



**CITY OF SAN ANTONIO  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL  
COUNCIL CONSIDERATION REQUEST**

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2019 AUG 27 AM 10:19

TO: Mayor and City Council  
FROM: Councilwoman Jada Andrews-Sullivan, District 2, Councilman John Courage, District 9  
COPIES TO: Erik Walsh, City Manager; Leticia Vacek, City Clerk; Andy Segovia, City Attorney; John Peterek, Assistant to the City Manager; Emily McGinn, Assistant to City Council  
SUBJECT: Voluntary Gun Buyback Program  
DATE: 8/21/2019

Issue Proposed for Consideration

I ask for your support for the inclusion of the following item on the agenda of the earliest available meeting of the Governance Committee:

To direct COSA staff to develop and implement a voluntary gun buyback program in the City of San Antonio. I urge City staff to utilize at least 20% of the non-restricted Asset Forfeiture Fund as an initial funding source for the first year of operation in the FY 2020 budget. The purpose of this program will be for the City to safely purchase privately owned firearms in an effort to reduce the number of weapons in the City. Features of the program should include compensation in exchange for functioning weapons, gun clips, and ammunition. The City should accept firearms that are non-functioning without remuneration, and should prescribe value to a firearm based upon a sliding scale that will depend on factors such as condition, clip size, and type of weapon. All weapons collected by the City should be destroyed and not circulated back into the community under any condition.

The goal of the buyback program is to reduce the number of weapons that could fall into the hands of bad actors or mentally unstable persons through illegal gun transfers, theft, or accidental means. Anyone who voluntarily surrenders any firearm may do so anonymously and should not have to fear any legal or public repercussions for making a decision that ultimately increases the safety of their community.

I also implore COSA staff to design a campaign focusing on purchasing guns within communities that experience higher volumes of gun violence in the city. The campaign should also partner with local community organizations in order to best reach populations affected by gun violence.

Brief Background

With the recent mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio, it is time for elected representatives at all levels to take necessary action in order to best protect their communities. Despite the State's restrictions, the City of San Antonio has a responsibility to its citizens to act accordingly in the frame of State law. In 2017, according to the Center for Disease Control, there



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were 3,513 firearm related deaths in Texas alone, making it the number one in gun related deaths in the nation [1]. The buyback program's goal is to reduce gun violence by reducing the number of firearms in circulation and preventable, accidental deaths.

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### **Domestic Violence**

1 in 3 women report experiencing abuse from an intimate partner in their lifetime in the United States [2]. When domestic abusers have access to a firearm, they not only endanger their partner, but also their families and community. In an average month, 52 American women are shot and killed by an intimate partner and many more are injured [3]. Access to a gun in the home makes it five times more likely that women will be killed by their abusive partner [4]. Increasingly, studies show that bisexual and transgender people are more likely to report lifetime partner violence than their cisgender counterparts. Removing the gun from the situation and empowering couples to make the decision early on, will increase the likelihood that victims of domestic violence will survive an abusive relationship.

### **Mass Shootings**

In 2017, just 30 miles from San Antonio, the shooting at Sutherland Springs claimed the lives of 26 individuals. In recent history, 4 of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in history have taken place in Texas. In 2019 there have been 255 mass shootings across the nation. The El Paso shooting, being the most recent claimed the lives of 22 individuals and wounded 24. A large portion of all guns used in crimes are stolen from law abiding citizens. A voluntary program to remove guns in our community is a step we can take to reduce incidents of gun deaths.

### **Mental Health / Suicide**

Access to a firearm in the home triples the risk of suicide death [5]. Gun suicides tend to be concentrated in states with higher rates of firearm ownership. Guns are used in 51% of suicide deaths in America with 85% of those attempts ending in death compared to 5% of suicide attempts involving non-firearm attempts [6]. From 2007 to 2016, Veteran suicides also saw a rise nationally by increasing at a rate of over 32% with increases being much more prevalent among the 18 to 34 age group [7]. Those especially at risk of suicide could benefit from the program and have their firearms safely removed and destroyed rather than potentially having access to them during a suicidal episode.

### **Homicides / Violent Crime**

In 2018, According to FBI Homicide Data, San Antonio was the 2<sup>nd</sup> most dangerous city in Texas [8]. Texas DPS estimates that there are more than 100,000 gang members in the state. Many gang members are victims of poverty and economic inequality and resort to a life of crime to make ends meet. The goal of this initiative would be to provide a first step for those that choose to pursue a better life and give those individuals the push they need to make the right decision and be compensated for it. Additionally, when an individual is charged with a violent crime, and told they are not allowed to have any weapons, unless SAPD seizes those weapons on arrest, they do not have an avenue to dispose of them safely within the city. One goal of this program





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would be to assist in closing that gap in the system and provide for a safe method of disposal without prosecution.

**Other Adopted Programs**

Fort Worth Police Department implemented a buyback program in 2017. FWPD organized the program around 5 events over 5 weekends where citizens could come in and surrender their firearms for \$50. Each of these weekends, police were able to obtain between 70 and 100 firearms.

A buyback program in Camden County, N.J utilized a "sliding scale" of compensation to target firearms. \$50 was given to a gun that could fire, and \$250 was given to high power weapons. They were able to obtain 1,137 guns, including 5 automatic assault weapons.


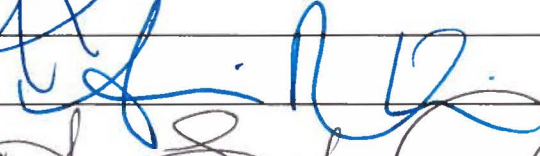
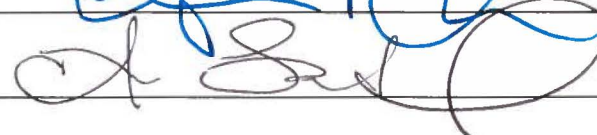
A buyback program implemented in Baltimore, Maryland offered between \$25 and \$500 per weapon turned in. 245 shotguns, 273 rifles, 509 handguns, and 69 uncategorized firearms were turned in to the Buyback program, including a rocket launcher

Submitted for Council consideration by:


  
Councilwoman Jada Andrews-Sullivan, District 2

  
Councilman John Courage, District 9

Supporting Councilmembers' Signatures (3 only)

1.   
2.   
3. 

District

  
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Citations

1. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm\\_mortality/firearm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm)
2. <https://www.thehotline.org/resources/statistics/>
3. Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), 2013 to 2017. Washington, DC: Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation.
4. Campbell JC, Webster D, Koziol-McLain J, et al. Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2003; 93(7): 1089-1097.
5. Anglemyer A, Horvath T, Rutherford G. The accessibility of firearms and risk for suicide and homicide victimization among household members: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 2014; 160(2): 101-110.
6. Miller M, Azrael D, Barber C. Suicide mortality in the United States: The importance of attending to method in understanding population-level disparities in the burden of suicide. *Annual Review of Public Health*. 2012; 33: 393-408.
7. <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Veterans-and-Suicide-Factsheet.pdf>
8. [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm\\_mortality/firearm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm)

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