

# CeaseFirePA

Working to prevent gun violence in your community

## 2010 Voters Guide

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### Pennsylvania Governor's Race

*Where do the Candidates Stand on Gun Violence?*

Legislative update and candidate questionnaire with analysis

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*For more information contact CeaseFirePA 215-923-3151 or [Info@CeaseFirePA.org](mailto:Info@CeaseFirePA.org)*

# ***Voices Throughout Pennsylvania Support CeaseFirePA's Work to Reduce Gun Violence***

## ***The Philadelphia Inquirer***

***"It's good to see the state's top anti-gun-violence group take the rather audacious step of trying to get all of the major gubernatorial candidates to go on record in favor of tighter, commonsense gun laws."***

*(Editorial, Feb. 13, 2010)*

## ***Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®***

***"This is not about shotguns or rifles, so hunters need not be concerned. This is aimed at the illegal handgun trade. Because it is about making life hard for criminals, [it] has support of law enforcement officials across the state. Because it is also about responsibility, it deserves the support of lawmakers."***

*(Editorial, April 1, 2008)*

## ***PUBLIC OPINION OF CHAMBERSBURG***

***"The ability for law enforcement to quickly and accurately trace handguns to their owners does nothing to infringe upon citizens' right to bear arms."***

*(Editorial, March 20, 2008)*

## ***Intelligencer Journal / LANCASTER NEW ERA***

***"A lost-or-stolen-gun measure is hardly heavy-handed gun control. It's an attempt to foil the sale of guns to felons, wife beaters and others not permitted to carry handguns. Is that not a good idea? ... A great way to build momentum is for more cities and towns to enact their own lost-or-stolen-gun ordinances. ... You don't have to live in Philadelphia to want to make it more difficult for thugs to get their hands on firearms. And it's becoming evident that you don't have to live in fear of the NRA, either."***

*(Column, July 23, 2009)*

## Gun Violence is a Pennsylvania Problem

**Gun violence is a problem across Pennsylvania.** Each year, more than 1,200 people are shot and killed in Pennsylvania. More than half are homicides – nearly all of which are committed by criminals using illegal handguns.

**Gun violence is not just a big city problem.** In 2008 homicides with guns dropped in Philadelphia, while increasing dramatically in Pittsburgh. In the State Capitol, Harrisburg, murders jumped nearly 60 percent last year. On Mother's Day 2009, in York, a 9-year-old little girl was caught in gang crossfire and murdered on the sidewalk. In nearly every case, a criminal using an illegal gun was to blame.

**Gun violence puts police officers at risk.** In the last decade, 22 law enforcement officers have been shot and killed in the line of duty in Pennsylvania. In 2009 alone, six were murdered: four Police Officers in Allegheny County, and two State Troopers – one in the Lehigh Valley and another in the Northwest.

**Gun violence is fueled by criminals using illegal guns.** The vast majority of crimes committed with guns – fatal or not – are committed by criminals prohibited from possessing firearms using handguns obtained illegally through trafficking, straw purchases, or theft. The problem is not law abiding citizens who own guns for sport, defense, tradition, or any other legitimate reason. Reducing the illegal supply of handguns to criminals is crucial to reducing gun violence.

**Finally, the problem is being addressed.** For the first time, gun violence has become an issue in the campaign for Governor of Pennsylvania. Every candidate has acknowledged the problem, and some – as the following CeaseFirePA Voters Guide illustrates – have committed to addressing the issue by taking action to reduce the illegal supply of guns to criminals.

**Pennsylvanians understand there is a problem and want reform to address it.** People know it's not law-abiding citizens who commit crimes with guns. It is criminals without regard for the law. We need reforms in place making it harder for those criminals to get guns.

**Support grows statewide for lost or stolen handgun reporting law.** A statewide, public opinion survey conducted by CeaseFirePA discovered that two-thirds of Pennsylvania residents support reforms to make it harder for criminals to obtain handguns. One particular reform – lost or stolen handgun reporting – drew overwhelming support. As the pollster noted:

"It is rare to find a measure with such pervasive support, with nearly unanimous support from all parties (96%) and nearly nine in ten Republicans (88%), Democrats (89%), and Independents (91%) all strongly supporting the proposal. **Even among gun owners, an overwhelming 92% favor this measure to enhance public safety.**"

*(Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, Nov. 19, 2007)*

# ***Where do the Candidates for Governor Stand on Gun Violence?***

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***For the first time, gun violence prevention is an issue in the race for Governor.***

CeaseFirePA is a Pennsylvania non-profit organization working to prevent gun violence. The organization supports enforcement of current laws against illegal gun trafficking *and* the strengthening of state laws to reduce gun violence. Building coalitions with mayors, police chiefs, faith leaders, business executives, college students and thousands of citizens, CeaseFirePA is active in more than 30 communities across the state.

