



ERIK NASARENKO

VENTURA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

NEWS RELEASE



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Contact: Joey Buttitta
Title: Communications Manager/PIO
Phone: (805) 767-3400
Email: Joey.Buttitta@venturacounty.gov

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“Safer Together” Symposium Strengthening Gun Violence Prevention Efforts



VENTURA, Calif. – Today the Ventura County District Attorney’s Office and GIFFORDS, the gun violence prevention and advocacy group, hosted the “Safer Together” Gun Violence Restraining Order (GVRO) Symposium at the Ventura County Government Center. The symposium brought together prosecutors, city attorneys, law enforcement leaders, and mental health and violence prevention advocates to advance implementation of California’s evolving firearm safety laws.

The symposium comes months after Governor Gavin Newsom signed AB 1344 into law, authorizing a pilot program in Ventura, Alameda, El Dorado, and Santa Clara counties that allows district attorneys to directly petition the court for GVROs. GVROs temporarily suspend a person’s legal access to firearms when they are found to pose a significant risk of harm to themselves or others and less restrictive alternatives are inappropriate. The bill was authored by California Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin and sponsored by Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko.

“The frequency of mass shootings committed with legally purchased firearms continues to underscore the urgent need to remove firearms from individuals who pose a danger to themselves or others, a critical first step in preventing tragedy,” said Assemblymember Jacqui Irwin. “The expanded use of Gun Violence Restraining Orders has proven to be an effective tool in addressing

this issue. I am especially grateful to Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko for his steadfast support of my efforts to pass Assembly Bill 1344 that established this pilot program. I believe strongly that adding Deputy District Attorneys to the list of eligible petitioners will save lives, and I am grateful our communities in Ventura County will be the first to benefit.”

Previously, only law enforcement officers, family members, household members, and certain other individuals could seek a GVRO. Under AB 1344, prosecutors in the participating counties are now empowered to initiate petitions when evidence demonstrates that an individual poses a significant danger of causing personal injury to themselves or others by possessing a firearm. The pilot program also requires annual reporting to the California Firearm Violence Research Center at UC Davis to evaluate usage and outcomes, helping inform potential statewide expansion.

The half-day symposium focused on strengthening local implementation of GVROs under the new law, with an emphasis on closing gaps between legislation and day-to-day practice. The event brought together cross-disciplinary stakeholders to ensure Ventura County remains at the forefront of coordinated firearms violence prevention.



“This symposium reflects our commitment to using every lawful tool available to prevent firearms violence,” said Ventura County District Attorney Erik Nasarenko. “Gun Violence Restraining Orders save lives when they are properly understood and consistently applied. By bringing prosecutors, law enforcement, and community partners together in one room, we are building a coordinated system that prioritizes prevention, victim safety, and accountability.”

Participants heard a landscape overview of firearms violence and restraining orders in both civil and criminal contexts from Ari Freilich, Director of the California Department of Justice’s Office of Gun Violence Prevention. A panel discussion featuring representatives from the District Attorney’s Office, the California Department of Justice Bureau of Firearms, and crisis intervention professionals identified systemic gaps the new framework seeks to address.

“Gun violence restraining orders are simple, commonsense laws that save countless lives, and protect whole communities from the tragedy and pain of



gun violence,” said GIFFORDS State Policy Attorney, Ethan Murray. “With this pilot program, select California’s District Attorneys are empowered to stop suicides, prevent mass shootings, and better protect Californians. This symposium only reaffirmed our confidence that the state has made the best possible choice in choosing DA Nasarenko to lead the pilot program.”

The program also included a practical implementation session led by members of the District Attorney’s Office. Attendees received detailed guidance on:

- How to report cases to the District Attorney’s Office for GVRO review
- The legal process to obtain a GVRO
- Firearm relinquishment and seizure procedures
- Required forms and step-by-step expectations at each stage of the process

The symposium concluded with a moderated audience discussion led by Julia Weber of the Judicial Council of California. Stakeholders were invited to identify implementation challenges, promising practices, and opportunities for collaboration. The discussion also focused on how the District Attorney’s Office can support successful rollout of AB 1344 and what next steps agencies can take to strengthen Ventura County’s GVRO filings.

