KZGN Talking Points 27th Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

Today’s topic: Should a family that has a concealed carry weapons permit be prohibited from taking in foster children?

It was announced recently in the news that Nevada has a rule that potential foster parents Brian and Valerie Wilson that have concealed carry weapons permits are prohibited from taking in foster children. After hearing this, it was learned that other states have the same rules as well. I don’t know all the states that have this prohibition, but to my surprise, California does not have this rule, at least as far as we can find out. The reasoning, they say, is they want to make sure guns don’t get into the hands of children. A question I have as to that logic is that here is someone that has been trained in the proper use and care of a gun, they have had a background check to make sure they can legally own a gun, but yet some bureaucrat can believe that a trained and licensed person can’t be trusted to keep the gun away from a child? But if some potential foster parent lies and said they have no guns in the home, that is fine? People can have guns and hide them whenever a home inspector comes to inspect the home.

Statistics now estimate as many as 33% of all homes in the United States have at least one gun in the home. KZGN news contributor Tonia Pyle did talk to the Kern County administrator of the foster children program. She told Tonia that Kern County has no such prohibition. However, they do have gun storage requirements that are enforced. They do want to make sure any host family that does have guns makes sure they don’t get in the hands of children. I agree with that requirement. I can’t think of anything worse than hearing about a small child gets hold of an improperly stored gun, and then kills him/herself, friend, or some other person. If you own a gun, you have the responsibility to make sure no unauthorized person can get hold of the gun.

More statistics on foster parents here in Kern County, there are 8 county-approved foster homes in Ridgecrest. Here is a statement from Heidi Carter-Escadero provided from Kern County department of health services, “There is nothing that would prevent a CCW holder, or any law enforcement or military person qualified to carry a weapon, from becoming a licensed foster parent.” However, we do have regulations about how those weapons are stored while in the home. Even with those regulations, we do have licensed homes that fall in this category.

As of February 27, 2015, licensing records indicate we have 8 county licensed homes in Ridgecrest and another 8 in other East Kern areas of Cal City, Rosamond, and Edwards AFB. We have an additional 15 licensed homes in Tehachapi. The foster family agencies, our partners in foster care, have an additional 20 homes in east Kern areas including Ridgecrest and Tehachapi.

In 2014, 99 children from families in East Kern were removed within the East Kern area due to child abuse or neglect. We are always in need of quality, caring homes for children in our care.

Anyone interested in becoming a foster parent can call 631-6204 to learn more about our process of becoming a resource foster parent.

Anyway, I think these anti-gun agencies should consider a person that legally went through the training and background check to get a concealed carry weapon permit as a positive thing. This person took the time to respect the law, to do it right and get the needed training to be able to understand the responsibility to own and carry a weapon. I would add, for those of you that have not gone through training to get a CCW, then you don’t know that a majority of the class is spent teaching the permit holder of the laws concerning carry a gun, and the situations where you can and cannot use a gun. While there is a shooting portion in the training to make sure a person can shoot accurately under pressure, the class is almost 75% classroom instruction.

In conclusion, let’s stop this nonsense about restricting CCW holders from being foster parents. These are law abiding people that follow the rules and do it right.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.