



# ***Law Enforcement Legislative Coalition***

13354 Manchester Rd Suite 210 Des Peres, MO 63131

Website: [www.lelc.us](http://www.lelc.us)

Email: [lelcusinfo@gmail.com](mailto:lelcusinfo@gmail.com)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**To set up an interview, please contact:**

**Chris DiGiuseppi – 636-673-5831**

**Kurt Frisz – 636-357-4277**

**Steve Lewis – 314-814-6020**

**Mike Weigand – 314-920-9844**

## **SAPA IS ANTI-POLICE, ANTI-VETERAN AND ANTI-GUN OWNER**

The Law Enforcement Legislative Coalition representing Police Chiefs and Law Enforcement leaders across the State of Missouri are voicing their concerns over a recent Missouri Senate Bill that's attempting to bring back the Second Amendment Preservation Act which was deemed unconstitutional by Federal Courts in 2024. LELC Leaders affirmatively state that SAPA actually hurt gun owners, was anti-police and was discriminatory against veterans in hiring. Police Chief Chris DiGiuseppi clarified that the Second Amendment Preservation Act yielded legal opinions from multiple legal counsel and insurance carriers for local governments that forced police departments to stop entering stolen firearms into the NCIC system, a system used to return stolen guns to their rightful owners. "Some of our police departments were prohibited from entering stolen firearms into the computer due to the prohibition on tracking within SAPA. This meant that law enforcement would not be able to identify the legal owner and return the gun, once located." Furthermore, DiGiuseppi said that if this gun were to be used in a crime, it would be seized and most likely destroyed. "We can't determine who owns the gun and therefore it would be held in an evidence lock-up/holdover and most likely destroyed when the case was completely adjudicated. That's NOT protecting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment rights of those gun owners." DiGiuseppi further commented that this would make Missouri a safe-haven for selling and receiving stolen guns, while victimizing law-abiding gun owners.

Chief Kurt Frisz, President of the LELC, stated that gun lobbyists were attempting to manipulate law makers and were not prioritizing gun owners, "this is a money-making endeavor for a very small group of gun lobbyists who are trying to capitalize on the publicity instead of prioritizing second amendment rights. Our organization is trying to protect gun owners and victims of crime."

Chief Steve Lewis, Vice President of the LELC, commented on SAPA's other effects on law enforcement. "The law had language written in it that prohibited the recoupment of attorney's fees for local governments and the elimination of immunities for all police officers in order to make suing police officers and police departments easier, according to our legal advisors." Lewis said that law enforcement agencies would have had to defend frivolous litigation using taxpayer dollars, with no chance of recovery or deterring future frivolous claims from the same individuals. "It's a waste of money and it encroaches on our ability to police and lower crime."

Chief Mike Weigand, LELC Executive Board member, also stated that there were hiring restrictions in the previous SAPA law that discriminated against the hiring of veterans. He went on to explain that SAPA had a hiring restriction that prevented state or local governments from hiring anyone who worked for the federal government and participated in a federal gun case. "If we have a military police officer (a long standing and valuable source of recruits for police departments) who worked at one of the military bases within the state and participated in federal gun cases this may prevent us from hiring them." Weigand went on to state that this was problematic as federal law prohibits discrimination against military veterans for their military service. "Military veterans have risked their lives defending our freedoms, prohibitions on hiring them based on their military services is wrong."

LELC leaders are currently working with law makers to attempt to ensure that any new law does not make the same illegal and unconstitutional mistakes that the last law did by hindering or encroaching on law abiding gun owners, police officers or military veterans.

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