
OLR Bill Analysis

sSB 16

AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE.

SUMMARY

This bill reestablishes the state's firearm trafficking task force and renames it the firearms crimes and tracing task force. Under the bill, as under current law, this task force's charge is the cooperative enforcement of the state's gun distribution and possession laws. The task force consists of local and state law enforcement officers and may also include federal law enforcement officers.

The bill allocates \$1.25 million per year in FYs 23 and 24 of American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds to the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to fund the task force.

Under existing law, the task force's responsibilities include, among other things, (1) identifying people illegally trafficking in firearms and focusing resources on prosecuting them and (2) tracking illegally sold or distributed firearms and implementing strategies to take them from illegal possessors. The bill requires the task force, starting by February 1, 2023, to annually report to the governor and Judiciary and Public Safety and Security committees on (1) the number of traffickers identified and arrested, (2) the number of trafficked firearms seized, and (3) any of the task force's other activities during the prior year.

It also requires the DESPP commissioner to study the feasibility of creating a state license to sell firearms (see BACKGROUND). He must do so in consultation with representatives of a national firearms industry trade association that advocates for safe recreational shooting and hunting. By December 31, 2022, the commissioner must report the study's findings to the Judiciary and Public Safety and Security committees.

Lastly, the bill makes technical and conforming changes.

EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2022, except the funding allocation and DESPP study provisions take effect upon passage.

BACKGROUND

Federal Firearms License and Local Dealer’s Permit

Federal law requires anyone in the business of selling firearms to have a federal firearms license (18 U.S.C. § 921 et seq.). Under state law, federally licensed gun dealers who sell handguns must also have a local permit (i.e., a dealer’s permit) to sell handguns (issued by police chiefs, borough wardens, or first selectmen), as must anyone who sells 10 or more handguns in a calendar year (CGS § 29-28(a)).

Related Bill

sSB 430 (File 433), reported favorably by the Government Administration and Elections Committee, appropriates \$250,000 to DESPP in FY 23 to fund the state’s firearm trafficking task force.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Judiciary Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 35 Nay 4 (03/31/2022)