Pennsylvania suffers annually from 1,200 deaths caused by guns – homicides, suicides and accidental shootings. Seeking to educate state officials about this serious public health problem, CeaseFirePA commissioned an analysis of Pennsylvania gun laws by national firearms policy experts. CeaseFirePA then created a questionnaire with 18 policy proposals to reduce gun violence and distributed it to the six candidates for governor.

Five candidates – Democrats **Joe Hoeffel, Dan Onorato, Jack Wagner** and **Anthony Williams**, and Republican **Sam Rohrer** – responded to the questionnaire, and their answers are provided along with this analysis in **CeaseFirePA's 2010 Voters Guide for the Pennsylvania Governor's Race**.

One candidate, Republican **Tom Corbett**, failed to respond. Corbett, the state's Attorney General and chief law enforcement officer, was mailed the questionnaire with the other candidates in February. In March, a second copy was hand-delivered to the Corbett campaign. A follow-up email and phone call to the Corbett campaign were not returned. In a subsequent phone conversation, a Corbett campaign aide said the candidate would respond to the questionnaire. A response was never received.

## ***Lost or Stolen Handgun Reporting Receives Strong Support***

Four of the five candidates (**Hoeffel, Onorato, Wagner** and state Sen. **Anthony Williams**) said they support a reporting requirement for lost or stolen handguns. State Rep. **Sam Rohrer**, a Republican, was the only candidate opposing this reform, which is now backed statewide by 36 Pennsylvania cities and towns that have taken action and urged the General Assembly to pass a state law requiring that lost or stolen guns be reported to police. CeaseFirePA polls show 96 percent of Pennsylvanians support the reform – including 92 percent of firearms owners. With growing support from gubernatorial candidates, Pennsylvania municipalities, and statewide news media, lost or stolen handgun reporting is a reform whose time has come.

## ***Six Gun Policy Reforms Receive Consensus Support From Candidates***

While the candidates didn't agree on every issue, four of the five candidates supported six gun policy reforms raised by CeaseFirePA. **Hoeffel, Onorato, Wagner** and **Williams** formed a consensus around:

- ✓ Requiring reporting of lost or stolen handguns to the police
- ✓ Closing the terror gap that allows known terrorists to buy guns
- ✓ Restoring funds to Gun Violence Task Force and expanding Task Force to other cities
- ✓ Banning the sale and possession of assault weapons
- ✓ Increasing criminal penalties for persons convicted of illegally possessing handguns
- ✓ Strengthening law as to how persons prohibited from possessing guns surrender weapons

## ***Reform PA's Concealed Carry Reciprocity Agreements with Other States***

In recent weeks, news reports across Pennsylvania have made it clear the question of firearms reciprocity agreements – one state respects another state's laws and vice versa – is emerging as a serious public safety concern. Because Pennsylvania has entered into a weak reciprocity agreement with the state of Florida, a growing number of Pennsylvanians, some of whom have been denied the right to carry a concealed firearm in Pennsylvania by law enforcement officials, have been able to apply by mail to the Florida Department of Agriculture, obtain a permit, and *carry that concealed firearm in Pennsylvania*. At best, this weak agreement undermines the discretion and authority of Pennsylvania law enforcement to determine who is eligible to receive a concealed carry permit. At worst, it jeopardizes police officers and citizens, and places them in harm's way.

At last count, more than 3,100 Pennsylvanians have obtained Florida carry permits – and now may carry their concealed guns in Pennsylvania. Three of the six candidates (**Hoeffel**, **Onorato** and **Williams**) reacted strongly to this issue and pledged as governor to eliminate this “Florida loophole.” Candidate **Onorato's** response was on point: *“Pennsylvania residents should be able to receive a license to carry a concealed firearm if they meet our state's requirements. We should not be in the business of outsourcing this public safety function to other states.”*

## ***Overall, Four Candidates Support Gun Violence Prevention – But Three Are Strongest***

Four candidates – **Joe Hoeffel**, **Dan Onorato**, **Jack Wagner** and **Anthony Williams** – collectively support CeaseFirePA's questions 75 percent of the time – an unprecedented level of support for gun violence prevention policies in a Pennsylvania governor's race. Two of those candidates are from southwestern PA (**Onorato**, Allegheny County Executive, and **Wagner**, state Auditor General), yet both support a large number of CeaseFirePA's proposals – another blow to the conventional wisdom that western candidates will *never* discuss guns. They *are* - and voters are listening.



