



Where as, our nation's prosecutors maintain a special role within the community through which they can decrease the number of gun-related crimes occurring each year. Prosecutors, as community leaders, in partnership with criminal justice partners and the public, should be committed to curbing gun violence and illegal gun related crime.

The following statement of principles manifests our commitment to assist federal, state, local and tribal prosecutors in reducing gun related violence in the United States and the number of illegal guns on our streets.

Statement of Principles

As a national association dedicated to supporting and enhancing the effectiveness of prosecutors in their efforts to create safer communities, the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) creates this statement of principles regarding gun violence and illegal gun related crime to assist prosecutors in their effort to ensure justice and promote public safety.

- The number of citizens and communities affected annually by gun violence must be reduced and requires immediate attention from federal, state, local, and tribal prosecutors, legislative bodies, law enforcement agencies, the courts, and the community.*
- The enforcement of gun-related laws must be a high priority for prosecutors. Prosecutors should exercise their charging function and seek to hold those who are committing violence with guns as well as those selling or trafficking illegal guns accountable to the full extent of the law.*
- Prosecutors should advocate for appropriate sentences from judicial officers for those who commit such offenses, including restricting their right to possess guns where appropriate and lawful.*
- Prosecutors should work with legislative bodies to ensure that laws designed to keep guns out of the hands of minors, felons, the mentally ill, persons convicted of domestic violence crimes, and terrorists are effective and enforceable and that the regulatory system supporting those restrictions actually works*
- Because prosecutors are in a position to foster partnerships between law enforcement agencies and other criminal justice partners, prosecutors should focus on collaborative strategies based in information sharing and best practices in order to reduce the gun-related violence taking place in our communities and the number of illegal guns on our streets.*
- Prosecutors should work collaboratively with criminal justice system partners to advocate for sufficient resources for the criminal justice system to effectively hold violators accountable and protect the public from gun-related violence.*
- Prosecutors and their law enforcement partners should assist in tracing efforts to reduce the use and sale of illegal guns.*
- Prosecutors and their law enforcement partners should target those trafficking or dealing in illegal guns and the use of "straw" sales should be closely monitored in an effort to keep illegal guns out of the hands of criminals.*
- Prosecutors should work with criminal justice partners to educate community members on the importance of abiding by gun regulations in order to reduce gun-related crimes and the possession of illegal or stolen guns.*
- Prosecutors, law enforcement, and other criminal justice partners should engage community members in efforts to prevent gun-related violence and illegal gun crimes.*