



# **Reps. Robin Kelly, Cicilline, Lee, Morelle, Panetta, Pascrell Introduce Federal Firearm Licensee Act**

by Eliana Locke  
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WASHINGTON, D.C – Today, Congresswoman Robin L. Kelly (IL-02) led the introduction of the Federal Firearm Licensee Act. This legislation, first introduced in 2021 would update sections in the U.S. Code directed at federal firearms licensees (FFLs) that have not been updated in 30 years. The current rules insulate rogue firearms dealers who engage in unlawful practices from enforcement action and frustrate law enforcement efforts to curb gun trafficking and violence in our communities. Congresswoman Kelly is joined by Reps. David Cicilline (D-RI), Barbara Lee (D-CA), Bill Pascrell (D-NJ), Joe Morelle (D-NY), and Jimmy Panetta (D-CA) as co-leads of the legislation. The legislation has been endorsed by Everytown, Brady, Giffords, Moms Demand Action, and March for our Lives.



The federal government's current approach to governing licensed firearm dealers is inadequate to meet the business, technological and cultural realities of the 21st century. The bill modernizes regulations for existing FFLs by:

- Requiring physical security measures to prevent firearm theft.
- Clarifies the standards by which licensed dealers, and their employees, are assessed for purposes of license issuance and renewal.
- Repeals long-standing Appropriations Riders that have impeded enforcement of existing law by barring the ATF from using funds to require licensed dealers to conduct physical firearm inventories and prohibiting the public disclosure of firearms trace data.
- Increases record retention and electronic data management and sharing for background checks.

“Illegally sold and acquired guns account for more than 50% of the firearms used to commit crimes in Chicago. This is unacceptable,” said Rep. Robin Kelly (IL-02). “A lot has changed in the last 30 years, including how many people acquire guns. It is long past time to bring our gun trafficking laws into the 21<sup>st</sup> century to ensure that our government can adequately respond to the epidemic of gun violence and keep our communities safe. This legislation provides a commonsense approach to ensure that FFLs do not unwittingly provide safe harbor to those illegally trafficking guns into our neighborhoods.”

“There are far too many loopholes in our current background check system. This package will help ensure that all licensed firearms dealers are playing by the rules, and that our laws are keeping up with current technology,” said Congressman Cicilline. “We cannot allow the continuation of unregulated sales of firearms to people who are not meant to own guns under our current laws. I’m proud that this bill includes provisions of my bill, the Fire Sale Loophole Closing Act, to prevent gun dealers who lose their licenses from converting their unsold firearms to personal inventory, which then enables them to then sell this inventory without conducting background checks. I thank and applaud my friend and colleague Congresswoman Kelly for her work on this vital bill.”

“Illegal gun trafficking is a major contributor to the epidemic that is gun violence in America,” said Congresswoman Lee. “With this legislation—which includes my bill to remove the Tiahrt restrictions so the ATF can better collect and report key data to tackle gun trafficking—we can take a step forward in preventing the illicit flow of guns into our communities by closing loopholes in the background check process and holding rogue dealers accountable. I applaud my colleague Congresswoman Kelly for her leadership on this issue, and urge my colleagues to support this bill, put people over politics, and give ATF the tools they need to fight gun violence.”

“We are clearly facing an epidemic of gun violence in our country—but licensed gun dealers are still not required to take basic precautions to stop these dangerous weapons from falling into the wrong hands,” said Congressman Joe Morelle (D-NY). “I have long been an advocate for action to hold firearms dealers accountable for their role in gun trafficking, and I'm proud to sponsor this legislation which includes provisions of my Gun Theft Prevention Act. I appreciate this opportunity to work with my colleagues towards reaching our shared goal of stopping gun violence.”

“Our outdated federal firearm licensing laws aren't keeping pace with the proliferation of rogue firearms dealers or advancements in new technology,” said Rep. Panetta. “I'm proud to work with Rep. Kelly to introduce legislation to improve our system of background checks and ensure proper dealer licensing for firearm purchases. This bill is a comprehensive, common-sense way to prevent guns from getting into the wrong hands and keep Americans safe.”

“Americans are appalled at the state of crime gun tracing in America today,” said Rep. Pascrell (D-NJ), co-chair of the Congressional Law Enforcement Caucus. “Because of an anachronistic law imposed at the behest of the NRA, the ATF is literally banned from using computers to trace firearms used in crimes. Our simple change in this legislation, based on my Crime Gun Tracing Modernization Act, will help prevent crime, will save lives, and will create needed efficiency by finally bringing ATF crime gun tracing into the 21st century. After decades of being hamstrung by extremist NRA policies, the ATF must be given the authority to do its job. I thank Congresswoman Kelly for leading the way to finally enacting the commonsense firearms reform Americans cry out for every day.”

"The fight to end gun violence includes ensuring the careful and effective regulation of federally licensed firearms dealers, importers, and manufacturers. While progress was made last year to address gun trafficking federally, much more needs to be done to ensure that corrupt dealers are not engaging in illicit firearms transfers or gun trafficking. The Federal Firearm Licensee Act fills many gaps within federal law to better regulate the gun industry and prioritize public safety. We thank Congresswoman Kelly for introducing this legislation and her unwavering commitment to ending gun violence," said Adzi Vokhiwa, Giffords Federal Affairs Director

“Right now, the ATF is fighting rogue gun dealers with one hand tied behind its back — which is just how the gun lobby designed it,” said John Feinblatt, president of Everytown for Gun Safety. “This bill would give the ATF the tools it needs to hold rogue gun dealers accountable for putting profits ahead of public safety, and we applaud Rep. Kelly's tireless work to advance it.”

“Gun dealers must ensure their products don’t end up in the wrong hands, and this bill makes sure they don’t shirk that responsibility,” said Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action. “We’re proud to stand in strong support of Rep. Kelly’s legislation to close loopholes in the Federal Firearm Licensee system and bring these regulations into the 21st century.”

“The proliferation of crime guns in our communities has exacerbated the gun violence epidemic in America for too long. This policy would work to stem the flow of these firearms into disproportionately impacted communities through proven and effective strategies that will prevent such violence before it happens. By improving ATF’s ability to oversee gun dealers, hold irresponsible and negligent actors accountable, we can decrease the flow of illegal firearms into the criminal marketplace, and save lives. Brady is proud to endorse this legislation and thanks Rep. Kelly for her relentless leadership in fighting to prevent gun violence,” said Kris Brown, President of Brady.

When sellers don't follow the law and aren't responsible for their sales practices, our communities suffer. Kids die," said Zeenat Yahya, March For Our Lives' Director of Policy. "Our laws need to be responsive to 21st-century challenges, not be trapped in the last century, and this bill does just that. We're pleased to support Congresswoman Kelly's commonsense and lifesaving proposal and encourage our leaders on both sides of the aisle to support it.