



**Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Department
Office of Governor Deval L. Patrick
Press Release**

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**GOVERNOR PATRICK SIGNS GUN SAFETY
LEGISLATION TO HELP CURB GUN VIOLENCE,
PROTECT FAMILIES AND BUILD SAFER
COMMUNITIES**

BOSTON – Wednesday, August 13, 2014 – Governor Deval Patrick today signed H. 4376, "An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence," long-awaited gun safety legislation that seeks to curb the gun violence that impacts families and neighborhoods across the Commonwealth.

"Our communities and our families are safer when irresponsible gun sales and use are reduced," said Governor Patrick. "This Legislation moves us in that direction."

This legislation builds on the Commonwealth's Nation-leading gun laws by making Massachusetts compliant with the federal National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), creating new firearms crimes such as assault and battery by discharge of a firearm and enhancing sentences for existing firearms crimes like trafficking in firearms and gun related deaths. It also increases the safety of children while attending school through mandated the creation and review of school emergency response plans and direct communication with local police and fire departments.

"From strengthening background checks to improving school safety, this legislation puts our Commonwealth at the very forefront of efforts to reduce gun violence," said Congressman Joe Kennedy. "I urge my colleagues in Congress to follow Massachusetts' lead and pass federal legislation to comprehensively address this country's heartbreaking scourge of gun violence."

"As an active member of the U.S. House Democratic Caucus Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, I am proud to point to Massachusetts as a national leader in gun violence prevention," said Congressman Jim McGovern. "Massachusetts has proven that adopting common-sense legislation to ensure gun safety and keep guns out of the hands of people found to be dangerously mentally ill is the right thing to do."

The new law requires the Commonwealth's courts to transmit all relevant mental health and substance abuse commitments, domestic violence convictions, restraining orders and guardianship appointments to the Massachusetts criminal justice information system for inclusion in NICS available to all states for the sole purpose of firearms

licensing. Further, the law makes a felony conviction a lifetime disqualifier for all firearms licenses and adds a suitability determination to Firearms Identification cards (FID), by which local licensing authorities may petition the district court to find an FID applicant unsuitable. Firearms dealers will also be required to conduct Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) checks on employees.

"This law recognizes the critical intersection between gun violence, suicide prevention, mental health care, domestic violence and school safety by tackling them together in a meaningful way," said Attorney General Martha Coakley. "By ensuring we comply with the national background check system and closing the gun show loophole, we also have new tools to reduce gun violence and protect our communities. I applaud Governor Patrick, Speaker DeLeo and the Legislature for their leadership on this critical issue."

"This legislation takes the necessary steps to ensure a safer Commonwealth," said Senate President Therese Murray. "Through this legislation we are supporting tighter regulations, enhanced penalties and increased protections for our schools, children and families in an overall effort to reduce the impact and prevalence of gun violence in our communities."

"While our state already has some of the strongest gun laws in the Nation, we seek not just to be among the safest states in our own country, we strive for Massachusetts to stand with the safest places in the world," said House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo. "I extend my sincerest thanks to Governor Patrick, Senate President Murray, my colleagues in the legislature, especially those who worked so hard to craft a bill with broad support, the members of the gun safety task force led by Northeastern University Associate Dean Jack McDevitt, and gun safety activist John Rosenthal for helping to make this day possible."

The legislation also:

- Eliminates the distinction between Class A and Class B Licenses to Carry (LTC);
- Requires the state's Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) to create a "real-time web portal" to revamp the private firearms sale process;
- Requires the Chief of Police and school Superintendent to assign a school resource officer to each school district; and
- Requires schools to address mental health needs of students and staff.

"Curbing the gun violence that plagues so many of our families and communities in the Commonwealth is among the highest priorities of this Administration," said Public Safety Secretary Andrea Cabral. "H. 4376 is strong and balances public safety needs with individual privacy and ownership rights. I applaud the Legislature for addressing this issue with realistic solutions."

This bill builds upon gun safety measures Governor Patrick has filed since first taking office, most recently filed in January 2013, and coincides with the legislative momentum building here and across the country to strengthen gun laws following the tragic shootings that have occurred throughout the Nation in recent years. In 2011, Governor Patrick launched the Massachusetts Safe and Successful Youth Initiative, a multi-faceted strategy for eliminating youth violence in the Commonwealth. To implement this strategy, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 534, which emphasizes the Administration's commitment to partnering with local officials to tackle this issue. The Safe and Successful Youth Initiative received \$4.6 million in funding in the Fiscal Year 2015 budget.

In 2010, Governor Patrick signed "An Act Reforming the Administrative Procedures Relative to Criminal Offender Record Information and Pre and Post Trial Supervised Release," which allows District Attorneys the ability to request dangerousness hearings for individuals charged with carrying an illegal firearm, illegally possessing a machine gun or sawed off shotgun, a high capacity firearm or possessing a firearm after being convicted of a felony. Dangerousness hearings allow a court to hold defendants without bail before a trial on an assessment of the defendant's risk to the community.

"This legislation creates more accountability for all the participants in the firearms licensing process," said Representative Garrett Bradley. "I want to express my appreciation to my colleagues in the Legislature for addressing school safety, mental health services, criminal firearms trafficking and enhancing the record keeping and licensing processes while preserving the constitutional rights of legal gun owners."

"I am extremely proud to have played a role in the passage of this historic gun violence prevention legislation," said Representative David Linsky. "The bill signed into law today by Governor Patrick is a major victory for public safety that is the result of 18 months of work and diligence in crafting a balanced piece of legislation. Massachusetts will now have the most effective laws in the country to prevent gun violence. The new law will save lives. I would like to thank everyone who played a role in the passage of this bill."

"Today marks a historic day in the Commonwealth, with Governor Patrick's actions today to sign this bill into law," said Boston Mayor Martin Walsh. "Gun violence is not rooted in one single cause, and through this legislation we can take a comprehensive approach to effectively address this issue. We have to work together to prevent gun violence in every city and town, and I am optimistic that Boston will be provided with additional tools that can be used to curb urban violence and bring peace to our neighborhoods. Every single victim matters, and this legislation sends that message to those touched by senseless violence. I thank Speaker DeLeo, Senate President Murray, the members of the Massachusetts State Legislature and Governor Patrick for bringing this crucial legislation to fruition."

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