



POLICE

PORT HURON



March 3, 2020

Chairman Graham Filler and Committee Members,

On April 6th, 2019, the Port Huron Police Department hosted its first ever Gun Buyback program. My staff and I did not know what to expect, but remained hopeful that the program would help those who were searching for a safe and easy means of removing unwanted guns from their homes. We were overwhelmed by the response. In a five-hour period, local residents poured into the collection site and turned over their unwanted firearms. The program was so successful that I, and several of my staff, had to withdraw money from our personal bank accounts to pay citizens after the budgeted funds ran out.

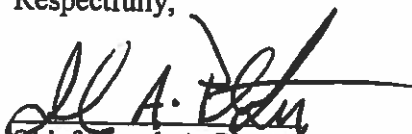
In total, the department collected sixty-two firearms; composed of twenty-nine handguns, eighteen rifles, and fifteen shotguns (one of which was an illegal, sawed-off weapon). We paid out \$9,310 to the county residents who decided to turn over weapons, rather than have them possibly stolen or misused by curious children.


During the exchange, I spoke with many of our community members and heard their stories. Several of those turning in firearms explained that they had a spouse or other family member pass away, leaving them with guns they did not want. Families held the guns for years, not knowing how or where to properly dispose of them. They were thankful that we were able to provide them with an easy, secure, and beneficial option. I spoke with grandparents who were concerned that the firearms they no longer used would be found by their grandchildren, leading to accidental and tragic harm. They were happy to have a safe place to turn over weapons and, as a result, rid their fear.

Our first Gun Buyback was such a successful, positive experience that I hope to make it an annual tradition. However, we cannot be successful without the support of our community, as well as our State and Local Leaders. The Gun Buyback Program offers citizens another avenue to improve the welfare of their homes by providing a safe, welcoming, secure, and easy means of disposing unwanted guns. HB 5479 eliminates that ability. We oppose HB 5479 and ask our leaders to do the same, so that Michigan families don't have a viable option taken away.

The Port Huron Police Department is dedicated to serving each and every citizen in the community. Our successful Gun Buyback Program is an example of what can be accomplished when law enforcement and local leaders work together to solve some of the challenges that families in our community face.

Respectfully,


Chief Joseph A. Platzer


City Manager James Freed

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