



San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

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## **City Attorney's Office Trains Law Enforcement Agencies on Gun Violence Restraining Orders**

*Joined by San Diego Police, Alzheimer's San Diego and PERT Mental Health Experts*

City Attorney Mara W. Elliott led a regional workshop on Gun Violence Restraining Orders yesterday at which more than two dozen government and law enforcement agencies from San Diego County were trained on the processes to obtain court orders that remove firearms from individuals who pose a serious risk to themselves or others.

The City Attorney's Office has obtained 25 GVROs in the past five months against gun owners involving underlying issues including addiction, dementia, and other mental health problems coupled with specific threats of violence or threatening behavior. Three of the GVROs were against students who posed threats to classmates, teachers, or other school employees.

The training was held in conjunction with the San Diego Police Department, Alzheimer's San Diego, and the Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) of the County Health and Human Services Agency.

**"Each of us is here because we're committed to keeping guns from falling into the wrong hands,"** City Attorney Elliott told the gathering at the Central Library downtown. **"We want to teach you what we know, so you have another tool to keep yourselves and your communities safe from irresponsible gun owners."**

More than 60 local law enforcement personnel attended, including representatives from nine cities (Carlsbad, Chula Vista, Escondido, La Mesa, National City, Oceanside, San Diego, San Marcos, and Santee), two universities (SDSU and USD), and six school districts (Escondido Union High School, Grossmont Union High School, San Diego Unified, Sweetwater Union High School, San Ysidro, and Vista Unified school districts).

The training focused on the procedures developed by the Criminal Division of the City Attorney's Office and by then-Assistant Chief (now Chief) David Nisleit of the San Diego Police Department. The process balances the danger posed by irresponsible gun owners with their right to due process. A GVRO is in effect for one year, during which the gun owner can address the issues that led to the court order.

The San Diego City Attorney's Office has been at the forefront of the movement to disarm gun owners before they commit acts of violence, employing a California statute that took effect in 2016. Other states are now adopting similar laws, sometimes known as "Red Flag" laws.

**"We created our own program from scratch, but it's one that can be replicated by any city or any law enforcement agency,"** City Attorney Elliott said. **"This program protects the public from irresponsible gun owners without infringing on anyone's Second Amendment rights."**

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The GVRO training was conducted by Supervising Deputy City Attorney Ryan Scott, who presented an in-depth explanation of the law and the court protocols for obtaining GVROs, as well as case examples. Scott has represented the San Diego Police Department at all 25 GVRO hearings.

Alzheimer's San Diego explained the impacts of aging on gun owners, and PERT focused on recognizing mental health issues and responding to mental health crises.

Adults 65 and older have the highest rate of gun ownership in the United States. In this age group, 60 percent are managing two or more chronic diseases. One in every three persons over the age of 65 is visually impaired, and there is a one-in-nine risk of developing dementia.

Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia cause disorientation and impaired judgment, which impact the ability to safely handle firearms. Family members can use the GVRO to remove guns from the home when the gun owner is not acting responsibly and poses a significant risk of serious harm to themselves and others.

Attached is a handout from the training that gives an overview of the GVRO program

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