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Red Flag Law Clears California Senate Public Safety Committee

SACRAMENTO, CA – Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko testified this week in the California State Senate Public Safety Committee in support of Assembly Bill 1344, a measure aimed at significantly enhancing public safety. Authored by Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin, the bill would authorize district attorneys to directly petition the courts for Gun Violence Restraining Orders (GVROs), commonly referred to as “Red Flag Laws.” These judicial orders allow a judge to temporarily prohibit firearm possession by individuals who pose a significant danger to themselves or others.

AB 1344 passed unopposed from the Senate Public Safety Committee following testimony from District Attorney Nasarenko and a representative from Giffords Law Center, the national gun violence prevention organization founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.

“When an individual is in distress and at risk of harming themselves or others, petitioners can go into court and seek a gun violence restraining order,” District Attorney Nasarenko told the committee. “District Attorneys are best positioned because of our courtroom knowledge and where we sit to bring forward these life-saving measures.”

The bill initially established a targeted pilot program for district attorneys in Ventura and El Dorado counties. An amendment has been added to expand the program to include two more jurisdictions, Alameda and Santa Clara counties, strengthening the bill’s reach and impact.

“While there have been previous laws that have sought to increase access to GVROs, the current rate of GVRO use continues to remain low,” Assemblymember Irwin said in the Senate Public Safety hearing. “For years, I have advocated for District Attorneys to be added to the list of authorized petitioners for GVROs.”

Despite proximity to the courts and access to critical information, district attorneys are not currently permitted to directly file for GVROs under existing law. AB 1344 would change that by allowing prosecutors to swiftly intervene when time-sensitive threats arise, including filing emergency and final GVROs.

The bill requires annual reporting to the California Firearm Violence Research Center at UC Davis beginning in 2027. These reports will track GVRO data and outcomes to support evidence-based policy decisions.

“AB 1344 strikes the correct balance,” said Ethan Murray of Giffords Law Center. “It proposes a focused, data-driven pilot program to value the impact of DA involvement without undermining civil liberties or due process. AB 1344 is a prudent step toward strengthening California’s gun violence prevention tool kit.”

AB 1344 now advances to the Senate Appropriations Committee for further consideration.