



May 11, 2021

Dear Members of the Delaware House Judiciary and Appropriations Committees,

We, the undersigned organizations representing millions of gun violence prevention advocates, survivors, policy makers, public health professionals, as well as tens of thousands of Delawareans, write to you to state our collective support for Senate Bill 3, which would enact an evidence-based, effective permit to purchase system for ensuring that handguns are only purchased and used by responsible Americans.

Gun violence is a national crisis as well as a crisis in Delaware. Each year, handgun violence impacts far too many Delawareans. Every [three days](#), someone is impacted by gun violence in Delaware, and guns purchased in Delaware are regularly trafficked within the state and to other states where gun violence occurs. **These are preventable issues.** There is a [large body of research](#) that shows that [permit to purchase policies](#) are [effective at reducing gun violence](#) and trafficking, and confirms it is a necessary component of comprehensive, lifesaving gun laws.

SB 3 will ensure that handgun buyers are safety trained, subject to a comprehensive criminal background check and required to get fingerprinted in-person at a law enforcement agency. These requirements help protect against fraud or inaccuracies that could allow dangerous individuals to obtain handguns, a concern in the recent shooting in Smyrna that orphaned three children and left two women dead before the shooter took his own life. [Ten states](#) – Connecticut, Hawaii, Iowa, Maryland, Michigan, Nebraska, New Jersey, North Carolina, and Rhode Island – and the District of Columbia have enacted similar permit to purchase laws that require prospective purchasers to obtain a permit before buying at least some types of firearms. Like SB 3, [several of these states](#) allow the licensing authority to exercise discretion to deny a permit out of a well-founded concern that the applicant poses a risk of dangerousness. A number of states also require applicants to obtain firearm safety training.

Of the many gun violence prevention policies [supported by research](#), permit to purchase laws are among the most promising. When Connecticut passed a permitting law, its firearm homicide rate decreased by 40%^[i] and its firearm suicide rate decreased by 15%.^[ii] Conversely, when Missouri repealed its licensing law, the state experienced an up to 27% increase in its firearm homicide rate^[iii] and its firearm suicide rate increased by 16%.^[iv] A study of licensing laws across 80 large urban counties found that these laws are associated with an 11% decrease in firearm homicides.^[v]

Permit to purchase laws also help to prevent gun trafficking and the diversion of guns to prohibited purchasers. In states with permitting or licensing laws, criminals typically acquire guns that originate from states with weaker laws.^[vi] After Missouri repealed its permit to

purchase law, the share of crime guns that originated from an in-state retail transaction doubled.^[vii] States with strong permitting laws were associated with 76% lower rates of interstate gun trafficking.^[viii]

In addition to its demonstrated effectiveness, independent [polling conducted in March of this year](#) shows widespread public support for permit to purchase policies. More than 2-in-3 Delaware voters support this proposal, with broad majorities expressing ‘strong support,’ – including gun owners, Republicans, and residents of all three counties. This is consistent with polling in 2019 showing that 77% of all Americans, and 68% of American gun owners, support laws requiring a person to obtain a license from local law enforcement before buying a gun.^[ix]

Permit-to-purchase is a popular, effective, and evidence-backed policy that will undoubtedly improve public safety and reduce both gun violence and gun crimes in Delaware and in neighboring states. Accordingly, the undersigned organizations urge you to vote SB 3 out of committee.

Signed,

Delaware Coalition Against Gun Violence

Giffords

Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

Brady

Everytown for Gun Safety / Moms Demand Action

March for Our Lives

States United to Prevent Gun Violence

Sandy Hook Promise

Delaware State NAACP

NAMI Delaware

League of Women Voters Delaware

Delaware Women for Inclusion

Equality Delaware

Delaware United

Network Delaware

Jewish Family Services of Delaware

Islamic Society of Delaware

Bishop Peggy Johnson, on behalf of the members of The United Methodist Church in Delaware

Stop the Violence Prayer Chain Community Center

Westminster Presbyterian Church Peace and Justice Work Group

Delaware Sikh Awareness Coalition (DSAC)

Punjabis in Delaware (PIND)

Ninth Ward Interfaith Coalition of Wilmington

Rev. Corey Fields, Calvary Baptist Church, Newark, DE

Rev. Gregory Pelley, UU Society of Mill Creek, Newark, DE

Sally Milbury-Steen, Newark Quaker Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

Naveed Baqir, Ph, Executive Director, Delaware Council on Global and Muslim affairs
Rev. Andrew L. Weber, Unitarian Universalist minister
Rev. Cynthia Robinson, New Ark United Church of Christ, Newark, DE
Pastor Andy Jacob, Hanover Church
Rev Dr. Clifford Johnson, Shiloh Baptist Church
La Vaida Owens White, Community Nurse
Rabbi Yair D. Robinson, Congregation Beth Emeth
Rabbi Michael Beals, Congregation Beth Shalom and Chair of the Delaware Council of Faith-Based Partnerships

[i] Kara E. Rudolph, Elizabeth A. Stuart, Jon S. Vernick, and Daniel W. Webster, "Association Between Connecticut's Permit-to-purchase Handgun Law and Homicides," *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 8 (2015): e49–e54.

[ii] Cassandra K Crifasi, John Speed Meyers, Jon S. Vernick, and Daniel W. Webster, "Effects of Changes in Permit-to-purchase Handgun Laws in Connecticut and Missouri on Suicide Rates," *Preventive Medicine* 79 (2015): 43–49.

[iii] W. Webster, J.S. Vernick, E.E. McGinty, and T. Alcorn, "Preventing the Diversion of Guns to Criminals through Effective Firearm Sales Laws," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis*, eds. Daniel W. Webster and Jon S. Vernick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 109-122.

[iv] Cassandra K Crifasi, John Speed Meyers, Jon S. Vernick, and Daniel W. Webster, "Effects of Changes in Permit-to-purchase Handgun Laws in Connecticut and Missouri on Suicide Rates," *Preventive Medicine* 79 (2015): 43–49.

[v] Cassandra K. Crifasi, et al, "Correction to: Association Between Firearm Laws and Homicide in Urban Counties," *Journal of Urban Health* 95, no. 5 (2018): 773–76; Cassandra K. Crifasi, et al., "Association Between Firearm Laws and Homicide in Urban Counties," *Journal of Urban Health* 95, no. 3 (2018): 383–390.

[vi] Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, and Lisa M. Hepburn, "Relationship Between Licensing, Registration, and Other Gun Sales Laws and the Source State of Crime Guns," *Injury Prevention* 7, no. 3 (2001): 184–189; Glenn L. Pierce, Anthony A. Braga, and Garen J. Wintemute, "Impact of California Firearms Sales Laws and Dealer Regulations on the Illegal Diversion of Guns," *Injury Prevention* 21, no. 3 (2015): 179–184.

[vii] Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, and Lisa M. Hepburn, "Relationship Between Licensing, Registration, and Other Gun Sales Laws and the Source State of Crime Guns," *Injury Prevention* 7, no. 3 (2001): 184–189.

[viii] Daniel W. Webster, Jon S. Vernick, Emma E. McGinty, and Ted Alcorn, "Preventing the Diversion of Guns to Criminals through Effective Firearm Sales Laws," in *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis*, eds. Daniel W. Webster and Jon S. Vernick (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013), 109-122.

[ix] Tim Malloy and Pat Smith, "U.S. Voter Support For Abortion Is High, Quinnipiac University National Poll Finds; 94 Percent Back Universal Gun Background Checks," *Quinnipiac University Poll*, May 22, 2019, <https://bit.ly/2w6sChE>.