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City Attorney Klein Responds to NRA-Backed Group Who Claims Safe Storage Laws Don't Work

Klein says safe storage saves lives despite misinformation campaign by gun lobbyists

COLUMBUS, OH—Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today issued a statement highlighting the important role safe storage laws play in promoting responsible gun ownership and holding individuals accountable for endangering the lives and safety of all children. City Attorney says that despite [recent claims made by an NRA-backed group](#), Columbus' safe storage law is a necessary tool for prosecutors to ensure the safety of children in every home with firearms.

“The vast majority of parents and gun owners agree that if you own a gun, you need to make sure it's locked up so that kids can't access them. That's the idea behind Columbus' safe storage law, which makes it easier for prosecutors to hold individuals accountable if any minor gains access to their weapon. For most people, this is common sense, but for a vocal minority backed by gun lobbyists and the NRA, telling gun owners to be responsible and safely store their weapons is a step too far.

“The gun lobby can say Ohio's child endangerment laws are enough alone to keep kids safe, but that doesn't make it true. Far from it. Columbus passed a safe storage law tailored to these specific cases because Ohio's child endangerment laws don't go far enough to protect all our kids and to allow us to prosecute those who threaten their lives and safety.

“Under Ohio law, endangering children protects only the children of the gun owner—not any of the child's friends who may also be in the home. In fact, it could be argued that the negligent storage of a firearm that results in the death of your child's best friend is not a criminal offense without our safe storage law in place as there is no duty to safely store a firearm in Ohio law.

“Time and again, we hear of a child going over to a friend's house, finding a loaded firearm and pulling the trigger, seriously injuring or

killing one or more children. In the world the NRA and gun lobbyists want us to live in, there's little a prosecutor could do about it.

“Columbus’ safe storage ordinance was enacted because there was a gap in the law that left too many of our most vulnerable children at risk. Striking safe storage and relying solely on endangering children charges would be like getting rid of Ohio’s drunk driving statute in order to rely on reckless operation of a vehicle charges. Yes, some cases would lead to convictions, but many others would fall through the cracks because of the gaps in these general codes.

“I won’t accept that. No family should be denied justice when their child’s life is endangered or ended because a friend’s parent or a neighbor is careless with their firearm. We have laws on the books like OVI and safe storage to fill the gaps in existing law to ensure those who are negligent in their handling of dangerous weapons thereby threatening the lives and safety of children and families are held accountable. That’s why we passed safe storage and it’s why we need to keep it—for our children.”

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