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SENATOR KEVIN DE LEÓN

PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

April 21, 2016

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Lieutenant Governor, State of California
State Capitol, Suite 1114
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Lt. Governor Newsom:

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kevin" followed by a horizontal line.

First, I would like to thank you for your role in keeping gun violence a front-burner issue in California with the Safety for All Act of 2016. As someone who has spent over a decade fighting for sensible gun-control measures, I hold an abiding belief that more can and should be done to keep firearms and ammo out of the hands of criminals and those with criminal intent. I believe we share the goal to prevent and protect Californians from senseless gun violence.

However, I fear reaching that goal is in danger of being derailed.

I am troubled by reports that you plan to move forward with your initiative regardless of our commitment to work together and what the Legislature can accomplish this session. This would amount to a risky all-or-nothing strategy that endangers the potential for enacting strong measures this year that will surely save lives.

The Legislature is working in earnest on a package of gun-control bills that provide the same safeguards as the Safety for All Act but for less money and minimal intrusion for lawful gun owners. It is widely accepted that, when possible, the legislative process is the preferred method over the ballot box to enact statewide policy. The legislative process is much more adaptable to changes and revisions to address unintended consequences and new data or approaches.

A prime example is the ammo-regulation component of the Safety for All Act, arguably the heart of the initiative, which largely draws from my SB 53 of 2013. At the time, I believed that the approach taken in SB 53 was the best way forward. Since then, however, my office and stakeholders have together come up with a more effective way to regulate ammo in California. While still accomplishing our paramount goal of keeping ammunition out of the hands of prohibited persons, this new point-of-sale approach has lower implementation costs, keeps our firearm registration records current, and very minimally changes the current purchase process for law-abiding gun users. To enact

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ammunition regulation as proposed in the Safety for All Act would deny California the flexibility to implement a more thoughtful and cost-effective approach.

There is a good chance of getting the legislative package of gun-control bills to the Governor.

A major impediment to success, however, is your stated position not to pull the Safety for All Act from the ballot under any circumstances. I fully understand the utility and strategy of public and private posturing. The downside is you will provide aid to gun-control opponents by giving cover to reluctant legislators who would rather side-step this important issue in lieu of a ballot initiative. This is why I sincerely hope you will be willing to work with the Legislature in advancing smart and sensible gun-control measures.

Your stated intention for introducing the "Safety for All Act" to protect Californians and save lives would be beyond question if you were to demonstrate a willingness to solve this scourge regardless of venue.

The California Legislature has shown an ability to move forward on several major policy issues – the most recent being minimum wage. We have set an example for the rest of the nation while providing a stark contrast to Congress.

This month, Governor Brown signed SB 3, increasing California's minimum wage to \$15 per hour. This effort was jump started by the initiative process – labor unions putting forward ballot measures to increase the minimum wage. Wisely, the unions did not dig in. They remained open to dialogue and compromise. The result: California now has the most progressive – and fairest – minimum-wage law in the country.

For the good of all Californians, I hope you can show the same wisdom and judgment demonstrated by the proponents of the minimum-wage ballot initiatives. I remain open to collaboration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,


KEVIN DE LEÓN
President pro Tempore
Twenty-Fourth Senate District

KDL:sn

*Let's work together
to get this done and
make California safer.
Best,*