

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Delivers Remarks on Gun Safety Package 3.0

07/5/2022

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

Good morning, everyone.

Thank you, Mayor Jonathan Busch, for welcoming us to Metuchen and kicking things off for us. With me are Acting Attorney General Matt Platkin

State Police Superintendent Colonel Pat Callahan ...

Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin, Senate Majority Leader Teresa Ruiz, Senator and former Governor Richard Codey, Senators Joe Cryan and Andrew Zwicker, Assemblyman John McKeon, Assemblywomen Annette Quijano, Verlina Reynolds Jackson, and Sadaf Jaffer ...

... And so many more tremendous advocates and voices for gun safety than I can mention without us all roasting under the sun.

Fourteen months ago, on April 15, 2021, we came together to unveil what we called our Gun Safety 3.0 package of legislation.

We did so because while we had made great progress in becoming one of the nation's top states for gun safety, we knew there was more to do. Every life lost to gun violence is one life too many.

On that same day, April 15, 2021, there were four mass-shootings in America, including an incident at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis, Indiana, in which eight people were senselessly murdered by a former coworker.

In the time since, there have been more than 870 mass shootings in America – Oxford, Michigan ... San Jose, California ... Buffalo, New York ... Uvalde, Texas ... and just yesterday, Highland Park, Illinois ... among hundreds and hundreds more – roughly two mass shootings every single day since we put forward our plan to help stop gun violence.

And, in New Jersey since April 15, 2021, there have been 1,271 total shootings in New Jersey – shootings which have claimed 291 lives and left 1,313 others injured.

There are those who think this is all just the price of living in the United States ...

There are those who take seriously the words of the satirical website, The Onion, “No Way To Prevent This,’ Says Only Nation Where This Regularly Happens” ...

... And, sadly, it appears six of these mistaken people sit on the United States Supreme Court.

We believe different. We believe – no, we know – that we can take on the epidemic of gun violence and win. We know we can put in place strong and smart gun safety laws that are consistent with the 2nd Amendment and still protect our communities.

And, surely, there were those who said we would never get the gun safety bills we supported through the Legislature. There were those who said that we were too ambitious, that the gun lobby was too strong, and that our political system would not have the will to take on and win this fight.

But, again, we believed different. And guess what? Today, we are making Gun Safety Package 3.0 the law. First, and perhaps most important, we are enacting a public nuisance law that will allow our Attorney General to hold gun manufacturers and distributors responsible for the damage caused by the reckless unchecked marketing and sale of firearms.

We're also saying, in no uncertain terms, that if you want to buy a gun you need to first complete a certified safety course – no different than if you want to drive a car you have to get a license showing you know how to safely use it ...

The loophole that allowed gunowners moving into New Jersey to skirt the procedures that established New Jersey residents follow in order to qualify to purchase or obtain firearms is hereby closed ...

We are requiring that when microstamping technology is commercially viable, gun retailers must offer firearms equipped with this technology, with a financial incentive for customers to choose it. Microstamping leaves a one-of-a-kind imprint on every round of ammunition fired, so law enforcement can trace a specific round to a specific gun and identify perpetrators of gun violence ...

And we're finally requiring electronic record-keeping of all ammunition sold in New Jersey to help law enforcement monitor suspicious purchases and identify bad-apple dealers and straw purchasers ...

We're increasing the penalties on those who break our existing law prohibiting the manufacturing or transporting of ghost guns – because if you're creating or transferring these untraceable guns, you're not a “responsible gun owner,” you're a criminal.

And, once and for all, we are banning the sale of .50 caliber weapons. I have often asked, who can seriously argue that a weapon that can take down a helicopter belongs on our streets? Sadly, one person who answered “yes” to that question was my predecessor, who vetoed this bill in 2013. Today, we reverse that terrible mistake.

These are now the laws of our land. They are commonsense. They are smart. They live up to our Jersey values. A poll released last week proved the overwhelming popularity of these laws among the people of New Jersey.

That same poll also showed that too many residents – especially parents with school-aged kids – live fearful of being the victim of gun violence.

So, these are not going to be our last words on gun safety. We cannot walk away from here today – none of us – thinking our job is done. Because it is not.

Not even two weeks ago, the right-wing majority that controls the United States Supreme Court erased our ability to decide for ourselves who can, and who can't, get a permit to carry a concealed weapon.

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This past Thursday, they signaled their desire to revisit our ban on high-capacity magazines, telling the lower courts to look at it again. And they also told the lower courts to look anew at Maryland's prohibition of dozens of models of assault rifles, some of which are also banned here in New Jersey.

But we're not going to just lay down and let our streets, our houses of worship, our supermarkets and shopping malls, our sports arenas, our bars, or anywhere else be overrun with hidden guns capable of unleashing a hail of bullets.

I look forward to working with the Legislature to address this awful decision with strong and smart laws expanding the number of places where firearms cannot be carried and saying, without any doubt, that you can't bring your gun onto private property without explicit permission to do so.

In the face of the Supreme Court's tragic and wrong-headed ruling, we need those laws – and all of these laws – more than ever.

And, now more than ever, we cannot let up in the fight to keep our communities safe.

I have mentioned it before – New Jersey has one of the nation's lowest rates of gun violence and gun deaths because we are among the leaders in gun safety. I am not going to give up on always looking for new ways to save lives, protect communities, and ensure that every resident can live without fear.

And I know that none of you are going to give up, either.

I must extend a special thank you to Speaker Craig Coughlin, who stood with me in this very location last December and committed to getting these bills done. We would not be here today without your leadership and the work of your team, including Dan Harris and Mark Iaconelli, who worked closely with my team to get these bills over the finish line.

And I also want to thank Senate President Nick Scutari, who after taking the reins of the Senate in January, joined us in this journey and ensured that we would not respond to the horrors of Buffalo and Uvalde by doing nothing.

So, to the two leaders, and to every legislator with us today who voted on the right side of history, thank you. To all the members of law enforcement who stand with us for safer communities, thank you.

And, to all the folks from Everytown and Moms Demand Action, Giffords, Brady, March for Our Lives, Sandy Hook Promise, Ceasefire NJ, and the Rutgers Gun Violence Research Center ... from the Newark Street Team, Paterson Healing Collective, and Jersey City Together, on down to every community-based organization doing the hard work at street-level, thank you most of all!

Today is a day to celebrate. But it is not a day to rest on any laurels. Let's keep at it.

I cannot wait to sign these bills into law, but before I do, I want us to hear from some of the gun safety champions with us, starting with the Speaker of the General Assembly, Craig Coughlin.

Governor Phil Murphy

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