Three candidates – **Hoeffel**, **Onorato** and **Williams** – were strongest in support of gun violence prevention policies. **Hoeffel**, a Montgomery County Commissioner, supported every policy proposal – the only candidate for governor to do so. **Onorato** supported CeaseFirePA's proposals on 13 questions, and didn't oppose any policy, seeking more information on some before committing. That's a long way from his position when he entered the race, when **Onorato** told reporters he opposed gun violence prevention legislation as “feel good” reforms. **Williams**, a gun violence prevention supporter in the Senate, responded affirmatively on 16 questions – the second highest total. **Williams**, however, opposed two reasonable reforms – strengthening standards for firearm safety locking devices, and prohibiting guns on college campuses – a reform in place in 15 states. **Hoeffel** and **Onorato** supported both reforms.

Rep. **Sam Rohrer**, the only Republican to respond, opposed CeaseFirePA's proposals on each of the 16 questions that he answered. **Rohrer** even opposed stronger criminal penalties for persons convicted of illegally possessing guns. He left two questions blank – restoring funding for the Gun Violence Task Force and expanding it to other cities, and working with Federal authorities to close the terror gap that allows known terrorists to buy guns.

## ***Summary***

**Joe Hoeffel** was the candidate who most demonstrated agreement with CeaseFirePA's agenda to prevent gun violence. **Anthony Williams** was second in support for reasonable gun violence prevention policies, with **Dan Onorato** close behind. While Sen. **Williams** answered more questions affirmatively than **Onorato**, Sen. **Williams** opposed two questions that **Onorato** supported. We're pleased that **Jack Wagner** supported many of our proposals, but disappointed that he rejected several key policies. **Sam Rohrer** clearly missed the mark, but at least he answered the questionnaire and provided his views on guns to Pennsylvanians - more than can be said for Attorney General **Tom Corbett**, who failed to share his views on this vital public safety topic with the citizens of Pennsylvania.

## Where do the candidates stand?

 =Support   
  =Oppose  
 ? =No Position    NR=No Response



### Lost or Stolen Handgun Reporting

Require lost or stolen handguns be reported missing to the police, upon discovery of their absence.

### Enforce Prohibitions

Ensure that individuals who become prohibited from possessing firearms surrender their firearms responsibly.

### Tougher Penalties

Increase penalties for individuals found to be illegally in possession of firearms.

### Local Authority

Give certain Pennsylvania municipalities the authority to regulate firearms and ammunition.

### Gun Violence Task Force

Restore funding to the task force and expand to other areas in Pennsylvania.

### Mandatory Safety Training

Require the completion of a safety course before purchasing a firearm.

### Dealer Inventory Reporting

Require dealers to submit regular inventory reports to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms.

### One Gun A Month

Limit how many handguns a person may purchase legally in one month.

### Safety Locks

Strengthen standards governing firearms safety locks, and require that gun owners use safety locks.

### Ban Guns on Campus

Prohibit possession of firearms and ammunition on college campuses.

### Reform Reciprocity Agreements



























































Make sure only people eligible for a permit in Pennsylvania are allowed to carry a concealed firearm in Pennsylvania.

### Assault Weapons Ban

Ban the sale and possession of assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines.

### Close the Terror Gap

Grant the US Attorney General power to prevent suspected terrorists from purchasing guns and ammunition.

NR					
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The candidates' grades are based on their answers to the questions in the above chart and also to additional gun policy questions located in the full Voters Guide that follows.

# CeaseFirePA

Working to prevent gun violence in your community

F

A

B+

D

C+

A-

## 2010 CeaseFirePA Questionnaire: Candidate Responses

### Prosecuting Criminals

#### 1. Report lost or stolen handguns to the police.

CeaseFirePA supports a commonsense reform that would require the reporting of lost or stolen handguns upon discovery of their absence to the police. A lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement would encourage accountability among handgun owners, alert negligent owners to the dangers of not reporting a missing handgun, and close a loophole used by criminals, who intentionally do not report a missing gun because of illegal activity such as straw purchasing. Straw purchasers often claim a gun recovered at a crime scene and then traced back to them had been “lost or stolen,” when in fact the gun was sold to a criminal. In addition, reporting lost or stolen handguns protects law-abiding owners by assisting in the recovery of stolen property and by protecting them from suspicion if a missing gun is later implicated in a crime. Lost or Stolen applies only to handguns, and only upon an owner’s discovery that his or her handgun is missing.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Support*

**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*“Closing the “straw purchaser” loophole will prevent violent crimes and protect police here and elsewhere. It is also important to recognize that law abiding gun owners would report lost or stolen guns anyway, but this requirement would protect them from unwarranted suspicion if a missing gun is used in a crime. This common sense approach is supported by most Pennsylvanians and by most gun owners.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

#### 2. Strengthen the requirements governing how persons who become prohibited from possessing firearms surrender their weapons.

