

What is San Francisco's Proposition H?

Proposition H is one of the most radical gun control ordinances to be proposed in any U.S. city - one that sacrifices the safety of individual citizens for the posturing of cynical politicians. It is an ill-conceived attempt that will punish those who obey the law and reward those who violate it. **Prop. H would:**

Totally ban handguns: Prop. H requires that handguns owned by law-abiding San Francisco residents be disposed of or turned into the police.

Ban the sale, manufacture and distribution of all firearms: Current owners of rifles and shotguns would not be allowed to transfer their firearms to anyone, even family members. It would prohibit sales of any firearms

No compensation provided for law-abiding gun owners: Prop. H sets no reimbursement for private property surrendered to the police.

No penalties set for violating ban: Voters are being asked to approve a proposal with undefined consequences. Prop. H leaves the issue of penalties open, allowing the Board of Supervisors to set any punishment allowed by California law.

Unlimited power given to the Board of Supervisors: Prop. H's Section 8 states: "By a two-thirds vote and upon making findings, the Board of Supervisors may amend this ordinance in the furtherance of reducing handgun violence." Eight Supervisors can do anything they want to expand the scope of the proposition if it passes.

Banning firearms is not a progressive cause: Organizations including the Coalition for San Francisco Neighborhoods, the Libertarian Party of San Francisco and the San Francisco Pink Pistols oppose Prop. H, because it denies citizens the means to defend themselves against crime, including hate crime.

Taxpayers to pay for costly legal battle: Prop. H sponsors have not done their homework. A long-standing California preemption statute prohibits cities from passing a patchwork of conflicting gun laws. If Prop. H does pass, taxpayers will have to pay for a costly lawsuit that San Francisco may very well lose, as it has done in the past.

Discriminates against San Francisco residents: Visitors to the city may possess handguns as long as they obey other applicable laws.

Prop H will bring exactly the opposite results that its proponents claim. In other U.S. cities that have banned guns, crime did not go down—it increased. In the years following the D.C. ban, where crime had been trending down, crime rose sharply. In the ensuing years, Washington, D.C., became the murder capital of the nation.

Making San Francisco a magnet for violent crime: The passage of Prop. H may make criminals laugh, but it won't make them turn in their guns. Most criminals get their guns illegally, and felons who merely possess firearms are already committing a serious federal crime.

Diverting already stretched police resources: "Violent criminals who prey on San Francisco's residents and visitors have a better chance of getting away with their crime than predators in any other large American city." (San Francisco Chronicle, May 19, 2002). Can San Francisco really afford to divert law enforcement time and money from apprehending and arresting violent criminals to trying to enforce Prop. H?

Roadblocks, random searches of houses or neighborhoods: How exactly does the Board of Supervisors intend police to enforce Prop. H without violating San Franciscans' Fourth Amendment rights? How can Prop. H be enforced without violating someone's privacy and civil liberties?

Prop. H will leave law-abiding men and women defenseless: Prohibiting the right of individual San Franciscans to choose their means of defense against robbers, rapists, gang bangers, stalkers or home invaders denies a constitutionally protected civil liberty.

San Francisco already has some of the most stringent firearms laws in the nation. It's time to start getting tough with criminals who violate those laws and time to respect the civil liberties - including the right to self-defense - of law-abiding residents.