

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

GOVERNOR PHIL MURPHY

GOVERNOR MURPHY, ATTORNEY GENERAL GREWAL ANNOUNCE INTENTION TO TIGHTEN RESTRICTIONS ON HANDGUN-CARRY PERMITS

Will reverse previous administration policy that loosened restrictions

Trenton – Governor Phil Murphy and Attorney General Gurbir Grewal announced today that New Jersey will rescind a rule adopted by the Christie administration that attempted to weaken New Jersey’s stringent standards of what was considered a “justifiable need” to carry a handgun.

“New Jersey cannot, and must not, become part of the race to the bottom on handgun carry that we are seeing across the country,” said Governor Murphy. “My position on handgun carry has been clear and unambiguous. There already are too many guns on our streets, and adding more into the equation will not make New Jersey communities any safer.”

New Jersey law previously required individuals seeking to obtain a handgun -carry permit to demonstrate a “justifiable need” that they had been the recipient of specific threats or attacks. However, the Christie administration policy, adopted in March 2017, attempted to reduce the threshold by allowing applicants to include serious threats to support the required demonstration of justifiable need. As such, someone who lives or works in an area where certain crimes are common could arguably apply for a handgun-carry permit by citing a concern for their safety, even if they had not been personally subjected to a threat or incident.

In April 2017, the Legislature sued Governor Christie over the change, saying it ignored the legislative intent of the law, but that lawsuit is still pending.

“Today my office has begun taking steps to make our state’s handgun carry rules consistent with long-settled legal precedent,” Attorney General Grewal said. “Our ultimate goal is to solidify New Jersey’s handgun permitting rule language in its prior form – as advocated by the Legislature, and consistent with two prior decisions rendered by the State’s highest court. New Jersey’s law should be clear – private citizens should not be able to carry weapons based on mere generalized fear.”

Governor Murphy today also doubled down on his commitment to fight federal concealed-carry reciprocity legislation that passed the House of Representatives in December 2017. If enacted, that legislation would force New Jersey and other states to honor concealed-carry permits issued outside of their borders-- even if those states have lower standards or no standards for concealed-carry. New Jersey is one of ten states that currently does not honor concealed-carry permits issued out of state.

“The notion that we would have to be subjected to the lowest common denominator is reprehensible,” Governor Murphy said. “Forcing our state to comply with the standards of other states undermines our law, makes our people less safe, and makes it more difficult for the brave women and men in New Jersey law enforcement to do their jobs safely and effectively. Attorney General Grewal and I remain committed to fighting any federal regulations that could exacerbate the gun epidemic.”

Rules will be promulgated in accordance with the Administrative Procedures Act, which may take between three and six months.

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