

Governor Phil Murphy

Governor Murphy Urges Passage of Comprehensive Gun Safety Reform in Wake of Uvalde Elementary School Shooting

05/25/2022

TRENTON – Governor Phil Murphy renewed his call today for the passage of the comprehensive gun safety legislative package (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vp579g/bufvrclb/bqwt2w__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!O9z94A9-_Eakl0WY16pPOrWkFwKCTeUg67LAKvpBTbCr1CLu0SHbRzv9u8KDMI6BPKvmTb5zRDNaxqQzzbOyUAS) that he initially proposed in April 2021. The Governor urged legislators to pass the same package in April 2022 (https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vp579g/bufvrclb/rixt2w__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!O9z94A9-_Eakl0WY16pPOrWkFwKCTeUg67LAKvpBTbCr1CLu0SHbRzv9u8KDMI6BPKvmTb5zRDNaxqRyYChoagS), four months ([https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vp579g/bufvrclb/7ayt2w__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!O9z94A9-_Eakl0WY16pPOrWkFwKCTeUg67LAKvpBTbCr1CLu0SHbRzv9u8KDMI6BPKvmTb5zRDNaxqTshufyW\\$](https://urldefense.com/v3/__https://t.e2ma.net/click/vp579g/bufvrclb/7ayt2w__!!J30X0ZrnC1oQtbA!O9z94A9-_Eakl0WY16pPOrWkFwKCTeUg67LAKvpBTbCr1CLu0SHbRzv9u8KDMI6BPKvmTb5zRDNaxqTshufyW$)) after he was joined by Assembly Speaker Craig Coughlin in support of the gun safety bills. If passed by the Senate and Assembly 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.

Today's press conference, attended by educators and gun safety advocates, was held in the aftermath of the Uvalde, Texas elementary school shooting on Tuesday and the Buffalo supermarket shooting less than two weeks ago.

"From Uvalde to Buffalo, recent tragedies have reaffirmed that, in the absence of substantive reform, no community is immune to the epidemic of gun violence," said **Governor Murphy**. "The senseless murders in Texas should fortify our resolve to take action today – to avoid similar horrors not through empty words and promises, but through concrete measures to make every classroom and neighborhood safer. Our children, as well as the teachers who devote their lives to their education and safety, deserve nothing less."

In partnership with the Legislature, Governor Murphy has already taken significant steps to combat the gun violence epidemic. Among other measures, 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 Gun Violence Research Center to identify evidenced-based solutions to the gun violence crisis, and established a partnership with a coalition of states (Connecticut, New York, and Pennsylvania) to share crime gun data among law enforcement agencies.

"More than a dozen families in Uvalde were torn apart yesterday by gun violence," said **Senate Majority Leader M. Teresa Ruiz**. "As we are reminded of a reality in which massacres are more common than gun laws, it is clear that thoughts and prayers are meaningless without action. New Jersey has led the nation in acting strong gun control measures but unfortunately, gun violence still happens far too often in our own communities. If anything is truly going to change we need federal legislation. No child, family, or state is immune to gun violence until we act. We should always feel safe when walking in our neighborhoods or our local grocery stores, and especially on the sacred ground that is our schools."

"It's so sad to know that after fighting gun violence back in the 80s and 90s, here we are still fighting it today," said **Senator Richard J. Codey**. "Let's pray we live to see the day that we will win the fight."

"As a mother and leader, hearing about yesterday's shooting was heartbreaking," said **Senator Nilsa Cruz-Perez**. "The tragedy that took place yesterday in Uvalde could have been prevented. We must get behind this comprehensive gun package to save the innocent lives of our communities."

"As a Union County sheriff, I know all too well what can happen when we don't do all we can to protect our communities and the law enforcement officers responsible for their safety," said **Senator Joseph Cryan**. "By increasing from 18 to 21 the age at which a person can receive a firearms purchaser identification, we can better safeguard our community members and first responders in New Jersey."

"Less than two weeks ago, we mourned the loss of the victims in Buffalo. Now we mourn the lives of elementary school children and their teachers," said **Senator Brian P. Stack**. "With each tragedy, we are reminded that no supermarket, classroom, or sidewalk is safe unless we take action against the gun violence epidemic."

"Last legislative session, I was proud to sponsor legislation to promote microstamping technology in our state, amend the state's public nuisance law to hold the gun industry accountable, increase the age to purchase long guns to 21, ban .50 caliber weapons, and require those who move to New Jersey to obtain firearm IDs," said **Senator Nellie Pou**. "Over a year later, none of these commonsense measures have become law in New Jersey. Yesterday's tragedy underscores that now is the time to act and that we cannot wait any longer for these measures."