With the exception of persons subject to a protection from abuse order, Pennsylvania law gives persons prohibited from possessing firearms a “reasonable period of time, not to exceed 60 days” from the date of the imposition of the prohibition to sell or transfer their firearms to another eligible person. However, Pennsylvania has no law requiring persons who have become prohibited from possessing firearms to provide proof to a court that they have sold or transferred their firearms or ammunition.

For example, the Philadelphia Adult Probation and Parole unit gives anyone under its supervision *10 days* to dispose of a firearm – by turning it in to the police, by selling it to a licensed gun dealer, or by selling it to an eligible person. After the person sells or disposes of the firearm, they must provide their probation/parole officer with a receipt. Similarly, under PA law, if a person under a domestic abuse order transfers their firearms to a dealer or third party, the dealer or third party must provide a receipt, and the abuser must give the receipt to law enforcement.

Pennsylvania should extend these requirements to all persons required by law to surrender their firearms. Options to consider include: 1) requiring a person prohibited from possessing firearms to sell or transfer their ammunition as well; 2) shorten the time period during which the person must sell or transfer their weapons; 3) limit the persons to whom the person may sell or transfer their firearms; and 4) require the person to provide proof to a court that they’ve transferred their firearms. Law enforcement could utilize the permanent record of handgun sales maintained by the PA State Police to ensure that persons who become prohibited from possessing guns surrender their weapons.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Support*

**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*“A person who loses the right to possess a firearm under current law should then be required to transfer that firearm within a specific period of time and provide proof of the transfer to judicial or law enforcement authorities.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 3. Require gun dealers to notify law enforcement when a potential customer fails a background check.

Any time a handgun is transferred in Pennsylvania, a gun dealer (Federally Licensed Firearms dealer) is required to run a background check in National Instant Background Check System (NICS). When a prospective buyer fails a check, the firearm dealer should be required to report the results to local and state law enforcement agencies for further investigation.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Interested*

*"After a background check works in denying a firearm to a certain individual, is further action necessary? I would be interested to learn from stakeholders how this could be applied and enforced."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*  
**Tom Corbett:** *No response*  
**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 4. Prohibit sale of ammunition to individuals who are prohibited from possessing firearms.

Certain categories of people are prohibited by state or federal law from possessing firearms. Pennsylvania may wish to prohibit possession of ammunition by these people, including people prohibited from possessing firearms because of their age. Currently, no federal or Pennsylvania law requires ammunition purchasers to demonstrate eligibility to own firearms or proof of age in order to purchase ammunition.

The simplest approach to ensuring that persons prohibited from possessing firearms do not purchase ammunition is to require a person who is purchasing ammunition to display a license authorizing that person to possess both firearms and ammunition for those firearms.

Even if Pennsylvania does not wish to require licenses for the purchase or transfer of ammunition, it may nevertheless wish to require purchasers of ammunition to undergo similar criminal background checks and to provide proof of age.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Interested*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*"I support consistency in the law. It appears reasonable to apply to purchase of ammunition the same rules that currently apply to purchasers of firearms."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*  
**Tom Corbett:** *No response*  
**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 5. Stronger penalties for individuals found to be illegally in possession of handguns.

Many crimes committed with handguns are committed by individuals who are prohibited from possessing handguns, including: individuals convicted of a felony, juveniles, people restricted under a protection from abuse order, or people suffering a mental illness. Too often, gun charges are dropped or not taken fully into account during sentencing. Stronger penalties for illegal possession of a handgun will discourage trafficking and illegal possession.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*"Aggressive enforcement of existing laws and penalties is a key component to reducing crimes."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*  
**Tom Corbett:** *No response*  
**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

## Local Initiatives

### 6. Allow PA municipalities to set laws to reduce gun violence based on local needs.

Local municipalities face the brunt of gun violence and are in the best position to know what type of additional legislation is needed to address gun violence in their communities. What works in a big city may not always be necessary in a smaller town. While commonsense, responsible statewide gun laws are essential to effectively protect public safety, cities and towns need the authority to enact specific, local gun violence prevention laws in order to suit local needs. These laws should apply only to the apprehension of criminals and illegal guns.

Pennsylvania could authorize certain local jurisdictions within the state to regulate firearms and ammunition. Legislation pending in the Pennsylvania House would allow local PA municipalities to regulate firearms and ammunition if the specific measure proposed is first approved for the particular local jurisdiction by the state legislature and the local government shows a “compelling reason” for an exemption from the preemption statute.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Oppose*

*“As President of Pittsburgh City Council in the 1990s, I passed a city ordinance banning assault weapons. However it was later overturned by state law... I have come to the conclusion that gun laws – like most other types of laws – should be uniform throughout the commonwealth and aggressively enforced.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*  
**Tom Corbett:** *No Response*  
**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 7. Restore state funding to the Gun Violence Task Force, and expand the Task Force initiative to other Pennsylvania regions.

