

# FACT SHEET

Senator Loni Hancock (D – 09)  
Large Capacity Ammunition Magazines

## PURPOSE

This measure will prohibit the possession of large capacity ammunition magazines (defined as ammunition feeding devices holding more than 10 rounds.)

## BACKGROUND

In 2011, Jared Lee Loughner was able to fire 31 bullets in 15 seconds because he had supersized his Glock 19 handgun with a high-capacity magazine. In that 15 seconds he shot 19 people – killing federal Judge John Roll and five others and wounding 13 others, including U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords.

Loughner's massacre ended only when he stopped to reload and bystanders wrestled him to the ground. If he had used a standard magazine and was forced to reload earlier, some of his victims might have been spared.

In 1999, the Legislature passed SB 23 (Perata) which prohibited the possession of assault weapons, such as the AK-47 and created a generic definition of an assault weapon. As part of that legislation, the importation, manufacture and sale of large capacity ammunition magazines was strictly prohibited. However, the possession of high capacity magazines was not prohibited.

Federal law also outlawed possession of high capacity magazines as part of the 1994 federal assault weapons ban but allowed current owners to keep them under a “grandfathering” provision. The federal assault weapons ban was allowed to expire in 2004. Research has shown that, prior to

the implementation of the federal assault weapons ban, these high capacity magazines were used in between 14 and 26% of guns used in crime.

## NEED FOR THE BILL

High capacity ammunition magazines are ammunition feeding devices that hold more than ten rounds of ammunition. These magazines can hold upwards of 100 rounds of ammunition and allow a shooter to rapidly fire without reloading.

High capacity magazines are **not** designed for hunting or target shooting. High capacity magazines are military designed devices. They are designed for one purpose only -- to allow a shooter to fire a large number of bullets in a short period of time.

This bill will make clear that possession of these devices is also prohibited. Law enforcement officers have told us that, because the Penal Code currently fails to specifically prohibit possession, the law is very difficult to enforce. This needs to be fixed and this measure addresses that by prohibiting the possession.

Prohibiting possession of these high capacity magazines is just one important part of the comprehensive strategy being proposed today to reduce gun violence in California.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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