

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Signs First-in-the-Nation Legislation to Hold Gun Traffickers Criminally Liable for Resulting Deaths and Injuries

08/23/2023

New Initiative Continues the Murphy Administration's Steadfast Commitment to Combatting Gun Violence

TRENTON – Expanding on New Jersey's nation-leading gun safety laws, Governor Phil Murphy today signed S3150, which establishes strict liability criminal penalties for gun traffickers when an illegally trafficked firearm provided by them is used in a crime that results in serious or significant bodily injury or death.

Under the first-in-the-nation legislation, also known as the "Real Accountability for Consequences of Unlawful Trafficking of Firearms Act," a trafficked firearm used for a crime resulting in a death may be charged with a first-degree crime. Similarly, a person who commits a firearm trafficking violation resulting in serious or significant bodily injury may be charged with a second-degree crime. The bill will also allow New Jersey prosecutors to charge out-of-state traffickers, who have supplied around 80% of guns used for crimes in our state, for the harms their illegal out-of-state conduct causes in New Jersey.

The legislation is modeled on similar, longstanding laws that impose strict criminal liability on drug dealers for overdose deaths caused by their illicit products.


Back
to top

"Far too many New Jerseyans live with the daily fear that people in their

communities who cannot legally possess guns can illegally obtain firearms and cause great harm,” **said Governor Murphy.** “This bill allows us to hold those who illegally traffic those guns accountable for the harm that those weapons are used to cause. With today’s new law, New Jersey will become the first state in the nation to go after illegal gun traffickers in this way. This is yet another historic step to protect our children and families from gun violence, and we will continue to support long-term solutions that will break the cycle of violence once and for all.”

Today’s strong anti-trafficking bill builds on the Governor’s commonsense record of gun reforms, which has positioned New Jersey as a leader in gun safety. Since the beginning of the Murphy Administration, more than a dozen steps have been taken to address gun violence in the state. In July 2022, Governor Murphy signed seven comprehensive gun safety bills, his third significant gun safety package signing since taking office in 2018.

In collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General, more actions have been taken beyond the passing of legislation to address violence. Last week, it was announced that \$15 million would be made available through a competitive grant process to support Community-Based Violence Intervention (CBVI) Programs throughout the state. The program now stands at a \$40 million investment in state and federal funds since 2021. CBVI programs use interventions and protective activities in communities and among populations associated with risk factors for exposure to violence. Through this public health approach to interrupt cycles of violence, and with a focus on reducing gun violence, CBVI initiatives include a range of strategies: mentoring programs, street outreach, trauma support services, de-escalation among high-risk individuals, targeted afterschool programs, job training, and more.

The first prime sponsors of today’s bill, which passed unanimously through both houses, include Senator Troy Singleton and Assemblywoman Linda Carter. “Under the leadership of Governor Murphy and Attorney General Platkin, we are strengthening New Jersey’s existing status as a national leader in combating gun violence,” **said First Assistant Attorney General Lyndsay V. Ruotolo.** “The legislation signed today will provide more tools for prosecutors and law enforcement across the state to hold firearms traffickers accountable and make our communities safer.”

“Approximately 80 percent of crime guns traced in New Jersey come from out of state. We must continue to hold gun traffickers responsible for their role in perpetuating gun violence,” **said Senator Troy Singleton.** “Increasing the penalties of gun traffickers will aid in deterring and holding traffickers responsible for the risk they pose to residents. This law will specifically target traffickers that pose a severe threat to the safety of residents through illegal gun transfers and sales.”

“Those responsible for illegal firearm trafficking must be held accountable for the consequences of their actions,” **said Assemblywoman Linda Carter.** “These individuals are responsible for putting dangerous weapons in the hands of wrongdoers, and they deserve to be held responsible when a life is lost due to their unlawful actions. We will be able to impose stricter penalties on firearm traffickers thanks to this law.”

“This bill is another victory for our citizens and public safety. I applaud the Governor’s and Sponsor’s efforts to address the horrific consequences of how easily criminals provide firearms to others who engage in acts of violence. This bill will better secure communities such as Trenton throughout the state. This law will give our law enforcement officers the tools to cut off illegal supply lines and help keep unregistered weapons off the streets and away from our neighborhoods,” **said Trenton Mayor Reed Gusciora.**

“This law sends a clear message to those who would participate and/or profit from the illegal distribution of firearms, that they can now be held accountable for the injuries sustained and the lives lost due to gun violence,” **said Trenton Police Department Director Steve Wilson.**

