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## **New Bi-Partisan Voter Poll Shows Overwhelming Support for Laws to Reduce Gun Violence**

### *Statewide Campaign Launched to Promote Common Sense Gun Laws*

**Chicago/Springfield (March 21, 2007)**-The Illinois Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence (ICPGV), a project of Legal Community Against Violence, today announced in press events in both Chicago and Springfield the results of the largest and first-ever publicly released bi-partisan poll commissioned to gauge voters' attitudes about proposed changes to state gun laws. ICPGV is a new statewide campaign, representing law enforcement, the medical and public health communities, faith-based organizations, local and state policymakers and advocacy groups. It was formed to break the gridlock in Springfield on passing common sense laws to prevent gun violence and crime. From 1999 to 2004 guns killed 6,999 Illinois residents, including 1,039 children.

The results of the unprecedented statewide survey show overwhelming voter support statewide for six new gun laws to prevent these epidemic levels of gun violence. With respect to the sales of military style weapons, 8 in 10 Illinois voters favor a law to ban assault weapons, and 77% of voters support a law to ban powerful 50-caliber sniper rifles. "These polling numbers speak loudly and should trump the vocal but very, very small minority of voters represented by the gun lobby in Springfield," said Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart. "Military style assault weapons and powerful 50-caliber sniper rifles have no place in any community in Illinois. They are weapons designed for the battlefield, pure and simple."

Three of the proposed laws specifically address handgun violence. An overwhelming majority of voters (85%) strongly support laws requiring handgun dealers to obtain a state license, with no difference among Republicans (84%) and Democrats (86%). A proposal to require background checks on all handgun sales received strong support from 80 % of voters and a law to limit handgun sales to one per person per month is either strongly or somewhat favored by 7 out of 10 of voters.

"The fact is that no community is immune from gun violence," said Gurnee Police Chief Bob Jones, past president of the Illinois Association of Chiefs of Police. "Gang related crime is spilling out of the cities. We need to be able to stop

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the flow of illegal guns by requiring state licensing just like we do for other businesses, and putting limits on handgun purchases to prevent the relatively small number of unethical sellers who supply these weapons.”

Laws that would require greater gun owner responsibility are also favored by nearly all voters, with 86% strongly supporting a requirement that gun owners inform law enforcement if any of their guns are lost or stolen. Eight in 10 voters are also strongly in favor of requiring gun owners to lock their guns if there are children under age 18 in the household.

“For every person who dies from a gunshot wound, two others are injured by firearms. These deaths and injuries represent lives, families and communities shattered,” said Susan Avila, RN, MPH, Department of Trauma, Cook County Stroger Hospital. “Medical professionals can only do so much. Studies show that we can prevent this needless and costly gun violence with laws that limit access to firearms.”

Nina Vinik, Legal Director of Legal Community Against Violence (LCAV) added, “We have long known that these sensible policies are needed to address the problem of gun crime and violence in Illinois. Now we know that Illinois voters overwhelmingly agree.”

The bipartisan team of Overbrook Research (R) and Lake Research Partners (D) conducted the statewide poll of 603 voters, as well as additional surveys of 300 voters each (1,200) in four state senate districts. Support for the proposed gun laws was equally strong in all four districts, with majorities favoring each of the policies whether heavily Republican or Democrat.

More information about ICPGV, including policy fact sheets providing a brief analysis of each of the proposed changes to state law as well as the polling results can be found at [www.icpgv.org](http://www.icpgv.org).

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*Legal Community Against Violence is a public interest law center dedicated to preventing gun violence. LCAV focuses on policy reform at the state and local levels and serves public officials and activists working to prevent gun violence. Founded by lawyers in response to the tragic shooting at 101 California Street in San Francisco in 1993, LCAV is the country's only organization devoted exclusively to providing legal assistance in support of gun violence prevention.*