

# IMPACTS OF FIREARM VIOLENCE POLICY PROJECT

SITE VISIT SUMMARY  
MAY 11, 2023

## Working Together on Intervention and Prevention: Suicide Prevention at the Gun Range

Sacramento Gun Range; Rancho Cordova, CA

### The Opportunity

It is easy for firearm owners and those who have never held a firearm to misunderstand each other. For some, firearms are embedded within their culture and a normal part of their daily life. For others, the only time they think about firearms is when another mass shooting occurs. These different realities involve vastly different frameworks and sets of language around the topic, which can stymie productive conversations.

The Commission's gun range site visit provided an opportunity to further understand and facilitate meaningful dialogue around what can be a contentious discussion on gun safety and usage, connecting on a point of agreement: the desire to identify and implement meaningful and actionable solutions to firearm violence.

This site visit was held at the Sacramento Gun Range. Commissioners, Commission staff, and representatives from related State agencies were invited to attend.



## Site Visit Summary

Attendees heard four presentations during the site visit:

- 1 Bill Romanelli, a key partner of the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF), gave an overview of Project ChildSafe, NSSF's injury prevention program that creates educational materials, raises awareness, and distributes safety kits free of charge to promote the safe storage of firearms. Bill highlighted the importance of offering many options when it comes to safe storage and emphasizing a proactive approach to safety through communication and education.
- 2 Stan Collins, an expert in suicide prevention and a partner working with the Commission on two suicide prevention contracts, presented best practices in preventing suicide and putting time and space between a person in crisis and lethal means of harming themselves.
- 3 Danielle Jaymes, the general manager of the Sacramento Gun Range, gave a presentation on the changing demographics of firearm ownership and range membership. Danielle also gave an overview

of how the range can partner with firearm owners to temporarily store firearms at a reduced fee to decrease the likelihood of suicide by firearm.

- 4 Cora Schager, a firearm safety instructor at the Sacramento Gun Range, provided a lesson in the safe handling and operation of a firearm.

After the safety lesson and demonstration, attendees were given the opportunity to apply their new firearm safety knowledge by operating a firearm on the range.

Attendees left the site visit with a better understanding of firearms and their potential, how to safely handle and operate a firearm, and the opportunities for safety and prevention work available through a partnership with the firearm-owning community. This engagement left participants with a better understanding of the firearm-owning community and their interests and concerns, which is vital to creating actionable and realistic solutions that have broad buy-in.

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## Insights from the Site Visit

### The firearm-owning community is a critical ally in preventing firearm injury and death.

There are more than 400 million firearms in the United States, and the vast majority of them are never involved in an act of violence. This indicates that there are highly effective best practices employed by most firearm owners that greatly reduce the incidence of injury or death; safe storage practices are among the most critical.

### There are many options for safe firearm storage; affordability, accessibility, and trust are key to promoting best practices.

- Owners may be deterred from storing their firearms at a range or gun shop due to barriers such as the paperwork burden for both customer and range and the costs and background checks associated with re-acquiring firearms after the crisis has passed.
- Providing storage options in the community, such as Project ChildSafe's free distribution of trigger locks, can be a simple option for those who may be hesitant about facility-based storage or more restrictive in-home storage options that could hinder quick access in the case of self-defense or home defense.



### Misconceptions and lack of awareness hinder the progress of firearm safety practices.

- Firearm owners may be more likely to store their firearms with a friend or family member than a business in times of crisis, but many do not know about the recent regulation that specifically allows for this option; greater awareness may lead to firearm owners voluntarily transferring firearms for safekeeping at higher rates.
- Inappropriate language can feed tension around the topic of firearm safety. According to presenters at the site visit, for example, there is frustration felt by firearm owners around the term “assault weapon.” This terminology is considered inaccurate and unhelpful within the firearm-owning community, yet its overuse in the media has made it a point of contention that gets in the way of potentially life-saving discussions.

### NEXT STEPS

Staff will continue to engage firearm owners in the discussion around firearm violence and mental health throughout this project. The Commission will consider further opportunities to partner in suicide prevention work happening statewide, including raising awareness of the recent legislation permitting temporary firearm transfers to reduce suicide risk and empower firearm owners through the promotion of safe storage practices.

