

116TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. _____

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

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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

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. DEFINITIONS.**

11 In this Act—

12 (1) the terms “Attorney General”, “State”, and
13 “handgun” have the meanings given those terms in
14 section 921(a) of title 18, United States Code; and

15 (2) the term “Indian tribe” has the meaning
16 given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Deter-
17 mination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C.
18 5304).

19 **SEC. 4. GRANT PROGRAM AUTHORIZED FOR HANDGUN LI-**
20 **CENSING.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Attorney General may award
22 grants to States, units of local government, and Indian
23 tribes for the development, implementation, and evalua-
24 tion of handgun purchaser licensing requirements.

1 (b) PROGRAM AUTHORIZED.—From the amounts ap-
2 propriated to carry out this Act and not later than 90
3 days after such amounts are appropriated, the Attorney
4 General shall award grants, on a competitive basis, to eli-
5 gible applicants whose applications are approved under
6 subsection (c) to assist such applicants in implementing
7 and improving handgun purchaser licensing programs.

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

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

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

21 (d) ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS.—To be eligible for
22 grants, an applicant shall have in effect handgun pur-
23 chaser licensing laws that include the following provisions:

24 (1) An individual applying for a handgun li-
25 cense or permit must be not less than 21 years old

1 and be a national or lawful permanent resident of
2 the United States.

3 (2) Such an individual must apply for the hand-
4 gun purchaser license or permit at a law enforce-
5 ment agency in the State in which they reside.

6 (3) Such an individual must reapply for the
7 handgun purchaser license or permit after a period
8 not longer than 5 years.

9 (4) Such an individual must submit to a back-
10 ground investigation, and a criminal history check,
11 in connection with their application, as established
12 by the State, which background investigation and
13 criminal history check ensure, at a minimum, that
14 such individual is not prohibited from possessing a
15 firearm under section 922(g) of title 18, United
16 States Code.

17 (5) Such an individual must submit fingerprints
18 and photographs in connection with the application
19 for the license or permit.

20 (6) Any individual who is prohibited from pos-
21 sessing a firearm under section 922(g) of title 18,
22 United States Code, may not receive a license or
23 permit.

1 (e) USE OF FUNDS.—A recipient of a grant under
2 this Act shall use such grant to improve handgun pur-
3 chaser licensing programs of that grantee.

4 **SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

5 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
6 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.