"The tragedy of Sandy Hook was a wake-up call echoing across the nation. The very tangible threat of gun violence hit home for many parents and communities again yesterday," said **Assembly Majority Leader Louis Greenwald**. "Today, we mourn with families in Uvalde after witnessing yet another devastating tragedy that has taken the lives of 19 innocent children and two teachers. New Jersey, in these times of crisis, has stood up for stronger gun safety measures. Since 2012, we have enacted several common-sense anti-gun violence laws, including strengthening background checks, Extreme Risk Protection Orders, that are helping families and communities in New Jersey prevent tragedies like what we saw in Uvalde. We have enacted measures to limit firearm magazine capacity to 10 rounds, which was inspired by the parents of Sandy Hook, and put laws on the books to end the traumas of gun violence in our communities by partnering with hospitals to provide intervention services in our hospitals. There's more work to be done and we will not stop until the cycle of violence plaguing our communities and throughout the nation ends."

"We cannot allow ourselves to become numb to the senseless violence that takes far too many lives each day," said **Assemblyman Reginald Atkins**. "Countless families have been touched by the loss of a loved one due to gun violence, including more than 20 families in Uvalde after yesterday's tragedy. It is our responsibility as leaders of this state to do everything in our power to protect New Jerseyans, and these proposals will help us do just that."

"We have lost far too many Americans today," **said Assemblyman Ralph Caputo**. "Going to school has become a matter of life and death for our children and teachers. Legislation like this gun safety package is crucial to continue to protect our children and fellow New Jerseyans."

"As another horrific tragedy leaves the nation reeling yet again, it is our responsibility to promote public safety with greater determination than ever before," **said Assemblywoman Linda S. Carter**. "As an educator, I am heartbroken and as a leader, I am outraged. Requiring firearm purchaser ID cards and the registration of firearms acquired out of state are critical and necessary first steps toward protecting children and families across the state."

"Protecting the safety and well-being of the people we represent should be the number one priority of every legislator, both here in New Jersey and every other state across our nation," **said Assemblyman Herb Conaway**. "The toll gun violence takes on survivors and the families of victims is incalculable. It is incumbent on our State to take whatever action is necessary to protect residents by enhancing our gun safety laws."

"My thoughts and prayers go out to the families in Uvalde. We cannot continue to lose loved ones through these seemingly endless acts of gun violence," **said Assemblyman Roy Freiman**. "We protect young people and the broader community through laws mandating a minimum age of 21 to purchase alcohol, so why shouldn't we have that same requirement for the purchase of firearms more than capable of harming others? Gun safety is something we must continue to prioritize, and we must accept that there is no singular solution to the gun violence problem in our country. Raising the minimum age a resident can receive the documentation they need to purchase shotguns and rifles is a reasonable and logical step we can take to help keep New Jersey residents safe amid an epidemic of gun violence."

"School shootings are a uniquely American problem," **said Assemblywoman Shama Haider**. "We have normalized tragedy in this country. It is imperative we pass this gun legislation now before more innocent lives are lost."

"Although New Jersey has strong policies in place to protect our residents against gun violence, other states often have different laws surrounding firearm purchases," **said Assemblywoman Mila Jasey**. "With this in mind, we must apply the rules across the board by holding gun owners who move to our state to the same standards as current residents. Closing the loophole in New Jersey's gun registration system is one way we can promote greater safety in our communities."

"Students and teachers across the state deserve to learn and educate in safe spaces, environments that are not plagued by constant fear of violence and injury," **said Assemblywoman Sadaf Jaffer**. "Our most vulnerable community members, as well as our future generations, require the protection that can only be guaranteed by comprehensive gun safety reform, including a requirement for the safe storage of firearms."

"I refuse to believe that these constant tragedies are simply something we must accept; there is always more we can do as a state and as a nation," **said Assemblywoman Angelica Jimenez**. "New Jersey has worked to advance critical gun reforms over the years and must keep up our progress by adopting additional laws that will help prevent more families from ever having to know what it's like to lose a loved one to gun violence."

"The loss of so many young lives in Uvalde yesterday is one of far too many heartbreaking incidents our country will continue to face if we do not take action to curb the ever-present threat of gun violence," **said Assemblyman Robert Karabinchak**. "New Jersey has some of the strongest laws in the nation, but this sensible legislative package offers additional ways we can defend the people of our state and serve as a model to the rest of the nation to help prevent these tragedies from continuing to occur."

