



CITIZENS CRIME COMMISSION OF NEW YORK CITY

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Contact: Alexis Grenell (917) 327-1180 or agrenell@gmail.com

Richard Aborn's Statement on Governor's Proposed Gun Package

NEW YORK-The Citizens Crime Commission of New York City applauds Governor Cuomo's commitment to curb gun violence and illegal weapons in New York State. This is a watershed moment for the gun control movement. The Governor has a real opportunity to set the agenda for the nation by proposing a comprehensive solution. The legislature has the opportunity to show that both parties can put aside their differences and swiftly join in the fight to protect the public; we deserve no less. Gun violence is a national epidemic that all Americans, gun owners and non-gun owners alike, deplore. After Newtown and Webster, there can be no doubt that a strong gun policy is paramount to public safety. Since the passage of the progressive Sullivan Act in 1911, New York State has had some of the most effective gun control laws in the nation. Governor Cuomo continues this important leadership role as the nation continues to tackle the scourge of gun violence.

Background

In his 2013 State of the State Address, Governor Cuomo announced his plan to protect public safety through comprehensive measures to prevent gun violence:

Safe and Fair Gun Policy: There have been far too many lives claimed as a result of gun violence in recent years, from Columbine, to Virginia Tech, Aurora, Newtown, and Webster. New York once led the way: 'Sullivan's Law' of 1911 was the nation's first gun control law—a model law that required a permit for possession of a hand gun. The time has come to make New York safer and once again lead the way for other states to follow.

We Must Pass the Toughest Assault Weapons Ban in the Country: New York's ban on assault weapons is so riddled with loopholes and so difficult to understand that it has become virtually unenforceable. While state law bans magazines with a capacity greater than ten rounds of ammunition, the law exempts magazines manufactured prior to 1994. Because magazines are not generally stamped with a serial number or other mark that would identify the date of manufacture, it is virtually impossible to determine whether a large capacity magazine was manufactured prior to 1994. In order to fix this problem, the Governor proposed tightening our assault weapons ban and eliminating large capacity magazines regardless of date of manufacture.

Preventing Private Sales to Prohibited Persons: While New York mandates that individuals buying guns from dealers or at gun shows be checked to determine whether they have a criminal record, suffer from mental illness, or otherwise are in a category of persons prohibited from owning guns, no such checks are done when a gun is sold privately. The Governor announced that he will propose requiring that any sale in New York State between private parties be subject to the same background checks.

Enhanced Penalties: To effectively deter the flow and use of illegal guns on our streets, the Governor announced that he will propose enhancing penalties for those who illegally buy guns, for those who use guns on school property, and for those who engage in violent and serious drug-related gang activity.

Reporting by Mental Health Professionals: Governor Cuomo announced that he will propose measures to ensure that when a mental health professional determines that a firearm owner is likely to engage in conduct that would result in serious harm to self or others, that risk may be reported and the gun removed by law enforcement authorities.

One State, One Standard: Currently, licenses for handguns are issued by the county in which the gun owner lives, many of which are valid for life. As a result, while certain checks are run at the time a license is issued, once a license is obtained, there is no subsequent check to determine whether the holder is still eligible to own a gun. The Governor announced that he will propose a single standard across the state to ensure that appropriate checks can be run to bar convicted felons and other prohibited people from possessing firearms.

Combating Gun Violence in the State's Most Violent Neighborhoods: The state will continue to implement programs that successfully reduce gun violence in high-crime neighborhoods. Pilot programs currently under way that employ a series of actions, including law enforcement, community members and service providers delivering a message that conveys facts about the consequences of further violence, have resulted in big reductions in gun violence over a short period of time.

About the Crime Commission

The Citizens Crime Commission of New York City is a non-partisan non-profit organization working to make criminal justice and public safety policies and practices more effective through innovation, research, and education. In the last three decades, the Crime Commission has been a leader on key issues such as: increasing the size of the NYPD, expanding the use of DNA evidence in crime fighting, creating innovations that reduce juvenile crime, developing interventions against gun violence and illegal gun crime, and highlighting the changing nature of the threat of terrorism.

For more information please visit our website at: www.nycrimecommission.org