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Contact: Andrew Sharp at

[ASharp@sandiego.gov](mailto:ASharp@sandiego.gov) or (619) 723-1674

## **California’s top gun violence prosecutor issues stark warning before tomorrow’s Supreme Court case: Giving guns to domestic abusers threatens all of us.**

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott is the first woman, first Latina, and first mother to serve as top attorney for the nation’s eighth largest city and California’s second. Mara W. Elliott says “**The stakes are astronomical,**” as the US Supreme Court takes up *U.S. v. Rahimi* on November 7, 2023. The Supreme Court will decide if individuals subject to qualifying domestic violence restraining orders can be prohibited from possessing firearms.

California’s top gun violence prevention prosecutor, Mara W. Elliott, has a unique perspective on the case as a top attorney who also operates Your Safe Place, a family justice center for domestic violence victims and other vulnerable populations.

Elliott was asked to speak on the link between domestic violence and gun violence last week by the AP and the San Diego City Council. City Attorney Elliott’s comments were published in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, East Oregonian, ABC News, North Texas e-News, PennLive, US News & World Report, and AP, among others. She regularly consults with leading Gun Violence Prevention organizations, like Brady United.

Attorney Elliott notes *Rahimi* threatens the safety of domestic violence survivors protected under restraining orders — and their communities. She championed the California law that requires all state-funded domestic violence clinics to offer victims a gun violence restraining orders (GVROs) for protection.

**“The nexus between gun violence and domestic abuse is terrifyingly clear,”** says Elliott.

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Recent City media releases can be accessed on the San Diego City Attorney’s website: <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney>  
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1200 Third Avenue, Suite 1620, San Diego, California 92101-4188 (619) 236-6220

In 68.2% of mass shootings, the perpetrator either killed at least one partner or family member or had a history of domestic violence. Source: “The Role of Domestic Violence in Fatal Mass Shootings in the United States,” 2014-2019, Lisa B. Geller, et al.

American women are 11 times more likely to be killed with a firearm than women in other high-income countries. Source: “Homicide, suicide, and unintentional firearm fatality: comparing the United States with other high-income countries, 2003,” Erin G. Richardson, et al.

The presence of a gun increases the risk of homicide for women in domestic violence situations by 500 percent. Source: “Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study,” by Jacquelyn C. Campbell, et al.

The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) credits Elliott for leading a 900 percent increase in GVROs in California, from 2016-2019, accounting for nearly 40% of the overall total statewide increase, far more than any other agency.

Elliott is California’s top gun violence prevention prosecutor, having removed more than 1,500 firearms through GVROs, preventing multiple violent incidents, including mass shootings.

“San Diego serves as a model of how cities and counties can use California’s red flag laws to prevent gun violence,” said California Attorney General Rob Bonta. “This is a program and strategy we can learn from and seek to replicate in other cities and counties throughout the state.”

California Governor Gavin Newsom and the California Legislature chose Elliott to take the lead in training other law enforcement agencies around the state in effective gun violence prevention strategies. Sadly, nearly two-thirds of Californians surveyed have still never heard of GVROs, according to a 2021 study from U.C. Davis.

**“Gun violence is not inevitable. We have powerful tools for protecting the public from predictable violence. GVROs are a crisis intervention tool. If someone is going through a really hard time, let’s get the guns out of their home and help them get better. We don’t have any interest in removing guns from responsible gun owners,”** says Elliott.

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## Post-oral arguments briefing

Following oral arguments, Elliott will meet with gun violence prevention activists in Southern California to break down the stakes in the *Rahimi* case, while stressing the benefits of GVROs.

### Background

A decade ago, Elliott watched closely as the California Legislature debated the creation of GVROs following a mass shooting at U.C. Santa Barbara, her alma mater. The law took effect in 2016, the same year Elliott overcame a crowded field to win election as San Diego City Attorney. She quickly established California's first comprehensive GVRO program through a collaboration with law enforcement and the courts. The program has confiscated more than 1,000 firearms, preventing multiple violent incidents, including mass shootings, and earning Elliott the reputation as the state's top gun violence prosecutor.

Elliott has also championed some of the most important gun violence prevention legislation in California, including new Safe Storage laws, a ghost gun ban, and an expansion of GVRO training across the state. In 2020, Elliott was overwhelmingly re-elected to a second term. Due to term limits, she will leave office in 2024.

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