

Hi John,

Moms Demand Action is a non-partisan grassroots organization made up of both gun owners and non gun-owners with the goal of reducing gun violence and improving gun safety for everyone. We believe the 2nd Amendment can be respected while simultaneously better protecting people through common sense gun safety policies.

We request that the Town of Yountville adopt a Safe Storage Ordinance which would require all firearms in a residence be securely stored in a locked container or disabled with a trigger lock. One small child dies almost every day in this country after finding an unsecured firearm in their own home or in a relative's home or while playing at a friend's house. Two older children, particularly teens, die every day in this country by suicide from an unsecured firearm they obtain from their home or another family member's home. In addition, 80% of school mass shootings are done by current or former students, using an unsecured firearm obtained from their own home or a relative's home. A Safe Storage ordinance has become more urgent than ever during Covid, given the dramatic rise in gun sales. Combined with more time spent sheltering at home and the increase in mental health issues, we have seen a shocking 43% increase in unintentional deaths of small children and a 9% increase in teen suicides.

Research shows that keeping guns securely stored does NOT hinder self-protection - a gun can be accessed within seconds - but it DOES prevent unintentional deaths of children and teen suicides, by as much as 85% depending on the type of storage. Storing firearms in a securely locked container can also prevent guns from being easily stolen in a home robbery. A DOJ-approved safe storage device can be obtained for as little as \$40 so the cost is not at all prohibitive, and trigger locks are often given out free at police stations.

Some people are under the impression that the California Penal Code (25100) already addresses this issue but it does not do so fully; specifically, it does not define how to safely store a firearm and it doesn't apply to all homes. For example, parents often hide their guns (feeling this makes them safe) rather than locking them up, but studies show 70% of children know the location of these hidden guns in their own home and many have even handled them without parent/guardian's knowledge.

Many cities and towns up and down California have already adopted Safe Storage ordinances. St. Helena recently passed such an ordinance this past summer. We hope that Yountville will do the same.

When considering the penalty for violating the Safe Storage Ordinance, Moms Demand Action supports a civil penalty, rather than a criminal penalty. We suggest a fine or community service. This is because we feel people of color may be disproportionately affected by this law and we also think a criminal penalty is unnecessary. Most firearm owners are law abiding and will follow the law if it is simply in place. We feel having this ordinance on the books will ultimately help to change our culture, much like the seat belt law did in the 1980's. Towns early on in the process of adopting safe storage ordinances did often adopt a criminal penalty – that is, a misdemeanor-- but more recent towns have adopted a civil only penalty. We therefore ask that if you move forward with this ordinance, that a civil penalty be adopted.

As a survivor of gun violence, I hope the Yountville Town Council will take this common sense step toward greater public safety. We, at Moms Demand Action, are very happy to provide you with any additional information or answer any questions you may have as you consider this request (please also

see the attached). We can also provide you with the ordinances that have passed in other nearby towns and can also meet with the Napa Sheriff's department, which acts as Yountville's police force, if appropriate.

Many thanks,
Liz

Liz Russell
Volunteer Co-Local Group Lead, Napa Valley Moms Demand Action
Sr. Survivor Fellow, Everytown for Gun Safety