In 2006, the PA Attorney General’s Office, working with the General Assembly, secured \$5 million in funding to staff a Gun Violence Task Force in Philadelphia that focused on illegal gun trafficking and straw purchasers. Using existing state laws and aggressive investigations, the Gun Violence Task Force has been a success, and its work has led to the arrest, prosecution and conviction of hundreds of offenders for illegal straw purchasing and gun trafficking. This past year, budget woes led the state to cut funding for the Gun Violence Task Force by 40 percent – from \$5 million down to \$3 million, jeopardizing the unit’s growing success and work. Many law enforcement officials believe the Task Force’s operations should be expanded, including to other regions of Pennsylvania, instead of being cut back.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*“Aggressive enforcement of existing laws and penalties is a key component in reducing violent crimes throughout PA. The state appropriation to the task force was cut in half by last year’s budget. I would ensure that the task force has the resources it needs to get the job done.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

*“In 2005, I secured the seed funding needed for an illegal gun task force for the Philadelphia Police Department, which later evolved into the Philadelphia Gun Violence Task Force. It is one of the most successful initiatives of its kind and should be replicated across PA, particularly in communities facing similar issues of illegal gun trafficking. Unlike feel-good measures, this is a proven method to help combat crime and violence, and I am vigorously fighting to restore this program to full funding.”*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*  
**Sam Rohrer:** *No response*

## Responsible Transfer

### 8. Require completion of a firearms safety training course before being permitted to purchase a firearm.

Pennsylvania may want to enact a requirement that a potential firearms purchaser undergo safety training before being allowed to buy a gun. A number of states require firearms safety training or a safety exam prior to a person's purchase of a gun. Such performance-based tests are intended to demonstrate whether a potential gun purchaser knows how to safely load, fire, and store a gun, and has knowledge of relevant firearms laws.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Interested*

*"I support increasing information made available to potential gun purchasers about opportunities for safety training."*

**Jack Wagner:** *Oppose*

*"Training should be made available to all purchasers. It should be encouraged, but not required."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

*"I would hope such training could be efficient and tailored, not overly cumbersome. There may be time-sensitive situations where someone's life is in peril, and making that person go through an extra waiting period, while well-intended, may prove detrimental – such as if a woman bought a gun for protection from an out-of-control boyfriend/husband/stalker."*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 9. Require gun dealers to provide inventory reports to law enforcement.

Neither federal nor Pennsylvania law requires dealers to provide inventory reports to law enforcement. Federal law requires firearms dealers to maintain records of the acquisition and sale of firearms, and to report the loss or theft of any firearm within 48 hours of discovery to ATF and local authorities. Pennsylvania law requires dealers to keep a record in triplicate of every firearm sold and retain the records for 20 years, and to report sales (but not acquisitions) of handguns to the PA State Police, which maintains a permanent database of handgun sales.

This piecemeal reporting of the inventory of firearms dealers makes it difficult to enforce the federal requirements that dealers report lost or stolen firearms and the federal and state requirements of a background check. As a result, illegal trafficking by firearms dealers to persons ineligible to possess firearms is harder to detect. Pennsylvania should require firearms dealers to provide periodic inventory reports to law enforcement. A parallel under existing PA law involves pharmacies. Pennsylvania has a prescription drug monitoring program in which pharmacies are required to report transactions to the state Attorney General's Office, to help law enforcement monitor and guard against illegal drug trafficking.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Support*

**Jack Wagner:** *Interested*

*"Gun dealers should be required to keep an inventory, but they should not be required to make that inventory public unless law enforcement needs cooperation in a specific case."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 10. Require background checks for gun dealer employees.

No federal or Pennsylvania law requires employees of gun dealers or ammunition sellers to undergo background checks – a requirement in a number of other states. By way of example, the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board requires a thorough background check for every gaming employee applicant. This background investigation includes civil and criminal proceedings, as well as personal, family, military, education, past employment and a signed statement of truth.

Pending legislation in the PA House would require firearms dealers to perform employee background checks.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Support*

**Jack Wagner:** *Interested*

*"I want to learn more about the effects of employee background checks on the prevention of improper firearms sales and, in turn, violent crimes."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

## 11. Prohibit firearms dealers from operating in residential neighborhoods or near schools, daycare centers, or parks.

Pennsylvania may want to further strengthen its laws regarding firearms dealers by prohibiting dealers from operating in residential neighborhoods or near schools, daycare centers, or parks. There are 2,292 federally licensed firearms dealers in Pennsylvania. No federal or Pennsylvania law prohibits firearms dealers or ammunition sellers from operating in the areas mentioned above.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *No position*

*"My concern is that this approach could be used as a back-door strategy to eliminate the ability of licensed firearms dealer to operate their businesses. In densely populated areas, any distance requirement might serve as a de facto prohibition."*

