Leija's comments to the community leaders focused on the importance of including young people in the discussion. The Coalition for Responsible Gun Safety, headed by former Fresno Mayor Karen Humphrey and Nora Benavides, Youth Organizer for the Fresno Youth Violence Prevention Network, offered to coordinate local follow-up meetings.
Tougher Handgun Laws Are Sought
Santa Cruz Sentinel, Thursday, February 23, 1995

Photographs:
(clockwise) (L to R) Councilman Scott Kennedy, Lt. Howard Skerry and Chief Steve Belcher; Connie Ponce

“...I think it is important that young people have access to this kind of information on handgun violence, and I think it should be taught in our schools.”
Connie Ponce
Assistant Program Coordinator, Barrios Unidos

Over 80 concerned residents of Santa Cruz took part in the videoconference held in the new offices of Barrios Unidos. Barrios Unidos is an anti-violence and gang prevention organization which receives funds from The California Wellness Foundation. The audience in Santa Cruz consisted of police officers, public health officials, educators, students and elected officials. During the local discussion, participants reacted to the shocking statistics and discussed ways to prevent handgun homicides and accidents involving youth. Daniel Alejandro, Executive Director of Barrios Unidos, focused on the importance of bringing the issue of handgun violence to the forefront of the community’s political agenda. Connie Ponce, a Santa Cruz High School student, talked about how important it is for young people to have access to information about this deadly epidemic. One week after the videoconference, Supervisors Mardi Wormhoudt and Fred Keeley wrote a letter to the Santa Cruz Board of Supervisors which described the four policy options and urged the Board to take immediate action on handgun violence against kids.

Featured Participants:
Daniel Alejandro (Welcome Address), Barrios Unidos
Chief Steve Belcher, Santa Cruz Police Department
Barbara Garcia (Moderator), Salud Para La Gente
Betsy McCarty, County of Santa Cruz
Anna Paredes, Familia Center
Connie Ponce, Barrios Unidos
Supervisor Mardi Wormhoudt (Welcome Address), Santa Cruz County
"The vast majority of Californians support sensible gun laws, and it's time that the politicians start listening to their constituents instead of the gun lobbyists."

Chief Larry Todd, Los Gatos Police Department

Over 70 community leaders, business owners and advocacy workers from San Jose gathered at San Jose State University to participate in the local videoconference. A highlight for participants in San Jose was when Los Gatos Police Chief Larry Todd phoned in his comments, which were heard by the 1,500 statewide and Washington, DC participants. Chief Todd's comments focused on the California Police Chiefs Union's commitment to help California cities deal with the rising level of handgun violence. During the local discussion which followed, San Jose City Councilman Manny Garcia publicly supported increasing the penalty for carrying a concealed weapon. The people of San Jose are serious about keeping handgun violence out of their neighborhoods and Santa Clara County Supervisor Jim Bell's office is taking the lead in organizing future violence prevention community meetings.
Mayor Frank Jordan welcomed the concerned citizens of San Francisco who participated in the videoconference at San Francisco General Hospital’s Carr Auditorium. The auditorium was filled with over 115 leaders from the community who pledged their commitment to help prevent handgun violence against kids. The San Francisco videoconference attracted many young people from the community. During the local discussion, young participants voiced their support for the four policy options and wanted to know the specifics on what local elected officials were doing to help solve the problem. Omar Butler, a victim of handgun violence and a youth organizer from Bayview Hunters Point, talked about what it is like to grow up in a neighborhood where handguns are easily accessible to young people. When videoconference participants wanted to know how they could get more involved, Marivic Mabanag, Associate Director of the Pacific Center for Violence Prevention, encouraged the audience to join the efforts of the many existing organizations in the San Francisco area that have already taken steps to reduce violence in the community.
Handgun Violence Deserves Attack from All Sides

Oakland Tribune Editorial by Daphne Muse
Saturday, March 4, 1995

Preservation Park, located in downtown Oakland, was the host to over 75 community leaders who participated in the videoconference. During the live videoconference, Bobbi Fisher, Physician for a Violence Free Society, phoned in a question concerning the possibility of communities coordinating local violence prevention efforts. Reverend Romie Lilly, Executive Director of the Southern Area Clergy Council and a panel member in Los Angeles, encouraged Ms. Fischer and the audience to work together and to build coalitions at a grassroots level. Mayor Elihu Harris' welcoming remarks set the tone for a serious discussion between healthcare workers, community activists, law enforcement officials and members of the religious community. After the live broadcast, Greg Hodge, from the Urban Strategies Council, facilitated the local discussion, giving many participants the chance to voice their opinions and ask the panel members questions concerning the four policy options. The Oakland audience was especially pleased to hear Oakland Police Chief Joseph Samuels, Jr. remark that he supports a local ban of Saturday Night Specials. Another audience favorite was a question from a healthcare representative who asked the panel for recommendations on what the healthcare community could do to help reduce handgun violence. Youth panelist Emma Garcia, from Teens on Target, responded by saying she thought healthcare workers could mobilize into a strong group and be a powerful voice against handgun violence.

