

NBC's *Today*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: News at 8; California Gov. Calls for Amendment on Guns]

HODA KOTB: Now to a story you will see first right here on *Today*, a historic announcement by California Governor Gavin Newsom that could affect the country when it comes to gun control. NBC's Jacob Soboroff sat down exclusively with the governor. Jacob, good morning.

JACOB SOBOROFF: Hey, Hoda, good morning to you. Every week in this country, there is another mass shooting, but in the aftermath, little seems to be done to stop more of them. Now, California Governor Gavin Newsom is taking an unprecedented step which he says will do just that. He's proposing a new 28th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that, if passed, would restrict access to guns in all 50 states. [TO NEWSOM] Why a constitutional amendment and why now?

GOVERNOR GAVIN NEWSOM (D-CA): Well, why now is pretty self-evident that a lot of laws we passed are being rolled back by the federal courts.

SOBOROFF: To be clear, you're not calling for the abolition of the Second Amendment.

NEWSOM: No. This is an existential crisis that we're experiencing every single day.

SOBOROFF: Saying he's fed up with Congress's inability to act, California Governor Newsom is proposing something never done before on gun control: having states work together to pass a U.S. Constitutional amendment on guns that would implement four measures nationwide — raise the age for buying a firearm 21, mandate universal background checks, require a reasonable waiting period for gun purchases, and ban the sale of assault rifles to civilians. To achieve this, he'll need two-thirds of states to propose the same amendment. That would trigger a constitutional convention where three quarters would have to vote yes for the amendment to pass. [TO NEWSOM] But more than half of these state legislatures are controlled by Republicans, so how is this possible? How is this going to happen?

NEWSOM: It's possible because their constituency demands it.

SOBOROFF: In fact, a recent Fox News poll found most Americans are in favor of these measures.

NEWSOM: There's not a parent out there, not one parent, you included, that doesn't think about these things when you send your kids to school.

SOBOROFF [TO NEWSOM]: You know very well what the critics will say about this. California has some of the strictest gun laws in the nation. In the first month of the year, between

Half Moon Bay and Monterey Park, 18 people were killed. That's what they're going to say. What do we need this 28th Amendment for?

NEWSOM: Well, California's gun death rate today is 73 percent lower than Texas. These federal judges want to turn America into Texas. We cannot let that happen.

SOBOROFF: The 19th Amendment to the Constitution that gave women the right to vote, it took 40 years or so. Do you think that 28th Amendment, if it's passed, will it happen in your lifetime?

NEWSOM: I hope so. If you don't start, it will never happen.

SOBOROFF: Again, guys, just to be really clear, to even get this amendment off the ground, California would need to be joined by two-thirds of the other states. Governor Newsom's first order of business is going to be shoring up support in ones with Republican-controlled legislatures. There is no question this is going to be a very uphill battle. Historically, there has never been a U.S. Constitutional amendment proposed by states that have ever passed, Hoda.

KOTB: Alright, Jacob Soboroff for us there. Jacob, thank you.