

April 20, 2021

The Honorable Marc Levine
State Capitol, Room 5135
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 1223 (Levine) Firearms and ammunition: excise tax
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember Levine,

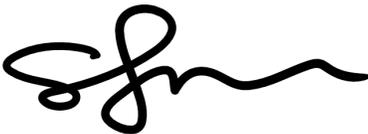
The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports AB 1223, as revised on April 7, 2021, which would extend the California Violence Intervention and Prevention (CalVIP) Grant Program until January 1, 2028, impose a \$25 excise tax on a retailer for each new handgun, semi automatic rifle, or shotgun sold, and impose an excise tax on ammunition until January 1, 2028.

Gun violence is among the greatest public health crises facing children and youth. Nearly 7,000 children younger than 18 are killed or wounded by gunshots each year. Firearm-related deaths are the third leading cause of death for children ages 1 to 17, outpaced only by death from car crashes and drowning and illnesses like cancer. It is imperative that we do all within our power to reduce gun violence. The American Academy of Pediatrics “advocates for stronger state and federal gun laws that protect children, including stronger background checks, solutions addressing firearms trafficking, and encouraging safe firearms storage.”¹

The CalVIP program is one of the most cost efficient and effective community-based violence intervention programs in the state. Communities which received CalVIP funding during the 2018 cycle saw homicides decrease by 3 times more than those that did not receive CalVIP support. In 2019, these programs helped California reduce gun homicide among the high risk age group (15-29 years old) to the lowest rate since 1970. However, the CalVIP program is set to sunset on January 1, 2025, and the Governor and Legislature must allocate funding for the program each year in the budget.

Extending the CalVIP Grant program will provide funds which will be deposited in the CalVIP Firearm and Ammunition Tax Fund, which the bill establishes, to further support the highly effective CalVIP program. AB 1223 will provide a reliable and continuous funding source for the CalVIP program to invest in reducing gun-related violence in our communities. AAP-CA strongly supports AB 1223 and urges you to vote YES. Thank you for your public service and leadership on behalf of the health and wellbeing of children, youth, and families in California.

Sincerely,



Sharon Pham, MD FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

¹ <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416>