

Rauner signs firearms trafficking bill to help protect communities from gun violence

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CHICAGO – Governor Bruce Rauner today signed HB 6303 to strengthen laws against gun trafficking in Illinois. The bill enhances penalties for firearms trafficking and aims to reduce the growing gun violence epidemic. This will help keep our kids and communities safe by allowing our law enforcement agencies to take action on those who are trafficking guns.

“We must stand up and help our kids and our communities find safety from violence,” said Governor Rauner. “Children are often in the crossfire. They’re vulnerable and impressionable. They deserve to see better things in the world. They deserve to feel safe in their own homes. They should not fear that guns will take the life of their friends, their family members, or even themselves. They should not live in fear or have their innocence shattered.”

The Governor signed the bill at the Illinois State Police (ISP) crime lab in Chicago and was joined by House Republican Leader Jim Durkin (R-Western Springs) and Senate Republican Leader Christine Radogno (R-Lemont), the chief legislative sponsors of the bill.

“425 people have been murdered by firearms in Chicago this year and another 2320 have been shot and wounded. Each weekend in Chicago is bloodier than the last,” House Republican Leader Durkin said. “Many of the shootings involved illegally acquired guns by Chicago street gangs. It is estimated that approximately 60 percent of guns used to commit violent crimes in Chicago were purchased outside of Illinois. The laws are more focused on holding the shooter accountable, but not the person who armed the shooter. That changes today with House Bill 6303.

“This law targets straw purchasers – those who skirt Illinois firearm laws by buying guns in other states with the intent to resell in the illegal black markets of Illinois,” Leader Durkin added. “The Cook County State’s Attorney’s Office brought this legislation to me and I am honored to have sponsored the bill in the Illinois House of Representatives. I thank the Illinois General Assembly for their bi-partisan unanimous support.”

“The statistics clearly demonstrate a continuing and increasing trend that jeopardizes public safety in Illinois,” Senate Republican Leader Radogno said. “People who cannot legally purchase guns in Illinois are going to states with more lax background check requirements and bringing them back into our state with criminal intent. These weapons are quickly used in the commission of crimes and add to the unconscionable gun violence here. This new law will be another tool to stop the flow of these illegally transferred weapons.”

HB 6303 makes it a felony for a person who has not been issued a FOID card to bring firearms into the state with the intention of selling or delivering them. Furthermore, if the individual trafficking in gun sales has previously been convicted of an unlawful use or delivery of a firearm, gunrunning or firearm trafficking, they will face even stiffer penalties. It is important to note that this bill does not take guns out of the hands of anyone that safely and legally has or carries a firearm. It exempts FOID card holders specifically for that reason.

This bill is designed to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and off our streets.

"Gun violence takes innocent lives and disrupts peaceful communities. The Firearms Trafficking Bill enhances penalties for those who choose to support gun violence while protecting the rights of law abiding citizens," said ISP Director Leo Schmitz. "The Illinois State Police is working closely with local, county and federal law enforcement to keep Illinois communities safe. Together with the help of good citizens, we can keep guns out of the hands of dangerous criminals. If you See Something, Say Something."