

# FACT SHEET

Senator Marty Block (D –39)

Require Hand Gun Safety Certificate and Eliminate 30 Day Loan Requirement

## PURPOSE

This measure will eliminate unregulated gun loans with exceptions, including hunting, to limit legal access to weapons by persons without a background check. It also will establish an annual Handgun Safety Certificate to improve handgun safety.

## BACKGROUND

Current law generally requires that all firearm transactions (sale, loan, or transfer) between two parties must be done through a licensed firearms dealer. However, existing law allows persons who are personally known to each other to avoid this requirement if the loan is infrequent, is for a lawful purpose, and does not exceed 30 days. This exception provides a loophole that could result in persons having access to weapons when in fact they are legally prohibited from doing so. This bill will remove this loophole.

California's current Handgun Safety Certificate (HSC) law is designed to ensure that persons who obtain handguns have a basic familiarity with those firearms, including but not limited to the safe handling and storage of those firearms. However, the current renewal is every five years and only applies to purchases of new handguns.

By requiring annual handgun safety training accidental handgun violence and accidents can be reduced. Examples that the Department of Justice use as accidents that could have been avoided if the basic gun safety rules had been practiced:

- Two young children playing in their home found a loaded handgun with the magazine removed on a bedside table.
- A handgun owner assumed a handgun was unloaded. While cleaning it, he accidentally

fired the handgun, causing injury to himself.

- While practicing target shooting, a shooter was distracted by a noise behind her. She turned with her finger on the trigger and accidentally fired, injuring a person standing nearby.

## NEED FOR THE BILL

Every handgun owner should understand and follow handgun safety practices, have a basic familiarity with the operation, handling, and storage of a handgun, and be fully aware of the responsibility of handgun ownership. Studies show that easy access to loaded handguns in homes is a major cause of accidental shootings of children.

In February 2012, a 17-year-old entered Chardon High School in Ohio armed with a handgun and fired 10 rounds in the school's cafeteria, killing three students and wounding two others. One week earlier, an 8-year-old girl in Washington was critically wounded in her third grade class when a gun accidentally discharged in a backpack. While these two shootings might seem very different, the common characteristic is that both children acquired their guns in the same way, by taking them from their family members' homes.

In 2010, there were a total of 2,811 gun deaths in California including 1,465 gun suicides. In 2011 California reported 504 people received unintentional injuries from firearms and 96 people had self-inflicted injuries caused by guns. While California currently requires a Handgun Safety Certificate when purchasing a handgun, there is no annual education or training requirements.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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