**Jack Wagner:** *Interested*

*"Children cannot learn and teachers cannot teach in an unsafe or disruptive environment."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

*"While in no way do I advocate guns or ammunition being near children, and Pennsylvania law already prohibits possessing a loaded firearm within a close proximity to a school, daycare, or playground I do hold concerns about unintended consequences. For example, a mom-and-pop location that has been in an area for years may suddenly face problems because a new housing development arose around it. Likewise, some communities could wind up facing zoning challenges and, or, suits from other existing outlets, such as a Kmart or Wal-Mart."*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

## 12. Require ammunition sellers to obtain a license.

Pennsylvania should have a licensing requirement to allow law enforcement to police and enforce any other laws regulating the sale or transfer of ammunition, and to provide a vehicle for the prosecution of unlicensed persons selling ammunition to criminals. The requirement should also require ammunition sellers to conduct background checks on employees who have access to ammunition, and impose on ammunition sellers requirements similar to those on firearms dealers.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*

**Dan Onorato:** *Interested*

**Jack Wagner:** *Support*

*"It is reasonable to apply to sellers of ammunition the same rules that apply to sellers of firearms."*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

### 13. Limit the number of firearms an individual may purchase in a certain period of time.

No federal or Pennsylvania law limits the number of firearms a person may purchase at one time. Laws restricting multiple purchases or sales of firearms are designed to reduce the number of guns entering the illegal market and to stem the flow of firearms between states. Interstate firearms trafficking flourishes, in part, because there is no federal limitation on the number of guns that an individual may purchase at any one time. Jurisdictions with weaker firearms laws attract gun traffickers who make multiple purchases and resell those guns in jurisdictions with stronger firearms laws.

One -gun-a-month laws prohibit the purchase of more than one handgun per person in any 30-day period. A study of Virginia's one-gun-a-month law demonstrated that the law was effective in reducing the number of crime guns traced to Virginia dealers. Virginia initially adopted its law in 1993 after the state became recognized as a primary source of crime guns recovered in states in the northeastern U.S. After the law's adoption, the odds of tracing a gun originally acquired in the Southeast to a Virginia gun dealer (as opposed to a dealer in a different southeastern state) dropped by 71 percent for guns recovered in New York, 72 percent for guns recovered in Massachusetts, and 66 percent for guns recovered in New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts combined.

**Joe Hoeffel:** **Support**

**Dan Onorato:** **No position**

*"I believe this issue is best addressed by allowing local governments to establish handgun legislation that best meets their local needs."*

**Jack Wagner:** **Oppose**

*"While it is essential to reduce the number of violent crimes, it has not been demonstrated that a one-gun-per-month law would do so."*

**Anthony Williams:** **Support**

*"I have supported and co-sponsored such legislation in the past. The spirit of this effort is to prevent guns from getting in the hands of criminals. Despite best efforts, though, it has gotten nowhere because of the lack of support in the General Assembly. Like any thoughtful governor, I am looking at additional means of achieving the goal of preventing gun violence, such as treating illegal gun possession as seriously as the underlying crimes caused by it."*

**Tom Corbett:** **No response**

**Sam Rohrer:** **Oppose**

## Improving Safety

### 14. Strengthen standards for firearms locking devices, and require that they be used.

Every year, firearms cause thousands of unintentional deaths and injuries. Children and young adults are the most frequent victims of such accidents. The presence of unlocked guns in the home increases the risk of intentional shootings as well. At least two studies have found that the risk of suicide increases in homes where guns are kept loaded and/or unlocked. On the other hand, the practices of keeping firearms locked, unloaded, and storing ammunition in a locked location separate from firearms assist in reducing youth suicide and unintentional injury in homes with children and teenagers where guns are stored.

Pennsylvania law prohibits a licensed dealer from transferring a handgun unless he or she provides the transferee with a locking device, the transferee purchases a locking device, or the design of the handgun incorporates a locking device. However, there is no law requiring that the provided locking device be used, or that a gun be stored in a secure location.

Pennsylvania should strengthen its law regarding locking devices by extending it to long guns, requiring testing and setting standards for locking devices, and/or requiring that all firearms be stored with a locking device in place. Several bills pending in the Pennsylvania House of Representatives would address these concerns.

**Joe Hoeffel:** **Support**

**Dan Onorato:** **Support**

*"I specifically support requiring that homes with minors use child safety locks or other devices that keep children from being accidentally killed by firearms."*

**Jack Wagner:** **No position**

*"The use of trigger locks should be encouraged, but not required."*

**Anthony Williams:** **Oppose**

*"I would encourage continued and vigorous education on gun lock safety and usage, something most insurance policies require. There is concern of civil liabilities for loved ones faced with tragedy; I would not want to see a grieving parent who has lost a child due to failing to use a locking device be slapped with a fine or jail time. That would prove added salt to a wound."*

**Tom Corbett:** **No response**

**Sam Rohrer:** **Oppose**

**15. Prohibit guns on college or university campuses.** In compliance with the federal Gun-Free Schools Act, Pennsylvania law *already* prohibits anyone, even a concealed weapons permit holder, from possessing firearms in the buildings or on the grounds of any private or public elementary or high school. Pennsylvania law also requires each public or private institution of higher learning to publish a policy statement regarding the possession and use of weapons.

