



Board of Commissioners of Cook County

118 North Clark Street
Chicago, IL

Legislation Text

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PROPOSED RESOLUTION

A RESOLUTION URGING THE ILLINOIS GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO INSTITUTE STATEWIDE LICENSING AND REGULATION OF GUN DEALERS AND RANGES

WHEREAS, on average 1,000 people die each year from gunshot wounds in our state. The gun death toll in Illinois in 2013 included 576 homicides and 496 suicides; and

WHEREAS, guns are used in over 70% of all homicides in Illinois; and

WHEREAS, the price of one gun homicide costs an average of \$441,000 in direct costs (including law enforcement, medical expenses, court costs, and prison), of which 87% is paid by taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, each gun death averages about \$6 million in total costs, including both direct and indirect costs; and

WHEREAS, Chicago police officers recover more than twice the number of crime guns per capita than in Los Angeles, and more than seven times than in New York City; and

WHEREAS, according to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (“ATF”) almost all the guns recovered after being used in crimes were originally sold by retail dealers; and

WHEREAS, corrupt gun dealers represent a major source of illegally trafficked firearms, making oversight of dealers critical; and

WHEREAS, between 2009 and 2013, four particular gun dealers, each located a short drive outside Chicago, supplied 20% of all guns recovered from Chicago crime scenes. These stores supplied thousands of crime guns; and

WHEREAS, firearms dealers are subject to very little federal oversight, and on average are inspected only once a decade, primarily because ATF lacks the resources and authority to monitor the 138,000 gun dealers, manufacturers, collectors, and others that it licenses; and

WHEREAS, lack of oversight makes it far too easy for gun dealers to turn a blind eye to “straw purchasers,” and other traffickers who fill out the paperwork and undergo background checks in order to provide guns to criminals or other people ineligible to possess guns; and

WHEREAS, states that do not permit or require law enforcement inspections of gun dealers are the sources of crime guns recovered in other states at a rate that is 50% greater than states that do, showing that illegal trafficking of guns could be substantially reduced with better oversight of gun dealers; and

WHEREAS, measures such as law enforcement inspections, background checks for employees, inventory inspections, video surveillance and improved security, and restrictions on the location of gun dealers and ranges, would promote best practices, discourage theft, and thwart illegal sales and straw purchases; and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois possesses the infrastructure and resources to institute licensing and regulation of gun dealerships, by requiring them to obtain a state license from the Department of Financial & Professional Regulation

(IDPFR); and

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois licenses and regulates a wide range of professions to promote public safety, health, and welfare, from acupuncturists and cosmetologists to real estate appraisers and professional geologists, but not gun dealers; and

WHEREAS, too many Illinois families have suffered the loss of a loved one and too many innocent people have been injured or lost their lives as bystanders or victims of gun crimes; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the President and the Cook County Board of Commissioners hereby petition the Illinois General Assembly to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the general public in Illinois by requiring firearms dealers and ammunition sellers to obtain a state license and conduct business responsibly to avoid the diversion of guns into the illegal market.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Cook County Clerk notifies the Illinois General Assembly and the Governor of this request.