

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Announces Support For Comprehensive Gun Safety Bill Package in Current Legislative Session

12/2/2021

Thanks Speaker Coughlin for His Commitment to Posting the Legislative Package

METUCHEN – As part of his ongoing commitment to meaningfully address the nation’s gun violence crisis, Governor Phil Murphy today urged legislators to take action in the coming weeks and pass a comprehensive gun safety legislative package that was initially proposed by the Governor in April. If passed by the Legislature and signed into law, the bill package discussed today would be the third wide-ranging gun safety package signed by the Governor since taking office. The Governor also thanked Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin for his commitment to posting the package during the current legislative session. Among the measures are reforms that would ensure firearms are handled safely, provide additional tools to law enforcement, and regulate school shooting drills.

The Governor was joined for the announcement by Speaker Coughlin, Senator Pat Diegnan, Assemblywoman Joanne Downey, Acting Attorney General Andrew J. Bruck, and gun safety advocates.

“Over the past four years, New Jersey has become a national leader on gun safety,” **said Governor Murphy**. “We must continue to build on that progress and make our state safer for the over nine million people who call New Jersey home. Today, I am proud to further commit to this goal, and I hope to work with my Legislative partners to take this step by the end of this legislative session. I thank Speaker Coughlin, Senate Majority Leader Loretta Weinberg, Assembly Majority Leader Lou Greenwald, and other legislative partners for their continued commitment to gun safety.”

In partnership with the Legislature, Governor Murphy has already taken significant steps to combat the epidemic of gun violence. Among other things, New Jersey has established a “red flag” law for gun violence protective orders; criminalized firearms trafficking; strengthened background checks; reduced the maximum capacity of ammunition magazines; banned “ghost guns;” established the Rutgers Gun Violence Research Center to identify evidenced-based solutions to the gun violence crisis; and established a partnership with a coalition of states (New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut) to share crime gun data between law enforcement agencies.

“Supporting this bill package alongside the Governor today, represents just the latest installment in our ongoing effort to lead the nation on fair and robust common-sense gun safety laws,” **said Assembly Speaker Craig J. Coughlin**. “Essential training, better tracking of firearms and ammunition, safer storage, and stronger policy to stem the flow of out-of-state guns into New Jersey are how we keep our communities safe. Our children deserve nothing less than to feel safe at school, and our residents to grocery shop, worship, and go about their day with peace of mind.”

"For far too long, gun violence has threatened and taken the lives of everyday people. New Jersey has consistently taken steps to minimize this threat. Gun regulations are necessary—they save lives," **said Senator Pat Diegnan**. "As legislators, it is our duty to ensure that New Jersey residents are safe from harm. I am proud of the work that we have done and will continue to do to regulate guns and their accessibility to the public."

"As we seem to hear about nearly every week in our country, gun violence remains a menace to society," **said Senator Loretta Weinberg**. "In the interest of keeping our streets safe and our schools and houses of worship secure from gun violence, we need to continue to do what we can where we can to bolster New Jersey's already existing strong gun safety laws, and to give our law enforcement agencies all the tools they need to prevent more gun-related deaths and injuries in the future."

"While we have made significant strides in advancing critical gun reforms in New Jersey, we must always remain vigilant in protecting residents from the dangers of gun violence," **said Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald**. "This legislative package would close harmful loopholes, limit high-caliber weapons, ensure the proper handling and storage of firearms, and give law enforcement the tools they need to address gun violence. Each of these commonsense measures represent important steps we can and must take to promote gun safety in our communities."

"My colleagues and I have been committed to creating legislation to address gun safety," **said Assemblywoman Joann Downey**. "Providing law enforcement with the proper tools to become more efficient in identifying specific firearms through microstamping technology will allow our police to better reduce gun violence. Gun safety is vital to keep the people of New Jersey safe."

"Thanks to the ongoing and visionary efforts of Governor Murphy and the Legislature, New Jersey is a national leader in reducing gun violence and taking important steps that make our State a safer place for our residents," **said Acting Attorney General Bruck**. "The legislation discussed by the Governor today will further our work to help communities statewide support victims of crime, while reducing the deadly cycle of gun-related violence."

"About six months ago, the Governor convened community public safety activists from across the state and engaged us in a conversation about developing complementary strategies with law enforcement to reduce violence and crime in cities," **said Aqeela Sherrills, Director of the Newark Community Street Team**. "He committed \$10 million, an unprecedented investment. It is the Governor's leadership that is making our communities and our state safe".

"New Jersey's gun violence crisis requires meaningful legislative action that both prioritizes the safety of New Jersey communities and reaffirms our state's status as a leader in the gun safety movement," **said Jenifer Berrier Gonzalez, a volunteer with the New Jersey chapter of Moms Demand Action**. "We are thankful to Governor Murphy for his commitment to signing this landmark gun safety package, and we urge lawmakers to work together to achieve this important milestone before this legislative session ends."

Governor Murphy today recommitted to the following additional reforms:

Ensuring Firearms are Handled Safely

- **Requiring Firearm Safety Training:** S-2169/A-5030 (Weinberg/Reynolds-Jackson) would modernize firearm ID cards, as well as require completion of a firearm safety course to receive a permit to purchase a gun or receive a firearm ID card.
- **Mandating Safe Storage of Firearms:** Gun owners would be required to store guns in a lockbox or gun safe.

Making New Jersey Safer

- **Banning .50 Caliber Firearms:** S-103/A-1280 (Gill/Greenwald) would revise the definition of "destructive device" under New Jersey law so that it includes weapons of .50 caliber or greater.
- **Closing Loophole for Importing Out-of-State Firearms:** A-3686/S-372 (Vainieri Huttler/Cryan) would require firearm owners who move to New Jersey to obtain a firearm purchaser identification card (FPIC) and register their firearms within 30 days of residing in this State.

Giving Law Enforcement the Tools to Address Gun Violence

- **Establishing Electronic Ammunition Sales Recordkeeping:** A-1292/S-1481 (Greenwald/Weinberg) would require manufacturers or dealers of handgun ammunition to keep a detailed electronic record of ammunition sales, and report ammunition sales to the State Police.
- **Promoting Microstamping Technology:** S-3826/A-5787 (Weinberg/Downey) would require within a year that firearm manufacturers incorporate microstamping technology into new handguns sold in New Jersey, providing law enforcement with a tool to quickly link firearm cartridge casings found at the scene of a crime to a specific firearm, without having to recover the firearm itself.

Additional Actions

- **Regulating School Shooting Drills:** New Jersey schools currently are required to conduct active shooter exercises but guidelines are not specific about how those drills should be conducted. The Governor proposes authorizing the Department of Education to establish trauma-informed and age-appropriate standards for lockdown drills.
- **Holding the Gun Industry Accountable:** In New Jersey, almost 80% of guns used in crimes are originally purchased outside of the state. However, the gun industry has failed to take any steps to stem the flow of guns to the illegal market through gun shows, flea markets, straw purchasers, and theft. The Governor proposes amending the state's public nuisance laws to prohibit the gun industry from endangering the safety or health of the public through its sale, manufacturing, importing, or marketing of guns.

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