

LWV Ohio Statehouse Day – March 19, 2013

LWVO Lobbyist Report

Gun Control

Rosie Craig

Gun Violence Prevention has been at the heart of national politics since the mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary school, where 20 children and six teachers were gunned down this past December. The LWVUS has positions related to gun control affirming the need to regulate the sale, possession, and transfer of firearms, and to curtail the proliferation of military style weapons, commonly called *Assault Weapons*. While the US Supreme Court ruled in 2008 that an individual right exists under the Second Amendment for one to have a gun for self-defense in the home, they too have reaffirmed that our governments have the right to regulate firearms.

President Obama has proposed federal legislation; universal background checks on gun sales, a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazines, gun trafficking legislation, and 23 executive actions. The LWVUS sent a letter to Vice President Biden in January supporting “...*strong federal measures to limit the accessibility and regulate the ownership of [handguns and semi-automatic assault] weapons by private citizens..* See <http://www.lwv.org/content/league-sends-letter-vice-president-biden-regarding-gun-control>. Just as we do many things to prevent a world wide flu epidemic; from high tech research, vaccines, and education about hand washing, so must we apply broad measures to reduce gun violence.

Meanwhile, a pro-gun response has gathered significant strength in Ohio to move guns into schools. Ohio Revised Code 2923.122 allows a Board of Education to authorize employees with licenses to carry a concealed weapon to carry firearms in schools. (A school board *can* choose not to authorize.) Buckeye Firearms currently claims to have received over a thousand applicants for their *Armed Teacher Training Program*, which they hope to start offering this spring. League members passionate about keeping guns out of schools need to raise their voices to their state representatives as well as to their local school boards.

The time has never been better for local leagues to engage programming on ways to prevent gun violence. It must be remembered that the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons ban was passed by one vote. If we change the mind of one US representative, this might be the one vote to pass life saving legislation.

While the chance of passage in the current legislature may be small, LWVO will keep a watch on state legislation addressing the problem of guns in Ohio, with *Mandatory Safe Storage of Firearms*, having been introduced by Rep. Bill Patmon, HB 31 and a *placeholder* bill to ban assault weapons, SB 18, introduced by Senator Shirley Smith. LWVO will take advantage of any opportunities to provide testimony.

Any individual who might like to gain some lobbying experience on this topic, please know that I'd love some company as LWVO advocate on Gun Control.

USEFUL WEB SITES FOR GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

The following web sites provide a wealth of information to support the LWVUS positions on GUN CONTROL.

Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence : <http://home.ohioceasefire.org>

The Ohio Coalition Against Gun Violence is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, working to prevent gun violence through education, advocacy and public awareness. OCAGV is a corporate partner with LWVO. It is *the* web site for following issues and legislation unique to Ohio. It covers national items as well. One can go on the web site and sign up to receive action alerts. OCAGV is a member of States United Against Gun Violence, a national umbrella organization.

The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence: <http://www.bradiycampaign.org/>

The Brady Campaign works to pass and enforce sensible [federal](#) and [state](#) gun laws, regulations, and public policies through grassroots activism, electing public officials who support common sense gun laws, and [increasing public awareness](#) of gun violence. [Their legal arm, The Brady Center](#) works to [reform](#) the gun industry by enacting and enforcing sensible regulations to reduce gun violence, including regulations governing the gun industry. In addition, they [represent victims](#) of gun violence in the courts. They [educate](#) the public about gun violence through litigation, [grassroots mobilization](#), and outreach to [affected communities](#).

Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence: <http://smartgunlaws.org/about-gun-laws/>

Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (formerly Legal Community Against Violence) is the only national law center focused on providing comprehensive legal expertise in support of gun violence prevention and the promotion of smart gun laws that save lives. As a non-profit organization founded by attorneys, they remain dedicated to preventing the loss of lives caused by gun violence by providing trusted, in-depth legal expertise and information on America's gun laws. Go here for a true and thorough understanding of the Second Amendment.

Violence Policy Center: <http://www.vpc.org/>

The Violence Policy Center (VPC), a national tax-exempt 501(c)(3) non-profit organization based in Washington, DC, works to stop the annual toll of death and injury through research, advocacy, education, and collaboration. Firearms are the only consumer product not regulated by a federal agency for health and safety. This unique exemption has been exploited by the gun industry as it has moved to embrace increased lethality as the foundation of its design, manufacturing, and marketing efforts in the wake of the long-term decline in household gun ownership. The VPC believes that the answer to reducing gun violence lies in applying the decades-long lessons of consumer product safety regulation and injury prevention to the gun industry and its products.