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September 5, 2023

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Rivas
1021 O Street, Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SJR-7 Federal constitutional convention: firearms. – OPPOSE

Dear Governor Newsom, President pro Tempore Atkins, and Speaker Rivas:

The Fresno County Board of Supervisors is writing to share our opposition to SJR-7, the “Right to Safety Amendment”, as this amendment seeks to deprive citizens of essential liberties, while further expanding a bureaucracy that has failed to demonstrate evidence in reducing gun crime or mass shootings.

SJR-7 would deprive law abiding citizens between the ages of 18 and 21, full grown adults in the eyes of the law, from the rights enjoyed by American citizens for more than two centuries. The Age of Majority, the age by which the law defines adulthood, is 18 years old in 49 states including California. Even under the supposition of the ratification of the Right to Safety amendment, this legal definition of adulthood would remain unchanged. Further, there is no conclusive data or irrefutable study that shows restricting

firearm ownership to the age of 21 will have any negligible impact on reducing violent gun crime or minimizing the occurrence of mass shootings.

These young adults are qualified to serve or have served this nation's Armed Forces. They will also still be subject to military draft and could - under the concept of this amendment's proponents, still be required to engage in armed combat to kill and die for this nation in wartime but be refused the right to safely defend their homes and families with a civilian firearm upon their return.

SJR-7 also seeks to expand universal background check laws nationwide and apply to every firearm purchase. Studies are mixed and often demonstrate the ineffectiveness of background checks, and while the form of which is not explicitly stated within SJR-7, any hypothetical convention would be forced to address implementation of a universal national system. The U.S. Government Accountability Office's own data indicates the existing National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) is overburdened and grossly ineffective at preventing gun crimes.

This has not prevented the misuse of NICS to deny the constitutional rights of law-abiding citizens, including a quarter-million veterans, for reasons unrelated to criminal or mental health. Further, experts maintain that for any universal background check system to be effective would require a universal gun registration, a massive privacy invasion of every legal gun owner in the country. Considering abuses already made by Federal agencies with the data obtained from current registries, any effort to further expand gun registration is wholly unacceptable and would violate the privacy rights of tens of millions of citizens.

Lastly, SJR-7 seeks to prohibit the ownership of "assault weapons and other weapons of war", terms that are legally nebulous and shifting. Often what separates an "assault weapon" from not is the same firearm with different cosmetic features. If ratified, this amendment will instantly turn tens of millions of law-abiding citizens into criminals if they refuse to surrender their property without compensation.

The "Right to Safety" is a misnomer, as it will fail to provide safety but will deprive millions of otherwise legal citizens the right to defend themselves. While this proposal of the Governor and Legislature will almost assuredly fail in gaining support for a constitutional convention from more than a small handful of states, it is our duty as sworn elected representatives to protect

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the constitutional rights of the citizens of Fresno County. For the reasons above, the Fresno County Board of Supervisors must **oppose** SJR-7.

Sincerely,

Fresno County Board of Supervisors

Sal Quintero, Chairman
District Three

Nathan Magsig, Vice-Chairman
District Five

Brian Pacheco, Supervisor
District One

Steve Brandau, Supervisor
District Two

Ernest Buddy Mendes, Supervisor
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CC: Fresno County Board of Supervisors
Fresno County Legislative Delegation
The Honorable Aisha Wahab, Co-Author
The Honorable Reginald Byron Jones-Sawyer, Co-Author
Honorable Chair and Members, Senate Public Safety Committee
Paul Yoder, Legislative Advocate