

Los Angeles Times

L.A. mayor and police chief back federal ban on large-capacity ammunition magazines

March 2, 2011

Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, Police Chief Charlie Beck and other top officials voiced their support Wednesday for federal legislation that would ban large-capacity ammunition magazines such as the one used by the alleged gunman in the Tucson shooting rampage.

“It boils down to simple math: It’s 20 lives,” said Beck, describing the difference between a 10- and 30-round magazine attached to a weapon.

The pending federal law — H.R. 308, sponsored by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (D-N.Y.) — would ban magazines that hold more than 10 rounds. Chances of its passage are considered slim amid strong opposition from gun-rights advocates.

A large-capacity magazine was used in the January rampage in Tucson that left six dead and 13 wounded.

Displayed on a table beside Beck at a City Hall news conference Wednesday was an array of seized semi-automatic weapons. Such seizures have risen dramatically since a federal assault weapons ban expired in 2004, City Attorney Carmen Trutanich said.

Also among those expressing support for the ban on large-capacity ammunition magazines were several mothers who have lost children to shootings.

“We have to do something about these weapons,” said Sheri Barnett, 67, whose 27-year-old son was shot and killed in Los Angeles in 1998 in what police called a gang-related incident.

The City Council last month approved a resolution co-sponsored by Council President Eric Garcetti and Councilman Paul Koretz expressing support for the proposed federal law targeting large-capacity magazines.

City lawmakers are considering a separate proposal, authored by Garcetti, to ban the so-called open carry of handguns within the city limits. That provision would outlaw the carrying of legally owned handguns that are unloaded and kept in a visible place.

Under current state law, carrying such unloaded weapons is generally legal, though proposed state legislation would prohibit the practice. Gun rights advocates oppose the effort to restrict open carry of handguns as a violation of their constitutional rights.

-- Patrick J. McDonnell

<http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/lanow/2011/03/la-mayor-police-chief-voice-support-for-federal-ban-on-large-capacity-firearms.html>