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LARGE MAJORITY OF CALIFORNIA
PUBLIC TODAY FAVORS GUN
RESTRICTION LAW

by Mervin D. Field

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Public opinion in California today strongly favors legislation which would require every citizen who owns or buys a gun to register the gun with law enforcement agencies.

A recent California Poll survey finds that four out of five members of the adult public (79%) say they would approve of such a law. Even people who own guns strongly approve of such a law -- 69% of them say they would be in favor of a registration law.

Support of Californians for restrictions on the buying and possession of guns runs parallel to survey results obtained nationally by the Gallup Poll and by polling organizations in other states. For example, the Gallup Poll found earlier this year that three out of four citizens in the U.S. would favor a law requiring a police permit before a gun could be purchased, and would either forbid completely or put restrictions on use of guns by people under 18 years of age.

Possession of firearms in the United States is less restricted than it is in any other major nation of the world. More than half of the states have no restrictions at all on the sale of firearms, and anyone, even children, may buy and use them.

It has been estimated that 17,000 people annually are killed with firearms in the U.S.

The case for such a law centers around the argument that it would cut down on the ease with which criminals can get guns and would prevent firearms from getting into the hands of people who are emotionally disturbed, or immature teenagers. Proponents of restrictive laws point to the fact that President Kennedy's assassin used a gun which was sold to him by mail. The case of Charles Whitman,

(MORE)

a University of Texas student who massacred 14 people and wounded many others in a wild shooting orgy, has also apparently increased public desire for more restrictions on the possession of guns.

Those who advocate going slow on adopting restrictive measures of possession of guns point to the Second Amendment of the Constitution which guarantees the right to keep and bear arms.

While possession of firearms has not been made an issue in the current gubernatorial campaign, the two leading candidates appear to be in opposition in the issue. Governor Brown says he backs President Johnson's effort to control the indiscriminate sale of guns, and supports the Dodd gun control bill now pending in Congress. Republican candidate Ronald Reagan has been reported to advocate going slow on placing any more restrictions on the possession and sale of guns.

"Would you approve or disapprove of a law which would require every citizen who owns or buys a gun to register the gun with law enforcement agencies?"

	<u>Approve</u>	<u>Disapprove</u>	<u>Qualified</u>	<u>No opinion</u>
Statewide	79%	17	2	2
Southern California	78%	20	1	1
Northern California	82%	12	4	2
Democrats	80%	15	3	2
Republicans	76%	21	1	2
Own a gun	69%	26	4	1
Do not own a gun	86%	11	1	2
Male	70%	25	3	2
Female	87%	9	2	2
21 - 29 years	75%	20	3	2
30 - 39	76%	22	2	*
40 - 49	83%	14	3	-
50 - 59	81%	15	2	2
60 - 69	80%	13	3	4
70 or older	79%	14	2	5

*Less than 1/2 of one percent.