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**THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS**  
*of New York State*

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:  
A.8293A Paulin**

**TO: New York State Assembly**

**DATE: May 9, 2014**

**SUBJECT: *An act to amend the penal law and the general business law, in relation to safe weapon storage***

**The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly supports A.8293A, which would require the safe storage of all guns not in the immediate possession or control of the gun owner, either in a safe storage depository or with a locking device, to prevent access by children and others who should not have access to them.**

The League has long been a proponent of gun safety legislation and applauded the legislature and Governor last year for their passage of the NY Safe Act. However, while the NY Safe Act provides New Yorkers with some of the nation's strongest gun safety laws, it omitted an important "Child Access Prevention" (CAP) provision to aimed to prevent firearm injuries to children by limiting their access to guns and to hold gun owners responsible if they leave guns accessible to children or otherwise allow children to obtain firearms. It is time to correct that omission and pass CAP legislation as more than half the states in the nation have.

In the United States, nearly 2 million children live in homes where they have easy access to loaded or unlocked guns.<sup>1</sup> In New York State alone, 38% of gun owners have reported unsafe storage practices.<sup>2</sup> Poor gun storage is directly correlated to accidental gun-related death and injury. Each year in New York State an average of 210 children ages 19 and under receive hospital treatment due to unintentional firearm injury.<sup>3</sup> That average is likely higher, as a New

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<sup>1</sup> Firearm Ownership and Safe Storage in New York State, NY State Department of Health, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Id.

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury\\_prevention/children/fact\\_sheets/birth---19\\_years/firearm\\_injuries\\_birth---19\\_years.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/children/fact_sheets/birth---19_years/firearm_injuries_birth---19_years.htm).

York Times review found accidental gun deaths of children are seriously under-reported.<sup>4</sup> In addition to preventing such tragic accidents, safe storage can also reduce suicides, particularly by youth who may reach for an available firearm in a moment of distress. Studies indicate mere presence of an available firearm the house increases teen suicide. Firearms were used in nearly 44% of US suicide deaths among persons under age 25 in 2010.<sup>5</sup>

New York needs to do more to keep guns out of the hands of children to prevent needless death and injury. A8293A will enhance public safety by reducing the instance of unintentional shootings, suicides, homicides and accidents, since gun owners who leave guns accessible to children or unauthorized persons will now be criminally liable. In addition, since locked and stored guns are less likely to be stolen, A8293A will also help keep guns out of criminal hands.

***The League of Women Voters of New York State strongly urges your support of A.8293A.***

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/09/29/us/children-and-guns-the-hidden-toll.html>

<sup>5</sup> Nat'l Ctr. for Injury Prevention & Control, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Web-Based Injury Statistics Query & Reporting System (WISQARS) Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2010, for National, Regional, and States (Dec. 2012), [http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/dataRestriction\\_inj.html](http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/dataRestriction_inj.html) (hereinafter WISQARS Injury Mortality Reports, 1999-2010. Note: Users must agree to data use restrictions on the CDC site prior to accessing data)