

# Raleigh police hold buyback event for gun owners who lack secure weapon storage

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By Nigel Tufnell

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Law enforcement in Raleigh, North Carolina recently held a gun buyback event Mount Peace Baptist Church, 1601 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. Attendees had to be at least 18 to attend and were told in advance that they had to arrive in a vehicle with the unloaded gun in the back.

The Raleigh Police Department confirmed that 150 people voluntarily surrendered their guns, which included 267 functional firearms and an additional 11 inoperable weapons. Raleigh offered gift cards up to \$200 for any guns turned in, including broken ones.

Raleigh Mayor Mary-Ann Baldwin announced ahead of the event that their intention is not to restrict gun ownership. "If you have a gun that you can't secure, if you don't feel comfortable owning a weapon, whatever it is," Baldwin said. "We are just encouraging people to really focus on the safety aspects."

Baldwin went on to say that the inspiration for the buyback was two recently fruitful gun buybacks in Durham County.

A buyback earlier in August conducted by Durham County Sheriff's Department netted 295 guns. The Sheriff's office also stated that some people had to be turned away, despite the initial budget being bumped up from \$10,000 to \$35,000. Some Raleigh residents who attended the buyback were said to have waited in line for three hours.

Baldwin was interviewed by The News & Observer, where she said that reducing gun violence was a massive priority for the city. "We are treating this with a sense of urgency," Baldwin said.

Sixty-nine people were shot and more people were killed in Raleigh during the first half of this year than during the same period in either of the last two years, The N&O reported.

"What we're really focused on is safety," Baldwin informed The N&O. "When you look at statistics, it's frightening." Baldwin also said she wanted to focus on the basics of gun storage to avoid them being stolen. "What that means is don't leave them in your unlocked vehicle," Baldwin said. "Don't place them in a drawer. Please leave them in a locked safe."