



ZACH KLEIN
COLUMBUS CITY ATTORNEY

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Contact: Pete Shipley, 614.965.0203
Email: pjshipley@columbus.gov

Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein Co-Chairs National Conference of Prosecutors Fighting to Reduce Gun Violence and Hold Criminals Accountable

Prosecutors Against Gun Violence national summit saw prosecutors from across the country gather to discuss gun violence data, trends and best practices to reduce gun crimes

COLUMBUS, OH—Last week, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein joined Bronx County District Attorney Darcel D. Clark to co-chair the 2024 Prosecutors Against Gun Violence (PAGV) National Conference, a gathering of elected prosecutors, practitioners and experts from across the country to discuss the impact of gun violence and how prosecutors' offices are stepping up to address the epidemic in their communities. During the two-day event, City Attorney Klein met with dozens of prosecutors to see how they are working with law enforcement and lawmakers to crack down on gun violence and the proliferation of illegal guns, and to improve public safety.

“Prosecutors, law enforcement and countless Americans in neighborhoods and cities across the country are sounding the alarm about the proliferation of guns that too often fall into the wrong hands, leading to senseless acts of violence,” said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **“As leaders, we have two choices, either do nothing and hope that change is going to happen on its own or come together around commonsense solutions that get deadly weapons off the streets and put violent criminals behind bars. For all of us involved in this fight, the choice is simple. We need to do more to enforce the laws on the books, prosecute violent criminals, and have the political will to change our laws.”**

This year's conference, titled, “Prosecutors and the Other Pandemic: Preventing Gun Violence, Restoring Communities,” brought together some 150 elected prosecutors, practitioners, and experts from various jurisdictions in both red and blue states to discuss how modern-day prosecutor's offices are approaching gun violence at a localized level. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, gun violence has risen at an alarming rate across the United States.

City Attorney Klein spoke on a panel addressing recent legislation and court decisions impacting gun violence, offering his perspective, not only on cases with national implications like *NYSRPA v. Bruen*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a New York state law requiring concealed carry licenses in public places, but also several legal battles his office is leading against Ohio's blanket ban on local gun safety laws, including the implementation of the city's safe storage law and ban on high capacity magazines commonly used in mass shootings.

“What is happening in Ohio is cause for concern nationwide. Lawmakers pass bills that pour unlimited guns into our streets with few restrictions and then tell cities they’re on their own to deal with the consequences,” said City Attorney Klein. **“We’re fighting back because we have an obligation to do something to protect public safety, not only for residents and families in Columbus, but in cities across the country where a number of these guns end up in the wrong hands and lead to violence.”**

The two-day event was held at Fordham University in the Bronx, New York, in partnership with the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA).

PAGV's mission is to advance prosecutorial and policy solutions to end gun violence in America. It is a national, nonpartisan organization made up of prosecutors representing both sides of the aisle.