

## For Immediate Release

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Des Moines, Iowa – July 1, 2010 – On July 1, a new law will go into effect which will ban firearm possession for domestic abusers. The bill would prohibit possession of firearms by persons who are the subjects of domestic abuse protective orders or have been convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic abuse.

Since 1995, over two hundred Iowans have been killed in domestic abuse murders; 111 of these murders involved guns. This new law will help prevent the violence, terror, and death that occurs when domestic abuse is mixed with easy access to guns. Since 1994, federal law has prohibited possession of firearms by a person who is the subject of a domestic abuse protective order or has been convicted of a crime of domestic abuse. But federal law was not being adequately enforced in Iowa because there are not enough federal agents for enforcement and Iowa law enforcement officials are hesitant to enforce federal law. This new law gives legal authority to local law enforcement to enforce the firearms ban for domestic abusers.

This law also fairly protects the rights of gun owners by requiring due process. The prohibition cannot occur in the context of a temporary order which can be granted with only one side in court. When the final protective order ends, the prohibition on guns ends too.

The gun owner can choose between several alternatives to dispose of his or her weapons and comply with the law. The gun owner can sell or transfer the guns to a qualified person designated by the judge (such as a family member), or relinquish the guns to a local law enforcement agency for storage. There are no surprises as far as timing – the judge sets a date certain by which guns must be transferred. As long as the gun owner no longer possesses the firearm by that date, he has followed the law. Violation of the new state law is a class D felony.

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