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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, April 11, 2023  
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**\*\*VIDEO ATTACHED\*\***

## City Attorney Klein Announces Guilty Plea in First Test of City's Safe Storage Law

*Says case highlights need for more, not less, safety measures to keep kids and communities safe*

**COLUMBUS, OH**— Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein today announced that a Columbus man charged in the first case involving the City's recently-passed safe storage ordinance has pleaded guilty to two counts of negligent storage of a firearm and one count of child endangerment. The case involves a child of the defendant accessing and discharging a firearm owned by the defendant, which nearly struck the child, causing burns and short term hearing loss as another child looked on.\*\*

**"As a father, the images of a small child reaching into a couch cushion, finding a loaded firearm and discharging the weapon nearly pointed at his face are almost too chilling to watch,"** said Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein. **"There's nothing wrong with responsible gun ownership, but leaving an unsecured gun around house for kids to find is not responsible. That's why it's important that the City passed its safe storage law, and why we will continue to defend our right to enact commonsense measures to keep our kids and communities safe. Too often, these incidents end in tragedy, but the fact is they are almost always preventable."**

The defendant in the case, Matthew Rivas, entered a guilty plea before Franklin County Municipal Court Judge Jarrod B. Skinner. The sentence rendered by Judge Skinner was a joint recommendation after lengthy discussion with the mother of two of the juvenile victims in the case, and includes 10 days in jail, 170 days jail suspended, a \$150 fine, two years of probation, and mandating that the firearm used in the incident be confiscated and destroyed. As part of the plea, the defendant must not own, possess or use a firearm for the duration of the probation period.

**"A parent's worst nightmare is that something or someone will hurt, possibly kill your child, but to know that it can happen in the care of someone who is supposed to protect them is heartbreaking,"** said Lashawndra Allen, the mother of two of the juvenile victims in the case. **"We cannot control everything that happens to our children but we can lower their chances of being hurt at our hands by practicing gun**

**safety. Talking to our children about guns is not enough, especially with young children. I cannot stress enough the importance of exercising gun safety and using a gunlock or safe. We were lucky and I am very thankful that the situation did not result in a funeral. This will forever be a critical memory for me and my family. I hope to spread awareness about gun safety and eliminate events like this from happening in the future."**

The case comes amid multiple lawsuits being pushed by the State of Ohio and the Buckeye Institute against the City's recently passed gun safety ordinances, including measures to require safe storage of firearms in homes so that minors cannot access the weapons, limits on high capacity magazines, and steps to make it easier for prosecutors to go after individuals who sell firearms to those otherwise prohibited from owning or possessing a firearm, including those convicted of domestic violence.

**"My heart breaks for these children whose innocence and sense of safety have been lost in what's a wholly preventable situation,"** said Joseph Gibson, the City's Chief Prosecutor who represented the City in this case. **"This case is a clear cut example of why safe storage is so important to public safety and a reminder that the City is serious about holding those who endanger children accountable."**

***\*\*Video obtained from inside the defendant's home depicting the incident is attached. The child can be seen discharging the firearm at the 20-second mark. The defendant discharges the firearm again at the 48-second mark.***

[Video Recording](#)

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