

10-1524

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MOTION

A 2008 report by the RAND Corporation has substantiated the effectiveness of using a New Gun Buyer letter campaign to improve gun safety and modify new gun purchasers' behaviors.

RAND's study of two target neighborhoods in the City (77th and Devonshire Area Police Stations) explored the belief that guns obtained by prohibited persons (e.g. felons and certain misdemeanants) were often acquired by local friends and family without criminal records by conducting straw purchases. The "straw purchase" is a purchase of a firearm by someone who can legally purchase the firearm, for someone who can't.

To dissuade legal gun purchasers from selling or transferring their guns to prohibited persons, a working group consisting of various law enforcement agencies that included the California Department of Justice, the Los Angeles Police Department and the City Attorney's Office initiated a "letter campaign." As part of this campaign, new gun buyers who resided in the two pilot areas, would receive a letter sent by the City Attorney's Office and signed by the City Attorney, Attorney General and Chief of Police that indicated that the gun purchase had been documented, and should that gun be used in a crime and it had not been legally transferred, that original purchaser could be prosecuted for that subsequent illegal transfer. The letter would arrive on Day 2 or 3 of the state mandated 10-day waiting period. The rationale for this letter campaign was that since the person conducting the straw purchase did not have a criminal history, this population could be deterred from participating in this illegal activity.

The letter campaign has been regarded as successful for two reasons. First, results of the study showed that the number of individuals who "cancelled" the gun purchase, or did not take possession of the gun after receiving the letter, substantially increased. Second, the rate at which guns were reported stolen for those who received the letter is more than twice the rate for those who did not receive the letter.

The City Attorney's Office suspended the program at the end of the study period so RAND could analyze the data and complete its findings. Given that this program has been shown to be successful, its reinstatement should be explored.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Attorney and City Administrative Officer be requested to report on the feasibility and cost of reinstating the New Gun Buyer letter campaign.

PRESENTED BY:


ERIC GARCETTI
Councilmember, 13th District

SECONDED BY:



October 5 2010



ORIGINAL