

FIREARM SAFETY DEVICES

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1999
Reviewed by Board of Managers January 2010

- WHEREAS,** Firearms continue to be a leading cause of unintentional deaths among children (5 to 14 years old) and youth (15 to 24 years old), yet more than 30% of these deaths could have been prevented by the use of a firearm safety device; and
- WHEREAS,** A child-proof safety device could have prevented all the incidents in which children under the age of 6 years killed themselves or others with a firearm; and
- WHEREAS,** Every day more than a million elementary school aged latch-key children have access to guns in their homes; and
- WHEREAS,** Several types of firearm locking devices that are currently available would significantly reduce, if not eliminate, all unintentional firearm injuries and deaths to children; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to educate the community about the risks of unsecured firearms in the home, and about the availability and proper use of gun locks/trigger locks and other safety devices; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support legislation, regulation and/or other national, state and local measures to require that all firearms offered for sale or transfer be equipped with a safety locking device that would render the firearm incapable of firing; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA convention.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Every day in America, 14 children or youth, age 19 and under, are killed by fire arms. Many of these deaths are preventable. According to the federal General Accounting Office, nearly one-third of the unintentional deaths could be prevented with inexpensive gun safety devices. Load notification devices would add less than fifty cents to the cost of a gun. A safety locking device is available at any gun shop for \$10.98 or less. Tragically for these children, their families and those who unintentionally kill them, legislation requiring these devices has not even been allowed to reach the floor of Congress.

A magazine lock would also add less than fifty cents to the cost of a gun. Often a gun owner will remove the magazine from a gun and think it is unloaded, forgetting or not knowing that one bullet remains in the chamber. This device will disable the gun until the magazine is reinserted.

A trigger lock is a keyed lock that goes over the trigger and prevents the gun from being fired. These are especially effective in preventing young children from unintentionally firing a gun and properly used, with the key stored in a separate, secure place, can be effective for older children as well. All Smith and Wesson products that have been shipped from the factory since September 1997 have been equipped with trigger locks. Following their lead Glock, Beretta and other responsible gun manufacturers have agreed to include locks with all guns shipped.

A public education campaign is needed to inform current gun owners of the availability and affordability of such locks and all gun owners of the need to use the lock once it is purchased. This can be compared with the use of seat belts in cars: when seat belts first came out people complained about the additional cost and the restrictive ness. Through public education and enforcement, “buckling up” is now second nature for most people. The same happened when child safety seats were first introduced. Now, many hospitals will not release a newborn to go home without a proper child safety seat. With proper legislation, education and enforcement, having a load indicator and trigger lock device on every gun could also become the norm.

By passing this resolution, PTA promotes the third Object of PTA, “to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth,” and the National PTA Health and Welfare Policy #3 “to provide regulation of manufacture, advertising or sale of products hazardous to children and youth.”