

**LICENSING AND REGISTRATION OF HANDGUNS**

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2000*

*Reviewed and deemed relevant by Board of  
Managers August 2020*

- WHEREAS, One of the Objects of the PTA is to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship; and
- WHEREAS, Firearms continue to be a leading killer of children and youth in California and across the nation; and
- WHEREAS, California state law does not require licensing of gun owners nor periodically renewable registration per se of handguns; and
- WHEREAS, The licensing of handgun owners along with a hands-on proficiency test and a hands-on safety test would promote a basic knowledge of gun safety regulations; and
- WHEREAS, The registration of handguns would help law enforcement officials track guns used in criminal activity; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support state and federal legislation and/or regulations that require all handgun owners to hold a periodically renewed license that includes a hands-on proficiency test and hands-on safety test in order to purchase, receive or possess a handgun; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support state and federal legislation and/or regulations to facilitate the registration of all handguns on a periodically renewable basis and at all instances of transfer of ownership; 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 in June 2001.

###

*Continued on next page*

## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The term licensing applies to the owner of a gun and the term registration applies to the gun itself.

If licensing of handgun owners were required, a license would be issued to an individual after a test that, at a minimum would indicate knowledge of gun safety rules and regulations including safe storage of a gun and, ideally, would require loading, unloading, clearing and handling a gun as a part of the test. Included would be a background check on the individual with a thumbprint search of criminal records. This license would allow an individual to purchase a handgun and the license would be subject to periodic renewal.

If registration were required, each individual handgun would be registered. This registration would take place at the time the gun is purchased, would be renewable on a periodic schedule, and would provide a way of notifying the registering body when there is a transfer of ownership, if the gun is stolen and/or if the gun is destroyed, confiscated or otherwise not in possession of the registered owner. If a licensed owner has more than one handgun, each would be individually registered.

Several states already have laws that require the licensing of handgun owners and registration of their firearms. Other nations have much stronger laws.

The two leading killers of children and youth are guns and auto accidents. Owners and operators of autos are licensed and the autos are re-registered each year. California already requires a test before issuing a **hunting** license to make sure the hunter understands the rules and regulations. Although the state of California requires prospective handgun purchasers to have a basic firearms safety certificate (BFSC), there is no requirement for a hands-on proficiency/safety test.

Polling data reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicate wide public support for licensing and registration. Many law enforcement officials believe such measures would help them trace weapons used in crimes and would encourage people to report stolen weapons. Licensing and registration fees could cover the administrative costs. There may be some one-time set up costs to put a licensing/registration system online.

This resolution assists PTA in promoting the third Object of the PTA, “to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.”