



Policy Option:

HB 4393 & SB 1915: Restricting Bulk Handgun Sales to Deter Illegal Trafficking

What does it mean?

Laws restricting bulk sales and purchases of handguns are designed to reduce the number of guns entering the illegal market and to stem the flow of firearms between states. Gun traffickers often buy firearms in bulk, then turn around and sell them on the street, often in states with more restrictive gun laws. Studies show that handguns sold in bulk sales to the same individual purchaser are frequently used in crime.¹ Research has shown that limiting gun purchases to no more than one per month can reduce interstate gun trafficking.²

What would it *really* do?

Laws that limit handgun sales and purchases to one per person per month impose reasonable limits on the number of handguns that may be sold at one time to a single purchaser, thereby preventing traffickers from buying guns in bulk to resell to criminals.

Law-abiding citizens who want to defend their families against intruders would be able to purchase as many as twelve handguns each year, or 24 handguns in the case of a married couple. Collectors could seek an exemption to enable them to purchase larger quantities. Additionally, hunters and sportsmen would not be affected, as this policy is aimed at preventing handgun trafficking and therefore does not regulate shotguns and rifles.

What does the public think?

- Nearly 3 out of 4 (72%) Illinois voters favor limiting the number of handguns an individual can purchase to one handgun per month, with a majority (55%) strongly in support of such a measure. To read more polling results from the 2007 Voter Survey on Gun Regulations, go to www.icpgv.org/icpgv_polling.html.
- A January 2006 Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research and The Tarrance Group survey, on behalf of Mayors Against Illegal Guns, found that 57% of Americans favored a law limiting the number of handguns an individual can purchase to one per month.

What are the facts?

- Of all firearm homicides in 2002 in which the type of gun was known, 77% were committed with handguns.³

- A study of ATF crime gun trace data revealed that 22% of all handguns recovered in crime in 1999 had been transferred to a purchaser involved in a multiple sale.⁴ Crime gun trace data from 2000 showed that 20% of all retail handguns recovered in crime were purchased as part of a multiple sale.⁵
- A 1995 study of Virginia's one-gun-a-month law found the percent of guns traced back to a Virginia gun dealer after the law went into effect was reduced by 71% for guns recovered in New York and 72% for guns recovered in Massachusetts.⁶

Have Other States or Jurisdictions Enacted Similar Legislation?

California, Maryland and Virginia have all enacted legislation which restricts handgun sales or purchases to one per person per month to help stop bulk sales of handguns for trafficking.⁷ Cook County, Riverdale and Elmwood Park prohibit firearms dealers from transferring more than one firearm per transferee in any thirty day period.⁸

Final Thought

Prosecuting gun traffickers occurs after a crime has been committed. By cutting off a source of illegal handguns, a limit on bulk handgun sales is meant to prevent trafficking and gun violence before they occur.

Pending Legislation

HB 4393 (Sponsored by Rep Luis Arroyo)

SB 1915 (Sponsored by Senator Mattie Hunter)

This bill would make it illegal for anyone to sell more than one handgun in any 30-day period, and for anyone to purchase more than one handgun in any 30-day period. Collectors may apply for an exemption and must undergo an enhanced background check.

¹ See, e.g., Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, Crime Gun Trace Reports (2000) National Report* 52 (2002); Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, Crime Gun Trace Reports (1999) National Report* 37 (2000).

² Daniel W. Webster, ScD, MPH, Center for Gun Policy and Research, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Baltimore, MD, *How Cities Can Combat Illegal Guns and Gun Violence* 3, (Updated October 23, 2006).

³ Federal Bureau of Investigation, U.S. Department of Justice, *Crime in the United States 2002: Uniform Crime Reports* 22 (2003).

⁴ *Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, Crime Gun Trace Reports (1999) National Report*, supra note 9, at 37.

⁵ *Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative, Crime Gun Trace Reports (2000) National Report*, supra note 1.

⁶ Douglas Weil & Rebecca C. Knox, *Evaluating the Impact of Virginia's One-Gun-A-Month Law*, The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, Executive Summary & 7 (Aug. 1995).

⁷ Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, "One-Gun-Per-Month" Laws: Frequently Asked Questions available at <http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/faqs/?page=onegun> (last visited Feb. 23, 2007).

⁸ Legal Community Against Violence, Illinois Local Ordinance Summary, One-Gun-A-Month Section, at <http://www.lcav.org/states/illocalord.asp#OneGunPerMonth>.