

NEWS



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MAYOR'S OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS

Room 216 - City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
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Michael A. Nutter, Mayor
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Tuesday, September 16, 2008

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYORS FORM NEW ALLIANCE FOR GUN SAFETY

As part of PA Mayors for Gun Safety, Mayors from across the region will introduce local ordinances on lost and stolen guns based on successful Philadelphia legislation

Reading, PA – Through a coordinated effort to reduce gun violence, Mayors from across Southeastern Pennsylvania announced today that they will be introducing local ordinances in their City Councils requiring the reporting of lost or stolen guns within 24 hours. The local ordinances mirror legislation successfully passed by Philadelphia City Council and signed by Mayor Michael Nutter earlier this year. The announcement was made from the City Council chambers in Reading, Pennsylvania.

“For too long, cities have waited for Washington or Harrisburg to take the lead in the fight for the kind of commonsense gun safety measures our citizens want,” Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter said. “In Philadelphia I signed legislation that was sponsored by Councilmembers Donna Reed Miller and Darrell Clarke who have provided tremendous leadership on this issue. This demonstrates what can be achieved when local governing bodies and Mayors step up to take action on gun safety.”

On September 22, Mayor Tom McMahon of Reading said he will work to introduce to his City Council a local ordinance on lost and stolen guns. “I believe that responsible gun owners share our concern for gun safety, in that reporting of lost or stolen handguns is a sensible thing to do to help protect the public from the illegal use of such guns,” he said.

"The problem is clear," said Mayor John S. Brenner, of the City of York. "Too many illegal guns are making their way into the wrong hands. York City is not alone in grappling with this problem. Rural and urban communities of all sizes across this commonwealth and this country are dealing with gun violence. We join PA Mayors for Gun Safety because we want a reasonable, common sense solution to this problem."

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“This law will provide another tool for us to make our cities “Clean and Safe,” added Mayor Sal Panto, Jr. of Easton.

Mayor Rick Gray of Lancaster said: “This is a simple way of promoting public safety without in any way infringing on the rights of the owners of firearms. It is a commonsense approach to taking an excuse away from those who would deal in illegal firearms.”

“Although the City of Pottsville does not have the severity of gun violence as in other cities of the third class, we recognize the importance of addressing this problem head on,” said Mayor John Reiley of Pottsville.

On April 10, 2008, Mayor Nutter signed into law five pieces of gun legislation including the mandate to report lost or stolen firearms. This legislation was sponsored by Councilwoman Donna Reed Miller and Councilman Darrell Clarke, members who have been tireless advocates for commonsense gun safety measures. While the NRA immediately challenged all five ordinances, the Common Pleas Court upheld three, including this one.

The Philadelphia ordinance requires gun owners to file a report with police within 24 hours after the discovery of a lost or stolen firearm. It enables law enforcement to quickly assist legal gun owners in recovering their property and also gives law enforcement the opportunity to stop the flow of weapons into the hands of criminals.

Under the ordinance, individuals failing to file a report are fined up to \$1900.00 for the first offense and face either a \$2000.00 fine or up to 90 days in jail or both for subsequent offenses.

“We have the right, and in fact as leaders of this Commonwealth’s cities, we have the duty to enact sensible measures designed not to infringe the rights of gun owners, but to protect the rights of all of our citizens and keeping them safe by removing illegal guns from our streets,” said Mayor Ed Pawlowski of Allentown.

Soon after Mayor Nutter signed the legislation in Philadelphia, he met with other Mayors, including Reading Mayor McMahan, who heads the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities' Gun Violence Taskforce, to discuss ways other Mayors might take the lead locally to reduce gun violence and stem the flow of illegal guns. Together, these Mayors formed Pennsylvania Mayors for Gun Safety and agreed to introduce local ordinances similar to the one passed in Philadelphia.

A similar ordinance introduced at the State level required the reporting of lost or stolen guns within 72 hours. It was defeated on the floor of the House 75-128 after long debate.

Bethlehem Mayor John Callahan also spoke at the press conference and announced he would be introducing similar ordinances in his City Council shortly.

In a recent poll of six legislative districts in PA done by Greenberg, Quinlan, and Rosner, 96% of Pennsylvanians, including 92% gun owners, supported a lost or stolen gun reporting requirement.

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