

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 770

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 16, 2021

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 authorize 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 2019, 91.3 percent of firearm homicides
9 in the United States in which a firearm type was
10 specified 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 27.8-percent reduction in the rate of
13 firearm homicide; and

14 (B) a 32.8-percent reduction in firearm
15 suicide rates.

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

19 (A) a 47.3-percent increase in the rate of
20 firearm homicide; and

21 (B) a 23.5-percent increase in firearm sui-
22 cide rates.

23 (5) In States that have had effective handgun
24 purchaser licensing laws for decades, such as Con-
25 necticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and New York,

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

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

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

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

14 **“PART PP—HANDGUN LICENSING GRANT**
 15 **PROGRAM**

16 **“SEC. 3061. DEFINITION.**

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

20 **“SEC. 3062. GRANT PROGRAM.**

21 “(a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may
 22 award grants to States, units of local government, and In-
 23 dian tribes for the development, implementation, and eval-
 24 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 exemp-
 18 tions 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 the
 25 following requirements:

1 “(1) With respect to an individual applying for
2 a handgun license or permit—

3 “(A) the individual shall be—

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

5 “(ii) a citizen or national of the
6 United States or an alien lawfully admitted
7 for permanent residence (as those terms
8 are defined in section 101(a) of the Immi-
9 gration and Nationality Act (8 U.S.C.
10 1101(a)));

11 “(B) the individual shall apply for the
12 handgun purchaser license or permit at a law
13 enforcement agency in the State in which the
14 individual resides;

15 “(C) the individual shall reapply for the
16 handgun purchaser license or permit after a pe-
17 riod not longer than 5 years; and

18 “(D) the individual shall, in connection
19 with the application for the handgun purchaser
20 license or permit—

21 “(i) submit to a background investiga-
22 tion and a criminal history check, as estab-
23 lished by the State, which shall ensure, at
24 a minimum, that the individual is not pro-
25 hibited from possessing a firearm under

1 section 922(g) of title 18, United States
2 Code; and

3 “(ii) submit fingerprints and photo-
4 graphs.

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

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

12 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—Section
13 1001(a) of title I of the Omnibus Crime Control and Safe
14 Streets Act of 1968 (34 U.S.C. 10261(a)) is amended by
15 adding at the end the following:

16 “(29) There are authorized to be appropriated such
17 sums as may be necessary to carry out part PP.”.

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