“I want to thank the Governor and the Legislature for passing such an important bill for the safety of all New Jerseyans. It’s very important across our state that we address guns that are sold illegally and taking the lives of our youth. The illegal distribution of guns is destroying our communities and today’s bill signing is a step towards holding illegal traffickers accountable for their actions,” **said Pastor John Taylor of Friendship Baptist Church.**

“Today’s signing creates a strong deterrence for those who would bring illegal firearms into the State of New Jersey from the South via I-95 and from our western neighbors through other interstate roadways. Last year, 777 illegal guns were recovered by Newark Police, representing a 26 percent increase over the previous year. This new legislation is a crucial tool for more significantly holding accountable those who traffic illegal guns across state lines and for progressively reducing the number of senseless deaths and shootings that occur each year in New Jersey. I am grateful to Governor Murphy and our legislators who have tightened the screws on gun traffickers and made S3150 the law of the land,” **said Ras J. Baraka, Mayor of the City of Newark and President and Chair of the New Jersey Urban Mayors Association.**

Governor Phil Murphy

[Home \(/governor/\)](#)

Administration

[Governor Phil Murphy \(/governor/admin/about\)](#)

[Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver \(/governor/admin/lt\)](#)

[First Lady Tammy Snyder Murphy \(/governor/admin/fl\)](#)

[Senior Staff \(/governor/admin/staff\)](#)

[Cabinet \(/governor/admin/cabinet\)](#)

[Office of Climate Action and the Green Economy](#)

[\(/governor/climateaction/\)](#)

[Office of Equity \(/governor/admin/equity/\)](#)

[Office of Health Care Affordability and Transparency](#)

[\(/governor/admin/affordablehealthcare/index.shtml\)](#)

[Boards, Commissions & Authorities \(/governor/admin/bca\)](#)

[New Jersey Puerto Rico Commission](#)

[\(https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/\)](https://www.nj.gov/puertoricocommission/)

[Internship Opportunities \(/governor/admin/internship.shtml\)](#)

[Governor's Fellows Program \(/governor/admin/fellows\)](#)

[Governor's Residence - Drumthwacket \(http://drumthwacket.org/\)](http://drumthwacket.org/)

Key Initiatives

[Economy & Jobs \(/governor/initiatives/#Economy\)](#)

[Education \(/governor/initiatives/#Education\)](#)

[Environment \(/governor/initiatives/#Environment\)](#)

[Health \(/governor/initiatives/#Health\)](#)

[Law & Justice \(/governor/initiatives/#Justice\)](#)

[Transportation \(/governor/initiatives/#Transportation\)](#)

News & Events

Press Releases

[\(/governor/news/news/562023/approved/news_archive.shtml\)](#)

Photos (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/govmurphy>)

Public Addresses ([/governor/news/addresses](#))

Executive Orders

[\(/infobank/eo/056murphy/approved/eo_archive.html\)](#)

Administrative Orders

[\(/governor/news/ao/approved/ao_archive.shtml\)](#)

Direct Appointments ([/governor/news/appointments](#))

Advice and Consent Appointments

[\(/governor/news/acappointments\)](#)

Statements on Legislation

[\(/governor/news/statements/approved/statements_archive.shtml\)](#)

Administration Reports

[\(/governor/news/adminreports/approved/archive.shtml\)](#)

Transition Reports

[\(/governor/news/reports/approved/reports_archive.shtml\)](#)

Press Kits ([/governor/news/press](#))

Social

Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/governorphilmurphy/>)

Twitter (<https://twitter.com/GovMurphy>)

Instagram (<https://www.instagram.com/govmurphy/>)

Snapchat (<https://www.snapchat.com/add/philmurphy>)

YouTube (<https://www.youtube.com/njgovernorsoffice>)

Contact Us

Scheduling Requests (</governor/contact/scheduling/>)

Contact Us (</governor/contact/all/>)

Statewide

[NJ Home \(//www.nj.gov\)](http://www.nj.gov)

[Services A to Z \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/njgov/alphaserv.html)

[Departments/Agencies \(//www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/gov/deptserv/)

[FAQs \(//www.nj.gov/faqs/\)](http://www.nj.gov/faqs/)

[Contact Us \(//www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/feedback.html)

[Privacy Notice \(//www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/privacy.html)

[Legal Statement & Disclaimers \(//www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/legal.html)

[Accessibility Statement \(//www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html\)](http://www.nj.gov/nj/accessibility.html)

(//nj.gov/opra/)

(https://my.state.nj.us/openam/UI/Login)

Copyright © State of New Jersey, 1996-2023

Office of Governor PO Box 001

Trenton, NJ 08625

609-292-6000

(https://tech.nj.gov/)