Photographs:
(clockwise) Greg Hodge; Mike Nisperos and Gianna Tran; Atika Nisperos, Chief Joseph Samuels, Jr. and Bobbi Fischer

"I think that banning Saturday Night Specials is the logical expansion of the legislation involving the ban on assault weapons."

Mike Nisperos
Mayor Harris' Office of Drugs and Crime

Featured Participants:
Emma Garcia, Teens on Target
Mayor Elihu Harris (Welcome Address), City of Oakland
Greg Hodge (Moderator), Urban Strategies
Mike Nisperos, Mayor's Office of Drugs and Crime
Kalinda Price, Oakland Boys' and Girls' Clubs
Chief Joseph Samuels, Jr., Oakland Police Department
Gianna Tran, East Bay Asian Youth Center
Conference Takes Aim at Weapons—More Regulation, Penalties Cited as Ways to Stem Illegal Gun Use
West County Times, Contra Costa County
Thursday, February 23, 1995

In Richmond, Contra Costa Community College President Candy Rose welcomed over 85 local participants to the videoconference. The high level of energy in the room was encouraging to the diverse audience of community leaders who participated. Michelle Scully, who was wounded in the 101 California massacre in 1993 and whose husband was killed after using his body to shield her from the bullets, expressed during the local discussion the importance of networking, sharing information and working together as a community to fight this deadly epidemic. Andres Soto, Project Coordinator for Policy, Action, Collaboration and Training (PACT) at the Contra Costa County Health Services Department, explained to the audience how the citizens of Lafayette fought to pass a local ordinance which tightened local zoning laws for handgun dealers.

“We need to work collectively to be a stronger voice.”

Michelle Scully
Board Member
Handgun Control, Inc.

“Turning the tide on firearm violence is the beginning of a historic movement, not just in our community, but across the State of California.”

Andres Soto
Contra Costa County Health Services Department

Featured Participants:
Bianca Bloom, Contra Costa Office of Education
Chief William Landsdowne, Richmond Police Department
Candy Rose (Welcome Address), Contra Costa Community College
Andres Soto, Contra Costa County Health Services Department
Over 100 community leaders from the Stockton area gathered at the San Joaquin Office of Education to participate in the videoconference. The audience included educators, health officials, law enforcement officers, business owners and local elected officials. Stockton Mayor Joan Darrah was the first participant to phone in a live question to the satellite up-link in Los Angeles. Mayor Darrah wanted to know how a ban on Saturday Night Specials could be implemented and who would enforce the ban. Mayor Darrah also served as the moderator during the local discussion, which turned emotional when Magdalena Martinez, a local Spanish language newspaper editor, described her personal experience with handgun violence. Martinez’ daughter, a victim of a handgun shooting, is now confined to a wheelchair. A popular sentiment among the audience was the frustration with politicians who have not responded to the urgency of this important issue.
“In Mendocino, we have the opportunity to concentrate on working on prevention.”

Tim Mancini, Executive Director, Mendocino Family Youth Services

The Little Theater at Mendocino College was host to the videoconference in Ukiah. Welcoming remarks were given by Tim Mancini, Executive Director of Mendocino Family and Youth Services. The audience, which consisted mostly of people who work in violence prevention advocacy groups, discussed the importance of preventing handgun violence from entering their community.

Featured Participants:
Joyce Elmer, Center for Substance Abuse Prevention
Tim Mancini (Welcome Address), Mendocino Youth and Family Services
Susan Massini, Mendocino County District Attorney
Jim Tuso, Mendocino County Sheriff

Conference Mulls Ways to Curb Kids’ Gun Deaths
The Times Standard, Thursday, February 23, 1995

Over 45 members of the community assembled at the Eureka Police Department to participate in the videoconference. Eureka City Councilwoman Jean Warnes spoke in favor of the Home Rule policy option, commenting that she is in favor of giving local government more control. Humboldt County Sheriff Dennis Lewis said he supported the policy option of increasing the possible penalty for carrying a concealed loaded handgun from a misdemeanor to a felony.
Four Policy Options to Reduce Access to Handguns: Facts and Legislative Updates

More California kids are killed by handguns than car crashes. The emotional cost to families is incalculable. The financial cost of gun violence in direct medical care alone was over $329 million in 1991. Over 85 percent of that total — $283 million — consisted of uncompensated costs passed on to the taxpayers. The goal of the “First Aid for What’s Killing Our Kids — A Prescription for Prevention” videoconference was to provide information and ideas about ways in which policy makers across the state can help reduce the incidence of handgun violence against youth. Any serious effort to reduce handgun violence requires long-term, broad-based policy and program initiatives. Because higher rates of handgun injury and death are associated with greater accessibility, the four policy options featured at the February 22, 1995 videoconference focused on ways to reduce access to handguns and prevent the violence.

