



NEWS from the Shelby County Mayor's Office

Lee Harris, Mayor

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11th Floor, 160 North Main, Memphis, Tennessee 38103

MEDIA RELEASE

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SHELBY COUNTY GOVERNMENT, MAYOR LEE HARRIS, AND REP. JOHN GILLESPIE ANNOUNCE EFFORT TO EXPAND COUNTY COUNCIL ON GUN SAFETY'S FREE GUN LOCK BY MAIL PROGRAM STATEWIDE

One year ago, dozens of Shelby County residents gathered to make impactful changes on gun safety in our community and created the country's first free gun lock by mail program by a local government.

- WHO:** Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, Shelby County Commissioner Charlie Caswell, Shelby County Commissioner Mick Wright, Representative John Gillespie, and members of the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety
- WHAT:** A Gun Safety Awareness Month announcement with the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety
- WHEN:** Wednesday, June 28, 2023, at 3:30 p.m.
- WHERE:** Central Ave. and E. Parkway S., Memphis, TN (under the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety billboard)

Shelby County, TN – On Wednesday, June 28, 2023, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris, Shelby County Commissioners, and Tennessee State Representatives will recognize members of the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety for their work to increase public safety in our community and announce efforts to expand the Council's work statewide. Over the last year, the Council on Gun Safety, made up of more than two dozen residents from all walks of life, met regularly, attended community events, and presented ideas to decrease unintended gun tragedies, suicides, and the proliferation of guns on the streets of Shelby County.

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One initiative to come from the Council on Gun Safety's work is Shelby County's Free Gun Lock By Mail program. More than 700 Shelby County residents, representing all zip codes in Shelby County, have requested a gun lock online and received it through the mail since the program was rolled out this year. Gun locks are key to preventing unintended gun tragedies.

The Free Gun Lock By Mail program is a first-of-its-kind program by a local government in the United States. In a memo about gun safety following the shooting at The Covenant School in Nashville, mayors of Tennessee's metro areas urged Governor Bill Lee to adopt a program like the Shelby County Free Gun Lock By Mail program and implement it statewide.

Mayor Harris has made a statewide Free Gun Lock By Mail program part of his legislative agenda. In an outstanding show of bipartisanship, both Democrats and Republicans from Shelby County have supported this program and Representative John Gillespie has committed to sponsoring a bill to put this program in the state's budget during the next legislative session.

All members of the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety will be honored at this event during Gun Safety Awareness Month.

About the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety:

In June 2022, Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris and his administration formed the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety. The Council sought to address the high number of unintended tragedies by guns, including accidental youth shootings, the rise in suicide rates, and the proliferation of guns in Shelby County. Memphis has topped the national list of the most unintentional youth shootings according to the Safe Tennessee Project. Everytown For Gun Safety reports that every 12 hours someone in Tennessee dies by suicide with a firearm. The same group reports Memphis leads the nation in number of guns stolen from cars. Memphis Police say those guns are used in 40 percent of the city's crime. The Council is made up of youth, Second Amendment advocates, those who have lost loved ones to gun violence, and more.

Shelby County Mayor Lee Harris: "The Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety has come up with solutions to boost public safety in our community and keep more residents across Tennessee safe. Our Gun Lock By Mail program is the first of its kind by a local government and will decrease unintentional tragedies, suicides, and the risk of guns getting into the wrong hands. Now, I plan to put this program on my next legislative agenda and advocate alongside Rep. Gillespie for a similar program at the state level."



Representative John Gillespie: “I am proud a Shelby County model on gun safety can become one we see across the state. The Free Gun Lock By Mail Program is a simple and financially responsible solution to unintended tragedies, gun violence, and suicide. I am pleased to bring this model to the Statehouse during our next Legislative Session, so Tennessee residents have more options to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

Representative G.A. Hardaway: “For years I have worked with Shelby County families impacted by gun violence. We must do more to help them and prevent more people from becoming victims. The ideas coming from the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety are a reminder that we all want to be a part of making our community a better place. I’m eager to work to get the Council’s Free Gun Lock By Mail program implemented statewide.”

Shelby County Commissioner Mick Wright: “Residents are fed up with gun violence in our community. It’s important, as their representatives, we listen to their concerns and involve them in the process. The Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety does exactly that. These residents are serious about taking back their city and their work will go a long way to contribute to public safety in Shelby County.”

Shelby County Commissioner Charlie Caswell: “I applaud the work of the Shelby County Council on Gun Safety. As Co-Chair of the Shelby County Public Safety Ad Hoc Committee, and as a pastor, public safety is a top priority of mine and it takes all of us working together to come up with innovative, collaborative, and effective solutions.”

Jerri Green, Senior Policy Advisor for Mayor Lee Harris: “Shelby County residents want to be part of the public safety solution. That’s why we formed the Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety. It brings together all residents from gun owners to those who have been impacted by gun violence to our youth. These individuals dedicated their time to come up with solutions to better our whole community. Because of their work, now hundreds more Shelby County residents are taking gun safety seriously and saving lives.”

Jaila Hampton, Shelby County Government Council on Gun Safety Member: “I was inspired to become a member of the Shelby County Council on Gun Safety because I am a member of the next generation of leaders. I want myself and my peers to experience a brighter future. I am proud of the work the Council has done to combat the proliferation of guns in our community. I hope our work can save lives.”



(End of Release)