

# Fireworks Ban Makes Outlaws Out Of Illinoisans On Independence Day

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For nearly 80 years, Illinoisans have voted against the state fireworks ban by crossing state lines each July to buy fireworks, despite threatened penalties.

The state is now one of four nationwide to prohibit celebrating Independence Day with fireworks.

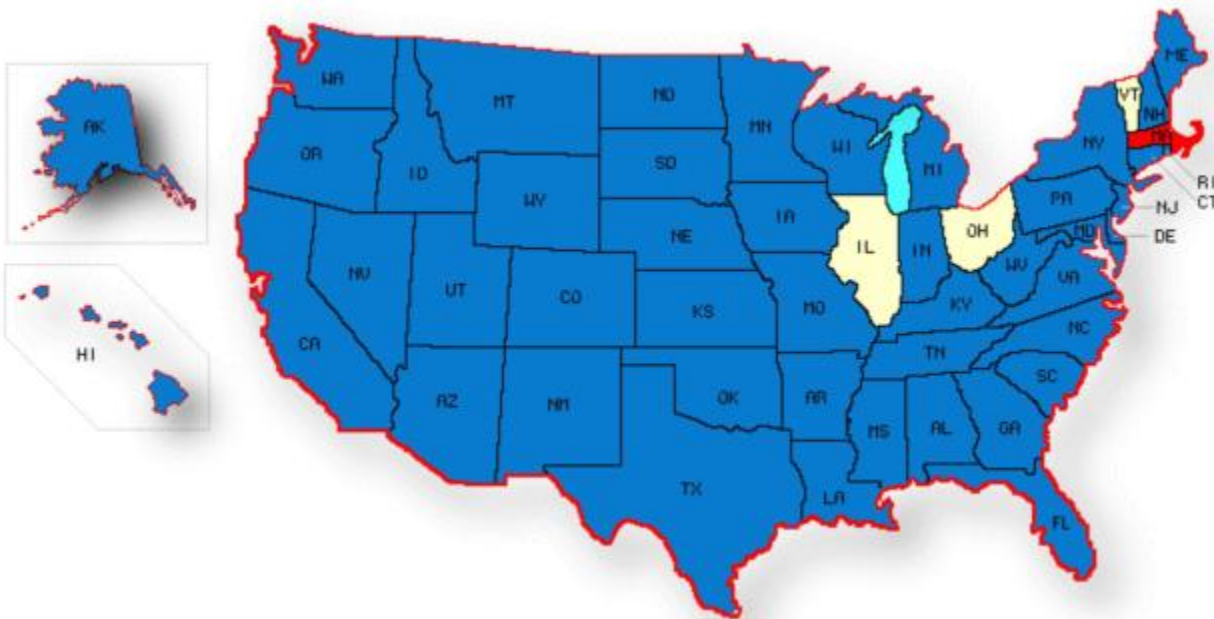
On Independence Day, Americans celebrate the freedoms guaranteed by countless sacrifices of others with parades through town, backyard barbecues and shooting off fireworks.

Just listen around July 4, and you know how many Illinoisans celebrate with backyard fireworks. But Illinois considers them [lawbreakers](#), with fines up to \$2,500 or a year in prison.

The Land of Lincoln remains one of the [four most restrictive states](#) in the nation on residents' ability to buy and use fireworks this Independence Day. Along with Vermont and Ohio, Illinois bans the use or purchase of fireworks other than novelty items such as sparklers, small noisemakers and smoke bombs. Massachusetts bans fireworks completely.

### **Illinois among few states to ban most fireworks**

Illinois is one of four states limiting residents to sparklers or other novelty fireworks, and Ohio is considering allowing consumer fireworks. Only Massachusetts bans all fireworks.



Illinois' Pyrotechnic Use Act makes the possession, transportation, or use of illegal fireworks a Class A misdemeanor punishable by fines up to \$2,500 or a year in prison. Carrying fireworks across state lines is also a federal offense.

Most fireworks have been illegal in Illinois since [1942](#), when state Rep. William G. Thon, R-Chicago, first drafted the bill. Since then, state residents who disagreed with the law have taken their business and tax dollars across state lines – with everyday Illinoisans risking fines and confinement to celebrate independence.

Illinoisans [flock](#) to neighboring Midwest states to stock up for Independence Day celebrations, costing the state jobs and tax revenue. Indiana brings in [\\$2.5 million](#) each year in tax revenue by imposing a 5% tax on pyrotechnics – atop the sales taxes – and a \$276 retailer fee, according to the [Tax Foundation](#).

In 2019, roughly [4,000](#) seasonal jobs were created by Indiana's fireworks businesses. Especially in towns near the Indiana state line, this is economic activity Illinois is voluntarily watching leave the state.

Nationwide, Americans spent [\\$1.9 billion](#) on consumer fireworks last year.

While fire and explosions are dangerous, proponents of the Illinois fireworks ban argue limiting the sale of fireworks to novelty items reduces the chance of residents seriously injuring themselves. Statistics show there is little logic behind what Illinois allows and bans.

Nationwide, there were [10,000](#) fireworks injuries requiring a trip to the emergency room in 2019, with sparklers causing 2.25 times as many injuries as bottle rockets. Illinois allows sparklers but bans bottle rockets.

Since 2011, eight states have [legalized](#) fireworks use. Ohio also introduced [legislation](#) this year that would allow residents to shoot off fireworks on specific holidays, including Independence Day.

However, a [2019 report](#) from the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found “there is not a statistically significant trend in estimated emergency department-treated, fireworks-related injuries from 2003 to 2019.”

So Illinois allows fireworks that are more likely to cause injury, injuries have not increased despite more states allowing consumer fireworks and Illinois may soon be one of only three states stopping its residents from celebrating Independence Day with a bang. All that, plus widespread disdain for the fireworks ban may encourage disrespect for other state laws.

On July 3, 1776, [John Adams](#) wrote to his wife that “ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, bonfires and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other from this time forward forever more.”

It is time Illinoisans celebrated Independence Day the way the Founding Fathers envisioned: by igniting a little freedom.