

FACT SHEET

Senator Darrell Steinberg (D – 09)

Fixed Magazines on Long Guns and Firearm Ownership Record

PURPOSE

This bill will prohibit the future sale, purchase, manufacture, importation, or transfer in California of semi-automatic rifles that can accept detachable magazines. Specifically, this bill will amend the current definition of illegal “assault weapon” to include a semiautomatic, rimfire, or centerfire rifle that does not have a fixed magazine with the capacity to accept ten or fewer rounds.

This bill will also require California gun owners to submit a Firearm Ownership Record to the Department of Justice for guns not covered under current law.

BACKGROUND

The Sandy Hook Elementary School is only one of many tragedies depicting the devastating lethality of military-style, rapid-rate-of-fire weapons. On July 20, 2012, twelve people were killed and 58 others were injured within a few minutes of an assailant entering a movie theater in Aurora Colorado. That shooter was armed with a .223-caliber Smith & Wesson M&P15 (an AR-15 assault rifle variant), a .40 caliber Glock semiautomatic pistol, and a Remington 12 gauge shotgun. He had fitted his Smith & Wesson assault rifle with a drum magazine capable of holding 100 rounds of ammunition in a single loading. On July 22, 2011, a shooter armed with a Ruger Mini-14 and a Glock 34 pistol shot and killed 69 people and wounded 110 others at a children’s summer camp in Norway. Both of the weapons used in Norway currently are legal in California. The common characteristic of the firearms used in these mass shootings is the ability to detach a magazine and rapidly reload.

In 1989, California passed the Roberti-Roos Act, the first statewide law in the nation designed to ban assault weapons. Soon after its passage, however, the firearms industry made minor cosmetic changes to many banned assault weapons evading the intent of the law and allowing their continued sale. In 1999, California moved to update the law to address the industry’s actions again.

California’s assault weapons laws have long been regarded as the toughest in the country. But, even these laws have loopholes and gaps that the gun manufacturers have exploited.

As these horrific tragedies demonstrate, rifles with detachable magazines pose an utterly unacceptable risk to the public health and well-being. Any rifle designed or modified to accept a detachable magazine can be converted into rapid-rate-of-fire weaponry that belongs on the battlefield, not in our streets and neighborhoods.

Rifles with detachable magazines have a virtually unlimited capacity to kill. It is this specific feature that this bill targets: the ability to shoot unchecked semiautomatic gunfire. By focusing on the function of these weapons and not just their form, this bill is aimed at the commercialization of mass killing machines, not the rights of sporting gun and hunting enthusiasts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Office of Senator Darrell Steinberg: 916-651-4006.