

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2004 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

House Bill 652
Judiciary

(Delegate Kelly, *et al.*)

**Public Safety - Handguns - Integrated Mechanical Safety Device Requirement -
Repeal**

This bill repeals the prohibition against a dealer selling, offering for sale, renting, or transferring a handgun in the State unless it is equipped with an integrated mechanical safety device. The prohibition against a dealer selling, offering for sale, renting, or transferring handguns in the State unless equipped with an external safety lock is not affected.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. While this bill would likely cause some reorganization of trooper and civilian staff responsibilities within the Department of State Police, it would not result in any general or special fund savings to either personnel costs or other operating expenses.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: Potential meaningful. The provisions of this bill would likely spur additional handgun sales in the State. The actual magnitude of such a retail impact on handgun dealers is unknown, but is assumed to be potentially significant to the State's 269 licensed gun dealers, who are generally believed to be small businesses.

Analysis

Current Law: An integrated mechanical safety device is a disabling or locking device that is built into a handgun and designed to prevent the handgun from being discharged

unless the device has been deactivated. An external safety lock is an external device that is attached to a handgun with a key or combination lock and is designed to prevent a handgun from being discharged unless the device has been deactivated.

A licensed firearms dealer is prohibited from selling or transferring in the State a handgun, made on or before December 31, 2002, without an external safety lock. Beginning January 1, 2003, a dealer may not sell or transfer any handgun made after December 31, 2002 unless it has an integrated mechanical safety device. (This provision does not apply to sales to the government, military, or law enforcement, or sales or transfers by licensed dealers or manufacturers to lawful out-of-state customers.)

A personalized handgun is a handgun manufactured with incorporated design technology that allows the handgun to be fired only by the authorized user and prevents any of the safety characteristics of the handgun from being readily deactivated.

These provisions were contained in Chapter 2 of 2000, the Responsible Gun Safety Act of 2000.

“Firearm” means: (1) a weapon that expels, is designed to expel, or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; or (2) the frame or receiver of such a weapon. The term includes a starter gun.

“Handgun” means any firearm with a barrel less than 16 inches in length including signal, starter, and blank pistols.

Background: As of April 2003, the following integrated mechanical safety devices have been approved by the Handgun Roster Board:

- Bersa Lock (Firestorm);
- Bond Arms Derringer Lock (not the “Allen Key” version);
- Charter 2000;
- Cimarron-Aldo Uberti System for SAA;
- Ghost, Inc. (for Glocks only);
- Glock’s Lock;
- Heckler & Koch System;
- Saf-T-Trigger by Saf-T-Hammer;
- Smith & Wesson Lock;
- Springfield Armory, Integral Locking System;

- Strahan Firing Pin Lock;
- Swiss Safety by Aldo Uberti;
- Taurus Systems, separate systems for revolvers and semi-automatics;
- Walther 22; and
- Sig Arms (only on model 229 at this time).

With respect to personalized handgun technology, the board concluded in a 2002 report that “while extensive research has been conducted in the area of personalized weapons, currently there are no models of personalized handguns available for sale. Based on its research, the technology to produce personalized weapons is between two and 10 years away. The Board will continue to evaluate the status of personalized handgun technology and report its findings each year to the Governor and the General Assembly of Maryland.”

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police, Department of Legislative Services

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mam/jr

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