PRESS RELEASE

PROSECUTORS FROM ACROSS THE U.S. OPPOSE LEGISLATION THAT WOULD REMOVE REGULATIONS ON GUN SILENCERS

Current Version of SHARE Act Would Eliminate Safeguards Barring Violent Offenders from Obtaining Silencers

Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce E. Dudley along with 28 additional members of Prosecutors Against Gun Violence (PAGV) announced today their strong opposition to provisions in the Sportsmen’s Heritage and Recreational Enhancement Act (“SHARE”) Act which would remove existing gun silencer safety regulations from federal law. The full letter is attached.

“As prosecutors, we are sworn to uphold public safety in our communities. The SHARE Act would threaten that safety by removing gun silencers from regulation under the National Firearms Act, which for decades has prevented felons, domestic abusers, and other people with dangerous histories from obtaining silencers,” wrote PAGV co-chairs Feuer and Vance in a letter regarding the legislation. “Given the challenges of protecting public safety in our communities—including from horrific mass shootings like the one we experienced this week in Las Vegas—and the increased risks to law enforcement, now is exactly the wrong time for Congress to make it easy for people with dangerous histories to buy silencers.”

The SHARE Act would jeopardize not only the safety of the public, but also the safety of the frontline law enforcement officers who work to keep communities safe. The loud and distinctive noise that a gunshot makes allows those who hear gunfire to assess the threat and take steps to protect themselves and those around them. Moreover, current federal law requires all buyers of silencers to pass a background check and comply with other common-sense safety provisions. Thanks to these successful regulations, silencers have been rarely used in connection with criminal activity.

Founded by District Attorney Vance and City Attorney Feuer in 2014, PAGV is a nonpartisan coalition of leading prosecutors, from every region of the United States, committed to advancing prosecutorial and policy solutions to the national public health and safety crisis of gun violence.

To stay up to date with PAGV’s progress, join the mailing list at ProsecutorsAGV.org, and follow PAGV on Facebook and Twitter.

***
October 4, 2017

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker of the House  
Office of the Speaker  
H-232 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515  

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
Office of the Democratic Leader  
H-204 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515  

Re: Prosecutors’ Opposition to the SHARE Act, H.R. 3668

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

We are members of Prosecutors Against Gun Violence (PAGV), a nonpartisan coalition of prosecutors from across this nation, and we write to express our strong opposition to the inclusion of legislation to remove silencer safety regulations as part of the SHARE Act. We were disappointed to see the SHARE Act, which was originally a sportsman’s bill, larded up with dangerous gun provisions that would jeopardize not only the safety of the public, but also of the front-line law enforcement officers who work to keep our communities safe.

As prosecutors, we are sworn to uphold public safety in our communities. The SHARE Act would threaten that safety by, amongst other things, removing gun silencers from the National Firearms Act, which for decades has prevented felons, domestic abusers, and other people with dangerous histories from obtaining silencers. Current federal law requires all buyers of silencers to pass a background check and comply with other common-sense safety provisions. And it is because of these very safeguards – the ones that the SHARE Act seeks to do away with – that silencers are rarely used in crimes. If those important safeguards are eliminated, we are concerned that incidents of silencer crimes will increase and threaten the safety of our communities.

Silencers in the wrong hands create serious public safety risks. The loud and distinctive noise that a gun makes is one of its most important features. When people hear and locate gunfire, they are able to assess the threat, and take steps to protect their safety and the safety of those around them. In mass shootings, being able to hear and identify the gunshots can mean the difference between life and death. For law enforcement, distorting the sound of gunfire through a silencer hinders our ability to quickly respond to shootings, and jeopardizes the safety of our front-line
officers. In Southern California in 2013, for example, Christopher Dorner used silencers to murder innocent victims and ambush police officers who were pursuing him. Silencers enabled Dorner to escape and avoid apprehension by law enforcement during one of the largest manhunts in LAPD history. Additionally, silencers would nullify the usefulness of the ShotSpotter system, which detects the location of gunfire and sends that information to law enforcement. ShotSpotter has significantly enhanced our ability to collect evidence and develop stronger cases against dangerous criminals; silencers would take away this powerful tool.

Given the challenges of protecting public safety in our communities—including from horrific mass shootings like the one we experienced this week in Las Vegas—and the increased risks to law enforcement, now is exactly the wrong time for Congress to make it easy for people with dangerous histories to buy silencers. We hope you will listen to the voices of law enforcement and draft legislation that respects the interests of gun owners while ensuring the safety of those who protect and serve. The current version of the SHARE Act falls short of achieving this important balance.

We welcome the opportunity to further discuss this matter with you.

Sincerely,

Jean Peters Baker  
Jackson County Prosecutor

Richard Brown  
Queens County District Attorney

John Choi  
Ramsey County Attorney

Darcel Clark  
Bronx County District Attorney

Joyce Dudley  
Santa Barbara County District Attorney

Mara Elliot  
San Diego City Attorney

Mike Feuer  
Los Angeles City Attorney

Kimberly Foxx  
Cook County State’s Attorney

Stanley Garnett  
Boulder County District Attorney

Eric Gonzalez  
Acting Kings County District Attorney

Paul Howard  
Fulton County District Attorney

Jackie Lacey  
Los Angeles County District Attorney

Barbara LaWall  
Pima County Attorney

Nancy O’Malley  
Alameda County District Attorney

Beth McCann  
Denver District Attorney

Michael McMahon  
Richmond County District Attorney

Kim Ogg  
Harris County District Attorney
Barbara Parker  
Oakland City Attorney

Jill Ravitch  
Sonoma County District Attorney

Jeff Rosen  
Santa Clara County District Attorney

Katherine Fernandez Rundle  
Miami-Dade State’s Attorney

Dan Satterberg  
King County Prosecuting Attorney

Madeline Singas  
Nassau County District Attorney

Rod Underhill  
Multnomah County District Attorney

Cyrus Vance  
New York County District Attorney

Lynneice Washington  
Jefferson County, Bessemer Cutoff District Attorney

Amy Weirich  
Shelby County District Attorney

Steven Wolfson  
Clara County District Attorney

Kym Worthy  
Wayne County Prosecuting Attorney