



*The Commonwealth of Massachusetts*

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
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**Speaker DeLeo Announces Comprehensive Gun Violence Legislation**

(BOSTON) – **House Speaker Robert A. DeLeo** (D-Winthrop), joined by House members and the Gun Violence Task Force, today announced comprehensive gun violence legislation which, for the first time, authorizes a police chief to deny a firearm identification (FID) card for a rifle or shotgun based on a “suitability” standard, extends federal restrictions for firearm acquisition to the state level, and prohibits a convicted felon from acquiring a FID card. Through a focus on mental health, violence prevention, increased oversight, and addressing systemic problems, the legislation will improve Massachusetts gun laws, already among the strongest and most effective in the nation.

“An Act Relative to the Reduction of Gun Violence” incorporates recommendations made by the Committee to Reduce Firearm Violence, a multi-disciplinary panel of experts appointed by Speaker DeLeo, and legislation filed by the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. The eight-member task force, chaired by Dr. Jack McDevitt of Northeastern University, includes individuals with diverse expertise and perspectives on gun violence and ownership.

“It is not enough to be one of the safest states in the nation, we must enact laws that make our communities the safest in the world,” **Speaker DeLeo** said. “I believe this legislation give us the tools and foundation to reach that goal. I thank Dean McDevitt, the task force and my colleagues in the House for their commitment to creating such a thoughtful, deliberate and comprehensive bill.”

“The members of the Committee to Reduce Firearm Violence are very pleased that so many of our recommendations and each of the most important recommendations have been included in the legislation filed by Speaker DeLeo,” said **Dr. McDevitt**, Chair of the Committee to Reduce Firearm Violence.

"The task of addressing the approximate 60 bills filed this session related to firearms has been a long and arduous one," said **Representative Harold Naughton, Jr.** (D-Clinton), Chair of the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security. "As we reach the end of this process, I commend the efforts of Speaker DeLeo, as well as my legislative colleagues as they have been exceptionally helpful in providing assistance and insight on this matter. I am confident that this new comprehensive piece of legislation takes deliberate action to reduce the number crimes and fatalities caused by firearms, while simultaneously upholding the second amendments right of every resident throughout the Commonwealth."

This legislation emphasizes the House's focus on treating mental health and substance addiction. It includes a number of provisions to ensure law enforcement officials have appropriate public documents relating to applicants' health and criminal histories and requires courts to report information regarding domestic violence, substance abuse and mental health. It brings Massachusetts into compliance with the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 so that all information under the control of Massachusetts' Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS) allowed by law, including commitment records, is transferred to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The bill also heightens suicide prevention efforts and related training for educators, health care providers and firearm owners and dealers.

To improve violence prevention, the bill creates a more standardized licensing process and streamlines record-keeping efforts. The Executive Office of Public Safety and Security (EOPSS) must establish a specific and uniform suitability standard for both licenses to carry and FID cards. While law enforcement officials have a procedure for issuing a license to carry, which is used to purchase or possess any legal firearm including hand guns, this bill establishes a similar process for the issuance of an FID card by creating a suitability standard. FID cards are used for the purchase and possession of a shotgun or rifle. The bill also requires local licensing authorities to trace any firearm used to commit a crime within its jurisdiction and to report relevant data.

The legislation includes provisions that will have immediate effects on school safety as well as provisions that will result in identifying best practices:

- Increases the penalty for carrying a firearm on school grounds and makes the offense a statutory right of arrest;
- Requires schools to develop plans to address the mental health needs of their students;
- Establishes a special commission to make recommendations regarding school emergency response plans;
- Requires schools to have two-way communication devices for specific use with police and fire officials;

- Establishes a special commission to study and report on mental, emotional and behavioral health in public schools.

The legislation includes numerous provisions to increase accountability and oversight for firearms dealers and gun owners:

- Increases the fine for failure to report a lost or stolen firearm;
- Requires applicants renewing their licenses or FID cards to verify that they have not lost any firearms or had any firearms stolen since the applicant's last renewal or issuance;
- Establishes a criminal penalty for gun dealers who fail to report a lost or stolen weapon;
- Requires gun dealers to obtain criminal offender record information (CORI) prior to hiring new employees;
- Mandates that all secondary market gun sales take place at a location operated by a licensed firearm dealer and requires the dealer to submit specific information to DCJIS.

The legislation also:

- Eliminates Class B licenses. All licenses to carry will now have the same conditions and restrictions;
- Improves administrative efficiencies for license and FID renewals;
- Increases penalties for improper storage of a firearm, rifle or shotgun;
- Develops standardized curriculum for gun safety training;
- Establishes stricter certification process for firearms safety instructor;
- Creates sanctions for carrying a firearm while intoxicated.