

An Act Modernizing Firearm Laws overview

An Act Modernizing Firearm Laws is a comprehensive approach to preventing gun violence and ensuring that Massachusetts remains one of the safest states in the nation. The 116 page bill tackles a variety of issues related to access to firearms, firearm safety, and more. This is a brief summary of some of the key points of the bill.

Firearm Data Collection and Accessibility:

- The bill takes huge strides in improving data collected related to licensing, firearm purchases, and firearms used in connection with a crime. This aligns with one of the Coalition's longest standing legislative priorities, improving data collection and analysis on guns recovered in connection with a crime.
- The Office of Public Safety and Security is directed to examine firearm purchasing patterns as they relate to guns used in connection with a crime, to understand the ways that bulk firearm purchasing impacts gun crime.
- The Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) is directed to create a publicly available dashboard with anonymized data on firearm crimes, firearm licensing, and firearm purchasing patterns. The dashboard is to be updated quarterly. Some of the data includes:
 - Information on applicants for firearm identification cards and licenses to carry, including whether those applications were approved or denied
 - Information on guns recovered in connection with a crime or attempted or completed suicide, including how the gun was obtained, if the user was a legal firearm owner at the time, and if the firearm was privately made.

Licensing Changes:

- The bill consolidates and simplifies existing licensing statutes to be more consistent and streamlined.
- Raises the age at which an individual can own a semi automatic rifle from 18 to 21.

Firearm Dealer Inspections:

- Local licensing authorities are required to inspect firearm dealers on a routine basis, but many local police departments are not able to follow this requirement
- H.4885 gives local police departments the ability to opt out of this requirement and cede that responsibility to the state police, ensuring that firearm dealers are inspected regularly.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPO)

- ERPOs allow select categories of people to file a petition with the court to temporarily remove firearms from an individual who is deemed to be at risk of hurting themselves or others.
- This bill adds school administrators and licensed healthcare providers, including mental health clinicians, to the list of individuals eligible to petition the court for an ERPO.
- This also allows for a pre-emptive ERPO to be filed against an individual who may not yet have a firearms license, preventing them from obtaining one for a set period of time.

Training Requirements

- Requires the State Police to develop a new training curriculum and standardized test for applicants for a license to carry or a firearm identification card.
- The curriculum will include a live fire requirement, ensuring that those who are legally permitted to carry a firearm have undergone safety training and practice, just like those who are licensed to drive a car.

Ghost Guns

- Ghost guns are unserialized, untraceable guns that can be assembled from kits or parts purchased without a background check. They are an easy way for those who may not be legally able to purchase a gun to acquire a fully functional firearm.
- This bill modifies the definition of a firearm to include the key components of a firearm that are used to assemble a ghost gun, and requires that all firearms are serialized, including those that are homemade.
- The bill also establishes a process for serializing homemade firearms.

Community Violence Prevention

- The bill establishes a commission to examine the way community violence prevention services in the Commonwealth are funded. The commission will submit a report with its findings and recommendations to the legislature. This includes a task force to examine the potential of federal funding for violence intervention programs.

Guns in polling places

- The bill prohibits the carrying of firearms in polling places or early voting sites, and prohibits the carrying of firearms within 150 feet of the entrance to a polling place.