Banning Saturday Night Specials

“Saturday Night Special” is the term commonly used to describe what is typically a short-barreled (4" or shorter), easily-concealed handgun that generally lacks any sporting purpose and is often made from inferior materials. Saturday Night Specials are disproportionately represented in homicides and other crimes. In fact, in 1993, eight out of ten of the guns most frequently confiscated by police in California were Saturday Night Specials.

In 1968, Congress passed the Gun Control Act, banning the importation of Saturday Night Specials, but not their manufacture, in the United States. Today, six privately-owned companies in California dominate the manufacturing of Saturday Night Specials. These six companies, located within a 45-mile radius of one another in Southern California, manufacture 80 percent of all Saturday Night Specials and 34 percent of all handguns in the United States. Furthermore, three of these Southern California companies accounted for 27 percent of the handguns sold after 1986 which were used in murders and other violent offenses during 1990 and 1991.

Because the 1968 Gun Control Act did not include the domestic manufacture of Saturday Night Specials, the state of Maryland established a Handgun Roster Board in 1988 to regulate the type of guns allowed to be manufactured and sold in the state. The Maryland Board prohibits the sale and manufacture of most guns classified as Saturday Night Specials. Other states such as, Illinois, Minnesota, Hawaii and South Carolina, passed “Melting Point Laws” that require guns sold in their state to be made from materials that will withstand melting at a minimum temperature. Most Saturday Night Specials do not meet this requirement.
A ban of Saturday Night Specials does not violate the Second Amendment. More than 100 years ago, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that state laws regulating guns are not subject to the Second Amendment of the Federal Constitution. Furthermore, a federal law banning Saturday Night Specials would be constitutional unless it interfered with a state's ability to maintain a militia or National Guard. No federal court has ever struck down any gun control law as a violation of the Second Amendment.

In the 1995 California Legislative Session, a bill was introduced by Assemblyman Louis Caldera (AB 629) that would require handguns manufactured and sold in California to be placed on a roster similar to the Handgun Roster Board established in the state of Maryland. In order to be placed on the roster, handguns would have to meet certain size and safety requirements as well as establish legitimate sporting, self defense or law enforcement purposes. This legislation would, in effect, stop the sale of Saturday Night Specials in California. This bill was recently defeated in the Public Safety Committee but will be up for reconsideration in January 1996.

Home Rule for Handgun Regulation

California, along with over 30 other states, currently preempts local regulation of firearms. This preemption prevents local cities or counties from passing laws to regulate the manufacture, sale or ownership of firearms in their jurisdiction. “Home Rule” refers to the ability of government at the local level to legislate policies tailored to the specific needs of their communities.

Statewide legislation rarely takes into account problems experienced by a state's various regions and environments. As juvenile and adult arrest rates as well as victimization rates indicate, different regions have varying degrees of problems with firearm violence. For example, a 1989 study indicated that the firearm homicide rate in metropolitan counties was five times the rate in non-metropolitan counties. As noted by Stephen Teret et al., "the urban handgun problem presents a classic situation in which a municipality must be free to exercise its police power to enact its own solution."

Handgun regulations tailored to the specific needs of a community have proven effective in reducing gun violence and have withstood court challenges. In 1976, legislation was passed in the District of Columbia which prohibited the purchase, sale, transfer and possession of all handguns. This law resulted in a 25 percent decline in the homicide and suicide rate by firearms per year for the next 11 years. Furthermore, a 1981 ban of handguns in Morton Grove, Illinois was upheld by a United States Appeals Court.

In California, state preemption of firearm regulation was passed in 1969. Several cities and counties have challenged state preemption of firearm regulation, including San Francisco in 1982,
following the murders of Mayor Moscone and Supervisor Milk. The San Francisco ordinance, which banned the private possession of handguns, was struck down by the California State Court of Appeals in 1982 as "invalid by reason of preemption by state law."23

In the 1995 California legislative session, Assemblyman Louis Caldera introduced AB 643 which calls for a repeal of the preemption law and would allow home rule. AB 643 is expected to be heard in the Assembly's Public Safety Committee in May of 1995.

