



LCAV Case Study **Facilitating Regional Collaboration to Curb Gun Violence – Outreach and Education to Help Suburban Chicago Communities Curb Gun Violence**

The Challenge: The City of Chicago has among the toughest gun laws in the nation, including a ban on the sale and possession of handguns and extensive regulation of firearms dealers. By contrast, surrounding suburban jurisdictions demonstrate, at best, a more haphazard approach to firearms regulation. As a result, gang members and other criminals in Chicago have ready access to illegal weapons outside the city limits. Studies show that more than half of all crime guns recovered in Chicago were first purchased within Illinois, and the vast majority of those were purchased in Cook County or an adjacent county, just outside the reach of the City's restrictive ordinances.

LCAV's Role: LCAV has been involved in a multi-dimensional approach to help suburban communities fight gun violence and stem the flow of illegal weapons. In January 2002, LCAV joined forces with Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley when he announced an initiative to encourage suburban municipalities to enact stronger local ordinances. Officials from twelve suburbs were also on hand to signal their commitment to the local ordinance initiative. These officials pledged to enact local ordinances to license gun dealers and to ban the sale and possession of assault weapons. LCAV and its network of *pro bono* Illinois lawyers committed to provide free legal assistance to those communities as part of that effort.

In January 2003, LCAV presented a workshop, co-sponsored by the City of Chicago/Office of the Mayor, the Northwest Municipal Conference, the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, and the Southwest Conference of Local Governments, for suburban officials to educate them on the need for local gun regulation. Representatives of at least 15 local jurisdictions, including many of the City's partners in the local ordinance initiative, attended the meeting, during which they learned about the role of local Illinois governments in regulating firearms; strategies and resources for achieving effective, sustainable regulation; and assistance available from LCAV to realize these goals.

Beginning immediately after the January 2003 workshop, LCAV responded to a series of requests for legal assistance from suburban jurisdictions anxious to review and strengthen their existing firearms ordinances. In one such case, LCAV attorneys worked with the mayor and police chief in a south suburban community that is home to one licensed gun shop. LCAV reviewed their existing ordinance, researched the viability of various alternative approaches suggested by the local officials, and prepared a detailed written analysis setting forth specific regulatory options.

Results: LCAV's outreach to suburban communities continues to generate requests by officials seeking to reduce gun violence with stronger local ordinances. In addition to the south suburban jurisdiction mentioned above, LCAV has assisted several other local Illinois communities to lay the legal groundwork necessary to accomplish legislative reform.

LCAV is a public interest law center dedicated to preventing gun violence. Formed in the wake of the 1993 assault weapon massacre at 101 California Street in San Francisco, LCAV provides free legal assistance to activists and public officials, including law enforcement and government attorneys, working to prevent gun violence. To learn more about our services or to request assistance, visit our web site, www.lcav.org, the nation's most comprehensive source for information on U.S. firearms regulation.

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