

Durbin, Schneider Introduce Legislation To Reduce Gun Violence From Stolen Firearms

by Emily Hampsten & Matt Fried
February 2 2023 11:52 AM



WASHINGTON – U.S. Senate Majority Whip Dick Durbin (D-IL), Chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, and U.S. Representative Brad Schneider (D-IL-10) today introduced bicameral legislation aimed at reducing gun violence by preventing the theft of firearms from federally-licensed gun dealers (FFLs). *The Safety Enhancements for Communities Using Reasonable and Effective (SECURE) Firearm Storage Act* would

address the problem of “smash and grab” gun store burglaries by requiring all firearms to be securely stored when a federally-licensed gun dealer is not open for business. Additionally, the bill would authorize the Attorney General to review and put forth additional security measures to reduce the risk of theft, and requires a new section on the FFL application for an applicant to describe security plans before a license can be approved.

Gun thefts from FFLs are a significant problem across the country. In 2020 and 2021, FFLs reported a combined 769 burglaries to the ATF, and a total of 8,897 firearms were reported stolen during the burglaries. These stolen guns frequently end up being used in crime; one study found that between 2012 and 2018, nearly 14,800 guns recovered in crimes had been reported as lost or stolen from gun dealers.

“Thousands of guns are stolen from gun dealers each year, and too often these guns are later used to commit violent crimes. Our bill would help prevent ‘smash and grab’ burglaries, which supply criminals with weapons they use to carry out acts of violence in our communities. This common sense legislation will help prevent bloodshed in our neighborhoods,” Durbin said.

“The safe storage of firearms is not only a matter of responsible gun handling, but it’s also a matter of public safety,” said Schneider. “Too often, stolen firearms end up in the hands of those who use them to commit violent crimes in our community. That’s why I am proud to help introduce this legislation to ensure that we are taking proactive measures to stem the flow of stolen guns and reduce gun violence.”

Thefts of guns from FFLs can be deterred by reasonable security measures, and FFLs that fail to take such measures have been the targets of recent burglaries. For example, 13 individuals were arrested in January for allegedly stealing almost 100 firearms from gun stores across Pennsylvania between September and November of last year. On November 3, 2022, 30 weapons, including handguns and rifles, were stolen from a gun store in a smash and grab robbery in Bath Township, Ohio. On October 21, 2022, 31 handguns were stolen from a gun store in Hudson Falls, New York. On October 16 and 17 of last year, thieves stole at least 75 firearms from two gun shops in the Kansas City metro area. In a series of burglaries in June and August of last year, 59 guns were stolen from a gun store in Omaha, Nebraska. On January 7, 2022, 33 firearms were stolen during the burglary of a gun store in Asheville, North Carolina. The *Chicago Tribune* [reported](#) on a gun stolen from a Wisconsin gun store in 2016 – that gun has since been linked to at least 27 shootings in Chicago, Illinois. Such thefts could be prevented if FFLs ensured that their guns were stored securely after business hours.

Along with Durbin, the bill is cosponsored by U.S. Senators Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Ed Markey (D-MA), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Chris Murphy (D-CT), and Tammy Duckworth (D-IL).

In the House, original cosponsors include U.S. Representatives Steve Cohen (D-TN-09), Robin Kelly (D-IL-02), Chellie Pingree (D-ME-01), Jamie Raskin (D-MD-08), Jan Schakowsky (D-IL-09), Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC-AL), James McGovern (D-MA-02), Mike Quigley (D-IL-05), Bill Foster (D-IL-14), and Ro Khanna (D-CA-17).

The legislation has been endorsed by Giffords, Everytown for Gun Safety, and Brady.

In order to decrease the loss or theft of guns from FFLs, the *SECURE Firearm Storage Act* would take several common sense measures. It would:

- Require FFLs, when their premises are closed, to secure all firearms in their inventory either by fastening them to an anchored steel rod or storing them in a locked safe or gun cabinet;
- Require FFLs to store all paper records of firearms transactions in a secure location so the records can be preserved in case they are needed for crime gun tracing investigations;
- Authorize the Attorney General to prescribe regulations with additional security requirements relating to alarm and security cameras, site hardening on FFL premises, and security of electronic records;
- Provide that an FFL that fails to follow these security requirements would face a civil penalty for the first violation; possible FFL license suspension for the second violation; and possible license revocation upon a third violation; and,
- Add a new section to the FFL application for applicants to describe how they will comply with these security requirements, and direct the Attorney General to ensure that an applicant's plan will be compliant before approving a license application.