

March 29, 2021

The Honorable Susan Eggman
State Capitol, Room 4052
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB-320 Domestic violence protective orders: possession of a firearm.
AAP-CA Position: SUPPORT

Dear Senator Eggman,

The American Academy of Pediatrics, California (AAP-CA) representing over 3,000 pediatrician members strongly supports SB 320, as introduced on February 4, 2021. This bill would strengthen the process by which persons subject to a restraining order must surrender firearms in accordance with existing law. It would also codify follow-up and enforcement procedures, and cause ownership of a gun by a person subjected to a protective order to be considered when determining child custody in domestic violence-related cases.

The presence of a gun in the home has been shown to drastically raise the risk of homicides in domestic violence. According to the Giffords Law Center, “when an abusive partner has access to a gun, a domestic violence victim is five times more likely to be killed.”¹ Data from the National Violent Death Reporting System showed that nearly one third of firearm homicides of children under the age of 13 years are related to domestic violence. Even if children are not physically harmed during intimate partner homicides, they are at risk of great trauma and toxic stress as frequent witnesses to intimate partner homicide-suicides, which overwhelmingly involve guns.

Currently, in California, a person subject to a protective order is forbidden from owning, possessing, purchasing, or receiving a firearm while that protective order is in effect. However, ensuring relinquishment of firearms already in possession of the prohibited person has not been enforced uniformly across the state. SB 320 would strengthen the process by which such persons must surrender firearms and codify follow-up and enforcement procedures.

Addressing toxic stress during childhood (also known as Adverse Childhood Experiences) and its lifelong impact on health has been prioritized by AAP-CA and California Surgeon General Dr. Nadine Burke Harris. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) supports strong gun safety measures. The most effective measure to prevent suicide, homicide, and unintentional firearm-related injuries is the absence of guns from homes and communities.² AAP-CA strongly supports SB 320. 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, M.D. FAAP
Member, State Government Affairs Committee
American Academy of Pediatrics, California

cc: AAP Leadership

¹ <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/who-can-have-a-gun/domestic-violence-firearms/>

² <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/safety-prevention/at-home/Pages/Handguns-in-the-Home.aspx>