

From: [LWV of Palo Alto](#)
To: [Council, City](#)
Subject: March 6 special meeting: Action Item 10-- public comment
Date: Friday, March 3, 2023 11:36:10 AM
Attachments: [sensitiveplaceord.docx](#)

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The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto supports the emergency ordinance banning firearms in sensitive places. The League requests that "sensitive places" be expanded to include all places where people assemble to practice democracy and houses of worship. Our letter is attached.

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League of Women Voters of Palo Alto

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To: Honorable Mayor Kou, Vice Mayor Stone, and City Council members:

Re: Action Item 10, March 6 Special City Council Meeting; ban of firearms in sensitive places

The League of Women Voters of Palo Alto (LWVPA) strongly supports an emergency city ordinance banning the carrying of firearms in “sensitive places” as a result of the Supreme Court ruling in N.Y.State Rifle and Pistol Assn. v. Bruen, which invalidated permitting requirements for concealed carry of firearms. The emergency we face is the rising number of mass shootings, the high rate of deaths from guns, and the use of violence as an intimidation tactic to threaten people who choose to participate in democracy including poll workers, elected officials, librarians, voters, and protesters.¹ (<https://health.ucdavis.edu/vprp/> and Santa Clara County’s 2022 report: “Cost of Gun Violence in Santa Clara County”.)

The emergency ordinance would ban firearms from any government buildings; any polling place; any public or private school, including preschools, and all related facilities such as athletic and research facilities, parking lots, and health facilities. Additional ‘sensitive sites’ would be identified by an ad-hoc committee which would complete its work within 90 days.

LWVPA strongly urges the city to expand “sensitive places” to include houses of worship, sites of public demonstrations and rallies, and streets and sidewalks within 1000 feet of sensitive places, parks, playgrounds, stadiums, and libraries, following the example of a similar Sunnyvale ordinance and a state bill.

These additional “sensitive places” are where people congregate or participate in democracy; they are places where emotions and tensions can flare. Ideally, these “sensitive places” should be included in the emergency ordinance, effective immediately. Alternatively, they should be added by the ad-hoc committee.

This emergency ordinance is an urgent matter of public safety. People may not attend city council or school board meetings or avoid civic and public or private activities for fear of gun violence. It’s time to protect democracy from armed intimidation and address our public health crisis of gun violence.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Liz Kniss".

Liz Kniss, President, LWV of Palo Alto

¹ LWVUS position on guns is to protect the health and safety of citizens through limiting the accessibility and regulating the ownership of handguns and semi-automatic weapons and supports the regulation of firearms for consumer safety.