"Requiring the micro-stamping of new firearms, establishing rigorous rules for the storage of firearms, and enabling our State to address any reckless endangerment of public safety by firearm manufacturers and retailers are several key steps New Jersey can take to further protect our communities from gun violence," **said Assemblyman John McKeon**. "Now is not the time for complacency or inaction. Our state must step up to the plate and advance this reasonable and necessary legislation."

"My heart breaks for the families in Uvalde, Buffalo, as well as those in Jersey City, Bayonne, and Kearny who now face a life without their loved one by their side because of the gun violence that is so prevalent in our nation," **said Assemblywoman Angela McKnight**. "Families here in New Jersey are not immune to these tragedies. But the gun reforms our State has and must continue to pass will offer residents stronger protections against this senseless violence."

"We cannot allow ourselves to be desensitized to gun violence or to the deaths of 19 children and two educators that we saw yesterday in Uvalde, Texas," **said Assemblyman Paul Moriarty**. "There are more guns than people in our country, and our nation's gun problem will not go away without action. I thank Governor Murphy for his commitment to this issue and I look forward to supporting legislation that will make our state—and our children—safer."

"Yesterday's tragedy in Uvalde saw too many lives lost, too many children killed and traumatized, and all due to our nation's lack of comprehensive gun control laws," **said Assembly member Ellen Park**. "We cannot let these 21 lives lost be another statistic. I'm proud to stand alongside Governor Murphy and my fellow legislators to support this critical legislation. Raising the age requirement from 18 to 21 to purchase a gun is yet another proactive step we can take in New Jersey as we continue to be a national leader in gun safety. We must demand that the nation catch up."

"Twenty-one lives were lost yesterday—most of them children—due to senseless gun violence," **said Assemblywoman Annette Quijano**. "I cannot imagine the pain and loss facing the families that have been torn apart by this tragedy. We must act and pass common sense gun safety laws now."

"I am heartbroken that another school has been devastated by the scourge of gun violence we see across our nation," **said Assemblywoman Reynolds-Jackson**. "As leaders, it is our responsibility to ensure the safety of our children and our educators. We must take these critical steps forwards in order to protect New Jerseyans and set an example for the country that the time for gun reform is now."

"The horrific shooting in Uvalde is beyond comprehension and proves that our students and teachers are not safe when they come to school every day," **said Assemblyman Gary Schaer**. "We need to stand together as a state and unite to pass this vital legislation. Despite our strong gun laws, New Jersey is not immune to such tragedies. I urge my fellow legislators to get behind this gun control package and continue to protect the people of New Jersey."

"The threat of gun violence hangs over every head in our nation. Yesterday's shooting in Texas was yet another tragic reminder of just how many lives are being lost every day," **said Assemblyman William W. Spearman**. "We cannot rest while there is still more our State can do to protect our residents. The practical reforms proposed in this legislation represent critical steps we can take here in New Jersey to keep our communities safe from gun violence."

"Today is a dark day for our nation. Once again, senseless gun violence has made its way into our schools and devastated not only the Robb Elementary community, but also all of us who are tired of seeing gun violence take the

lives of innocent schoolchildren," said Assemblywoman Shonique Speight. "My heart breaks for the victims of this horrific crime and their loved ones. Children and educators deserve to feel safe in school. New Jersey has some of the strongest gun laws in the nation. We will continue to take action to keep our children and communities safe."

Governor Murphy today recommitted to the following reforms:

Ensuring Firearms are Handled Safely

Requiring Firearm Safety Training: A-993 (Reynolds-Jackson) would 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. (For reference: A-2215 (Greenwald), the "New Jersey Safe Storage of Firearms Act")

Making New Jersey Safer

Banning .50 Caliber Firearms: S-1416 (Gill) 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-1179/S-1204 (Jasey/Cryan) would require firearm owners who move to New Jersey to obtain a firearm purchaser identification card (FPIC) and register their firearms within 60 days of residing in this State.

Raising Minimum Age to Purchase Long Guns to 21: A-509/S-504 (Freiman/Cryan) would raise from 18 to 21 the age at which a person is eligible to receive a firearms purchaser identification card used to purchase shotguns and rifles.

Giving Law Enforcement the Tools to Address Gun Violence

Establishing Electronic Ammunition Sales Recordkeeping: A-1302 (Greenwald) 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-1462/A-2216 (Codey/Greenwald) 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 Action

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. (For reference: A-1765/S-1893 (McKeon/Ruiz))

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