Allowing guns in colleges and universities poses a number of dangers, including more suicides and the use of guns by students under the influence of alcohol. One study found that two-thirds of gun-owning college students engage in binge drinking. Gun-owning students in particular are more likely than unarmed college students to drink “frequently and excessively” and then engage in risky activities, such as driving when under the influence of alcohol or vandalizing property. Firearms may also be accidentally discharged or misused at campus parties where large numbers of students are gathered or where alcohol or drugs are being consumed.

Recently the gun lobby has been pushing legislation in many states that prohibits colleges and universities from barring possession or use of firearms on campus. Despite the gun lobby’s efforts, 15 states currently have laws prohibiting the possession of firearms on the campuses of state colleges and universities. Eleven states also prohibit the possession of firearms on the campuses of private colleges and universities.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*  
**Jack Wagner:** *Oppose*

*“Each institution should develop its own policy to address this issue.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Oppose*

*“Because different colleges face different challenges, this is an issue best left to college administrators to decide how their campuses will be secured. A young woman who feels her life might be threatened should be allowed to responsibly own a gun on a college campus, for instance.”*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

**16. Strengthen PA’s reciprocity statute to ensure that Pennsylvanians must be licensed in Pennsylvania in order to carry a concealed firearm.** Pennsylvania law states if an applicant for a license to carry a concealed firearm is a Pennsylvania resident, he must make that application with his local sheriff (or police chief in Philadelphia). This requirement ensures the home county can conduct the necessary background checks to ensure the safety screening elements of PA law are satisfied. However, under the current, flawed interpretation of PA’s reciprocity statute, thousands of Pennsylvania residents have been able to mail away to other states to obtain licenses to carry concealed firearms –avoiding the PA application requirement and the required safety screening by Pennsylvania law enforcement. As one example, licenses to carry firearms are now issued via mail to Pennsylvanians by the Florida Department of Agriculture, a body which cannot *possibly* perform the safety checks set forth under current PA law.

The flawed interpretation of the PA reciprocity statute also threatens the safety of Pennsylvania police officers – who come into contact with armed persons on the streets carrying concealed weapons with licenses issued out-of-state. The officer on the street has no way of immediately verifying the authenticity of an out-of-state license. This poses clear dangers to our police. Below is an actual case in which a person who had his license to carry revoked in PA made a mockery of PA law and obtained a license to concealed carry from another state:

- A.M. is arrested in a rental car at a Pennsylvania airport with a loaded AK-47 in the car. A.M. had a PA license to carry which was subsequently revoked. While his case was pending, A.M. obtained a Florida license to carry – by mail. A.M. was subsequently stopped by Philadelphia police in a car with another loaded firearm. However, there was no arrest – even though his PA license to carry had been revoked – *because A.M. now had a Florida license to carry.*

The Pennsylvania legislature never intended to relinquish to other states Pennsylvania’s power to issue licenses to carry firearms to its own citizens. These actual cases (among many others provided by PA prosecutors) show the current interpretation of PA’s reciprocity statute is badly flawed and jeopardizes the public’s safety. The PA legislature no more intended to relinquish its power to issue licenses to carry firearms to Pennsylvanians than to allow other states to issue driver’s licenses to Pennsylvania residents.

**Joe Hoeffel:** *Support*  
**Dan Onorato:** *Support*

*“Pennsylvania residents should be able to receive a license to carry a concealed firearm if they meet our state’s requirements. We should not be in the business of outsourcing this public safety function to other states.”*

**Jack Wagner:** *Interested*

*“Keeping guns out of the hands of criminals must be a top priority in any reciprocity law.”*

**Anthony Williams:** *Support*

**Tom Corbett:** *No response*

**Sam Rohrer:** *Oppose*

## Assault Weapons

### 17. Ban the sale and possession of assault weapons and large capacity ammunition magazines.

Assault weapons are semi-automatic firearms designed with military features to allow rapid and accurate spray firing. They are not designed for sport; they are designed to kill humans quickly and efficiently. Features such as pistol grips and the ability to accept a detachable magazine clearly distinguish assault weapons from standard sporting firearms by enabling assault weapons to spray large amounts of fire quickly and accurately. A study analyzing FBI data shows that 20 percent of the law enforcement officers killed nationally in the line of duty from 1998 to 2001 were killed with an assault weapon. Pennsylvania is not immune from the threat to public safety posed by assault weapons. In December 2009, **Penn Hills Police Officer Michael Crawshaw** was murdered with an assault weapon. In April 2009, **Pittsburgh Police Officer Eric Kelly** was murdered with an assault weapon. In May 2008, **Philadelphia Police Officer Stephen Liczbinski** was murdered with an assault weapon.

