

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1844

To provide for a grant program for handgun licensing programs, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 13, 2019

Mr. VAN HOLLEN (for himself, Mr. BLUMENTHAL, and Mr. MURPHY) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide for a grant program for handgun licensing programs, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Handgun Purchaser
5 Licensing Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress finds as follows:

8 (1) In 2017, 91 percent of firearm homicides in
9 the United States, in which a firearm type was spec-
10 ified, were committed with a handgun.

1 (2) Research by top national experts show
2 that—

3 (A) adoption of handgun purchaser licens-
4 ing laws are associated with significant reduc-
5 tions in firearm-related homicides; and

6 (B) repeal of handgun purchaser licensing
7 laws are associated with significant increases in
8 firearm-related homicides.

9 (3) Research on the effects of the adoption of
10 a handgun purchaser licensing law in Connecticut in
11 1995 showed—

12 (A) a 40-percent reduction in the rate of
13 firearm homicide; and

14 (B) a 15-percent reduction in firearm sui-
15 cide rates during the first 10 years the law was
16 in place.

17 (4) Published research has shown that the re-
18 peal of a handgun purchaser licensing law in Mis-
19 souri in 2007 was associated with—

20 (A) a 27-percent increase in the rate of
21 firearm homicide; and

22 (B) a 16-percent increase in firearm sui-
23 cide rates.

24 (5) In States that have had effective handgun
25 purchaser licensing laws for decades, such as Con-

1 necticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York,
 2 the vast majority of firearms traced to crimes origi-
 3 nated in States that do not have handgun purchaser
 4 licensing laws, which supports the need for handgun
 5 purchaser licensing laws in every State.

6 (6) Research has shown that States with hand-
 7 gun purchaser licensing laws export far fewer fire-
 8 arms for criminal use in other States than States
 9 that lack handgun purchaser licensing laws.

10 **SEC. 3. GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED FOR HANDGUN LI-**
 11 **CENSING.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—Title I of the Omnibus Crime
 13 Control and Safe Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10101
 14 et seq.) is amended by adding at the end the following:

15 **“PART OO—HANDGUN LICENSING GRANT**
 16 **PROGRAM**

17 **“SEC. 3051. DEFINITION.**

18 “In this part, the term ‘handgun’ has the meaning
 19 given the term in section 921(a) of title 18, United States
 20 Code.

21 **“SEC. 3052. GRANT PROGRAM.**

22 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may
 23 award grants to States, units of local government, and In-
 24 dian tribes for the development, implementation, and eval-
 25 uation of handgun purchaser licensing requirements.

1 “(b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts
2 appropriated to carry out this part, and not later than
3 90 days after such amounts are appropriated, the Attor-
4 ney General shall award grants, on a competitive basis,
5 to eligible applicants whose applications are approved
6 under subsection (c) to assist such applicants in imple-
7 menting and improving handgun purchaser licensing pro-
8 grams.

9 “(c) APPLICATION.—To be eligible to receive a grant
10 under this part, a State, unit of local government, or In-
11 dian tribe shall submit to the Attorney General an applica-
12 tion at such time, in such manner, and containing such
13 information as the Attorney General may require, includ-
14 ing—

15 “(1) a description of the law that the applicant
16 has enacted to require a license for any purchase of
17 a handgun including a description of any other ex-
18 emptions to such law; and

19 “(2) a description of how the applicant will use
20 the grant to carry out or improve its handgun pur-
21 chaser licensing program.

22 “(d) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible
23 for a grant under this part, an applicant shall have in ef-
24 fect a handgun purchaser licensing law that includes, with

1 respect to an individual applying for a handgun license
2 or permit, the following requirements:

3 “(1) The individual shall be—

4 “(A) not less than 21 years old; and

5 “(B) a citizen or national of the United
6 States or an alien lawfully admitted for perma-
7 nent residence (as those terms are defined in
8 section 101(a) of the Immigration and Nation-
9 ality Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a))).

10 “(2) The individual shall apply for the handgun
11 purchaser license or permit at a law enforcement
12 agency in the State in which the individual resides.

13 “(3) The individual shall reapply for the hand-
14 gun purchaser license or permit after a period not
15 longer than 5 years.

16 “(4) The individual shall, in connection with the
17 application for the handgun purchaser license or
18 permit—

19 “(A) submit to a background investigation
20 and a criminal history check, as established by
21 the State, which shall ensure, at a minimum,
22 that the individual is not prohibited from pos-
23 sessing a firearm under section 922(g) of title
24 18, United States Code; and

25 “(B) submit fingerprints and photographs.

1 “(5) An individual who is prohibited from pos-
2 sessing a firearm under section 922(g) of title 18,
3 United States Code, may not be issued a handgun
4 purchasing license or permit.

5 “(e) USE OF FUNDS.—Grant funds awarded under
6 this part shall be used to improve the handgun purchaser
7 licensing program of that grant recipient.”.

8 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section
9 1001(a) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe
10 Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10261(a)) is amended by
11 adding at the end the following:

12 “(29) There are authorized to be appropriated such
13 sums as may be necessary to carry out part OO.”.

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