Penalties for Concealed Handguns

In California, carrying a concealed firearm without a permit is treated differently than other types of weapons-carrying offenses. The California Penal Code makes it a misdemeanor crime to carry upon one's person or within any vehicle any pistol, revolver or other firearm capable of being concealed.24 However, the carrying of generally less fatal weapons, such as certain types of knives, throwing stars, metal knuckles and blackjacks, can be punishable as felony crimes.25

Between 1984 and 1993 in the United States, arrests due to weapons law violations increased 46.1 percent in general and 125.6 percent for people under 18 years of age.26 In states with a tough penalty for carrying concealed weapons, like Massachusetts, studies have found there were lower incidences of firearm assaults and firearm robberies.27

In the 1995 California legislative session, Assemblyman Katz introduced AB 632 which would increase the penalty for carrying a concealed gun from a misdemeanor to a felony if the individual is carrying a stolen gun, is an active member of a gang or does not meet the State's minimum requirements for obtaining a concealed weapon's permit. AB 632 passed the Assembly's Public Safety Committee in April and will be heard before the Assembly's Appropriations Committee in May, 1995.

Regulation for Handguns

Nearly 50 percent of Americans in recent surveys report that they have a gun in their home.28 But unlike most consumer products typically found in the home such as lawn mowers, toasters and teddy bears, which are regulated by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), firearms are not subject to any safety regulations that would decrease the likelihood of misuse and accidents. Although CPSC has jurisdiction over pellet and air guns, regulation over firearms and ammunition is strictly exempted.29 Currently, there is no federal agency with the authority to prohibit or regulate for safety purposes the domestic manufacture or sale of firearms or firearm technology.
The regulation of handguns as a consumer product would help prevent handgun violence against kids. In fact, the U.S. General Accounting Office found that unintentional shootings, in which children under the age of six killed themselves or others, could have been prevented by childproof safety devices. Furthermore, it is estimated that 30 percent of all unintentional shootings could be prevented by the presence of two safety features: trigger locks and loading indicators.

Because the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) has considerable expertise and is already charged with other regulatory duties concerning firearms, it is the logical agency to oversee the regulation of firearms. As a division of the Department of the Treasury, ATF is charged with regulating the firearm industry and enforcing federal firearm laws. ATF’s responsibilities include the collection of excise taxes; inspection of manufacturers, wholesalers and dealers; the issuing of permits; and licenses and the investigation of illegal trafficking in firearms. In fiscal year 1993, ATF had a total budget of $360 million and a staff of 4,300. It is estimated that more than $230 million and 2,500 staff members are already dedicated to firearms related work and, according to studies by ATF, more rigid enforcement of licensing requirements would enable more ATF personnel to oversee firearm regulation.

In February 1995, the Firearms Safety and Violence Prevention Act (HR 915) was introduced in Congress by New York Representative Major Owens and co-sponsored by New York Representative Charles Schumer. This legislation would expand the authority of the ATF to regulate the design, manufacture and distribution of firearms and ammunition. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.

1 Department of Health Services Vital Statistic (unpublished data).
3 Dr. Wendy Max, Associate Professor Medical Economics at UCSD.
4 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
9 Ibid. 73.
22 Denver, Government Code § 33-70(1).
23 Denver, City and County of Denver, 136 Cal. 501 (1925).
24 CA Penal Code § 12025.
25 CA Penal Code § 12020.
31 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms and Explosives Operations Branch (Office of Compliance Operations).
33 Ibid. 27.
Handguns have become the leading killer of California's children...
the murder weapon of choice and the #1 teen suicide method. California is selling a thousand more each day and more kids are getting their hands on them with tragic results. Many responsible Californians agree on four steps that must be taken:

1. Ban Saturday Night Specials. These cheaply-made, cheap-to-buy handguns are disproportionately represented in homicides and other crimes. Imports were banned 25 years ago. Domestic Saturday Night Specials, 80% now made in Southern California, weren't.

2. Let communities decide what rules to live by. Most states preempt local gun controls with looser state laws, California among them. But where sensible laws rule, handgun violence declines. Twelve California counties account for most youth killings in the state. Wouldn't home rule make our streets and our children safer?

3. Increase the potential penalty for carrying a concealed handgun. Right now, it's a misdemeanor to carry a non-permitted, loaded pistol in your jacket pocket or tucked in your waistband — like jaywalking, or dropping a gum wrapper — while brass knuckles can be prosecuted as a felony.

4. Treat handguns like other consumer products. There are now more safety rules on teddy bears than on handguns, and basic devices that could prevent most accidental shootings are not required. Why not bring safety standards for handguns under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms?

As Donna Shalala, U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services, noted: "...gun violence against children is not an inner city problem. It's not a problem of poor people. It's not a problem confined to certain genders or ethnic groups. And, most important, it is not — nor will it ever be — somebody else's problem. It is our problem."

In response to the tragic consequences of violence in our society, The California Wellness Foundation is dedicating more than $35 million over five years to support a comprehensive Violence Prevention Initiative. To learn more about the Campaign to Prevent Handgun Violence Against Kids and other projects of the Initiative, please visit us.

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