



March 11, 2021

The Honorable Dave Min
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 2048
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 264 – OPPOSE
As Amended February 24, 2021**

Dear Senator Min:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I regret to inform you of our opposition to your Senate Bill 264, which would prohibit the sale of firearms on any state- and county-owned property. While RCRC generally does not engage on legislation dealing with firearms, we believe our involvement on this particular bill is warranted. It should also be noted that we were concerned about SB 264 prior to the February 24th amendments; however, the inclusion of county-owned property is deeply concerning.

RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county. The health and viability of each county's local fair and fairgrounds – whether state-owned/operated or county-owned - is a high priority of our member counties. These fairs and fairgrounds are an integral asset to many counties throughout the state, particularly in rural California.

Over the past two decades, District Agriculture Association (DAA)/county fairs have been financially struggling and are at a near breaking point. Prior to 2009-10, funding support for fairs was generated through pari-mutuel horse racing licensing fees. In 2009-2010, this funding source was replaced by a General Fund appropriation, which was subsequently eliminated in 2011-2012. After several years of financial neglect, the Legislature enacted Assembly Bill 1499 (Gray; 2017). AB 1499 requires the state's portion of sales and use tax received within the property of a state-designated fair to be transferred to the Fair and Exposition Fund in support of facility improvements at fairgrounds.

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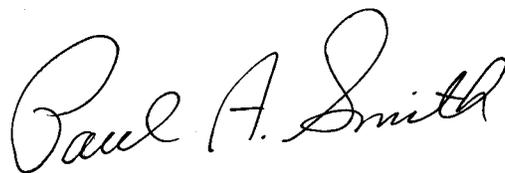
California's fairgrounds play a major role in the economies of the communities/counties where they are located. Beyond the annual "fair" event filled with corndogs and Ferris wheels, fair facilities host hundreds of events year-round. These facilities are home to various events such as gun shows, dog shows, RV shows, bridal shows, and other retail opportunities. SB 264 would prohibit these fairs from holding gun shows and as a result erode the revenue stream that would be derived from legal gun shows on these premises.

Firearms and firearm components are legal products that are already heavily regulated at both the federal and state level. As such, we do not see why the sale of a firearm and firearm components should be prohibited from state- or county-owned properties, especially on fairgrounds. Throughout the nation, there has been no evidence of mass shootings that have occurred which were a result of the weapon being obtained improperly at a county fairground property. We also do not see how such restrictions would impede gun violence. Quite frankly, SB 264 simply creates winners and losers in the retail firearm industry, and would drive firearm consumers to other retailers, including those that operate out-of-state.

Finally, we do not believe that a statewide approach is warranted. We believe each DAA or county-operated fair should be able to make the decision on when, what, and how retail formats occur at each property. The inclusion of a prohibition on the sale of an otherwise legal product on county-owned property, primarily on county fairgrounds, can only be seen as an intrusion into local authority that should be solely determined by the elected county officials. Additionally, we suggest putting a pause in applying restrictions on gun shows on state-owned DAA property for reasons outlined above.

For these reasons, we must respectfully oppose SB 264. If you should have any questions or concerns, please contact me at psmith@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul A. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

PAUL A. SMITH
Senior Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: Members of the Senate Public Safety Committee
Consultant, Senate Public Safety Committee
Eric Csizmar, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus