

**BAN ON THE MANUFACTURE AND SALE OF
SATURDAY NIGHT SPECIALS/JUNK GUNS***

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1997
Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010*

- WHEREAS, The third object of the National PTA states: “To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth;” and
- WHEREAS, The National PTA Health and Welfare Policy #3 states: “To provide regulation of manufacture, advertising or sales of products hazardous to children and youth;” and
- WHEREAS, The California State PTA, as part of its Legislation Platform, will support legislation “To prevent, control or eliminate hazards to the health, safety and well-being of all children and youth” (Legislation Plank #10); and
- WHEREAS, The U.S. Department of Justice reports juvenile homicides with guns has quadrupled in the past ten years while non-gun homicides remain unchanged; and
- WHEREAS, According to a 1996 report of the Coordinating Council on Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, in the state of California firearm deaths became the number one cause of death for juveniles in 1995 (more than by car accidents, diseases or drugs) and the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence reports that nationally 14 children a day are lost forever to guns; and
- WHEREAS, The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence and the office of U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (CA) report that Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns are 3.4 times more likely to be involved in a crime as other guns; and
- WHEREAS, Seventeen cities in California have approved passage of a ban on the sale of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns; and
- WHEREAS, Currently no federal regulatory agency, including the Consumer Product Safety Commission and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), has the power to impose minimum design and safety standards on domestically manufactured guns, including Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to educate its members and communities concerning the dangers of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to seek and support legislation, regulation and/or other national, state and local measures to ban the manufacture, sale or possession of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns; and be it further

Continued on next page

RESOLVED, That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA convention.

*Saturday Night Specials, also known as Junk Guns, are defined as short barreled (four inches or shorter), easily concealed handguns that generally lack any sporting purpose and are often made from inferior materials.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

America is in a gun crisis. Our children are being killed by guns at a record rate. In 1995, firearms became the number one cause of death of our children in California. A University of California at Davis study showed that Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns are 3.4 times more likely to be involved in a crime as other guns.

In addition to the human toll, the economic cost of firearm violence is over 20 billion dollars annually. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's estimate of the lifetime economic cost, including hospitalization, rehabilitation and lost wages, makes firearm injuries the third most expensive injury category. In 1991, California spent \$329 million for direct medical care for firearm injuries alone. Over 85 percent of that cost was passed on to the taxpayer.

Following the assassination of Senator Robert J. Kennedy, Congress passed the Gun Control Act of 1968 which prohibited the importation of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns. At that time most of the junk guns were made overseas, so it was not necessary to restrict their domestic manufacture. Unfortunately, by eliminating the foreign competition, the Gun Control Act of 1968 unintentionally created a lucrative domestic gun industry. Since this act was passed, southern California has become the Junk Gun capital of the United States.

Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns are especially attractive to youth because they can easily be concealed in the palm of the hand. These guns are sold at retail prices as low as \$69, the same price as a pair of sneakers. In 1995, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms stated that one type of gun most frequently traced to use in a crime was the Junk Gun.

The poor quality, lack of safety devices and the inferior design of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns make them dangerous to their owners. The guns are a poor choice for self-defense or sport, and are known to fire if bumped or dropped. They are also easily jammed, which can cause accidental discharge. In February 1968, arguing in favor of the ban on the importation of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns, *The American Rifleman*, a publication of the National Rifle Association, identified Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns as "miserably-made, potentially defective arms that contribute so much to rising violence."

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**Ban on the Manufacture and Sale of
Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns – continued**

National public opinion polls indicate that 66 percent to 73 percent of those polled support banning the sale of Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns. Even gun owners overwhelmingly support a ban on Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns. A 1993 Harris poll indicated that 35 percent of children ages six to twelve fear their lives will be cut short by gun violence. In too many cases, even a simple trip to and from school is frightening and potentially dangerous.

For 100 years PTA has advocated for the safety and well-being of all children. The California State PTA has adopted resolutions on the Ban on Military Assault Type Weapons (1989) and on Firearm Safety Awareness (1995). It is the responsibility of the PTA to speak out for the children whose lives are being threatened and lost due to Saturday Night Specials/Junk Guns. By passing this resolution we can take the first step to prevent another innocent child from being murdered by a Saturday Night Special.