Automatic and semi-automatic firearms often use a detachable magazine or feeding device to store cartridges (which hold ammunition). Magazines with a capacity of more than 10 rounds of ammunition are generally considered to be "large capacity" magazines. Because of their ability to hold so many rounds of ammunition, large capacity magazines significantly increase the lethality of the automatic and semi-automatic firearms using them. The Nov. 2009 murders of 13 people at Fort Hood in by **Nidal Malik Hasan** and the July 2009 murders of three women by **George Sodini** at a fitness center near **Pittsburgh**, were all made possible by each killer's use of high-capacity magazine firearms.

**Governor Rendell** has called for a renewal of the federal ban on assault weapons (like those used to murder Officers Liczbinski, Kelly, and Crawshaw) and high-capacity magazines (like those used by Hasan and Sodini), which Congress allowed to lapse under pressure from the NRA in 2004. Assault weapons are designed for combat use, have no place in traditional sporting activities, and nationally, have been linked to one in five murders of law enforcement officers, including the deaths of three Pennsylvania officers in less than two years.

**Joe Hoeffel: Support**  
**Dan Onorato: Support**

*"While I believe this issue is best addressed at the federal level, if the federal government fails to act I would support stronger state-level regulation of assault weapons."*

**Jack Wagner: Support**

*"I strongly support the right to bear arms, but I know firsthand the danger of assault weapons, which have no recreational, hunting, or cultural purpose. As a Marine infantryman serving in Vietnam, I lived with an assault weapon in my hand. It is a weapon made for mass killing in combat situations. I would prefer to see a federal ban that is uniform nationwide. In the absence of such a law, I would support a state ban."*

**Anthony Williams: Support**  
**Tom Corbett: No response**  
**Sam Rohrer: Oppose**

## Terrorists

**18. Close the Terror Gap.** Last November, U.S. Army Major Nidal Malik Hasan shot and killed 13 people at Fort Hood, Texas. **Major Hasan was suspected of having terrorist links.** The FBI had monitored Hasan, reviewing communications between Hasan and an al Qaeda recruiter who acted as a "spiritual advisor" to two of the 9/11 hijackers. Hasan passed the federal background check designed to prevent criminals and other dangerous persons from obtaining guns. FBI counterterrorism officials were not notified when Hasan bought a gun. **Hasan used that gun to kill 13 people and injure more than 30 others.**

Under Federal law, terror suspects who are barred from flying on planes can still buy guns. According to the U.S. Government Accountability Office, in the past five years people on the terrorist watch list successfully bought guns and explosives 865 times from licensed dealers.

Pennsylvania has identified this national issue as a matter for state concern as well. In 2005, the **Governor's Commission to Address Gun Violence** identified the terror gap as an issue worthy of state attention and concluded the Commonwealth should take steps to "disqualify identified terrorists from possessing a firearm." The terror gap remains an issue in Pennsylvania as well as the rest of the country.

**Joe Hoeffel: Support**  
**Dan Onorato: Support**  
**Jack Wagner: Support**

*"I agree with the Bush and Obama administrations that terrorists should not have access to guns and explosives."*

**Anthony Williams: Support**  
**Tom Corbett: No response**  
**Sam Rohrer: No response**

# ***36 Pennsylvania Cities and Towns Take Action in Support of Lost or Stolen Handgun Reporting***

These communities have passed ordinances or resolutions in support of a common sense requirement that gun owners report lost or stolen handguns to the police, upon discovering their absence. Cities and towns are taking action to send a strong message to criminals and gun traffickers that their crimes won't be tolerated, and to let the Pennsylvania General Assembly and Governor know their help is needed to protect friends, families, and neighbors.

★ Aliquippa

★ Allentown

★ Ambler

★ Baldwin Borough

★ Braddock

★ Bridgeport

★ Castle Shannon

★ Clairton

★ Conshohocken

★ Duquesne

★ Easton

★ Erie

★ Glassport

★ Harrisburg

★ Hatfield

★ Heidelberg

★ Homestead

★ Lancaster

★ Liberty

★ Lincoln

★ Munhall

★ Norristown

★ Oxford

★ Philadelphia

★ Pittsburgh

★ Pottsville

★ Radnor

★ Reading

★ Swarthmore

★ Upper Merion

★ West Conshohocken

★ West Homestead

★ West Mifflin

★ Whitaker

★ Wilkinsburg

★ York

