



**Governor Ned Lamont
State of Connecticut**



FACT SHEET
2022 Legislative Session

**SENATE BILL 16
GOVERNOR'S BILL
*AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE AND JUVENILE CRIME***

Public safety has to be every elected official's high priority. Governor Lamont proposes a series of initiatives and investments that will protect our neighborhoods, get illegal firearms off our streets, and provide law enforcement and the communities they serve with the resources they need to address the root causes of violence.

The Problem

Connecticut's violent crime rate is less than half the national average – but one shooting or car theft is one too many. Here and around the country, rising crime is often the symptom of a population reeling from two years of COVID-19 and of streets awash in illegal guns. While Connecticut remains one of the safest states in the country, Governor Lamont recognizes that citizens deserve action.

Governor Lamont's Solution

Governor Lamont proposes a targeted, comprehensive approach to funding community violence intervention programs, supporting municipal police departments, shoring up the criminal justice system, and slowing the proliferation of illegal firearms.

Those proposals build on the administration's track record of strong support for public safety, including:

- Doubling the number of officers trained annually for municipal and state police, with a rapid pace of new state trooper classes planned;
- Providing \$2.5 million in funding during the pandemic to allow hard-hit police departments to put additional officers on the beat;
- Providing \$2.5 million in funding during the pandemic to help probation officers reduce recidivism among the juveniles and adults;
- Initiating a first-in-the-nation approach to supporting hospital-based violence intervention programs with Medicaid funding;
- Entering into a regional MOU to share information about illegal firearms across state lines; and
- Supporting common-sense public safety measures like Ethan's Law and the 2019 ghost gun reform.

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Gun Violence

You can't be tough on crime if you're weak on guns. Although Connecticut [continues to lead the nation in this area](#), there is always more work to do. Governor Lamont proposes a set of common-sense proposals to get illegal guns out of our communities.

Establish a gun tracing task force to identify the source of illegal guns

- **Background:** Connecticut needs a coordinated statewide effort to identify the source of illegal guns.
- **Proposal:** Reestablish a state Gun Tracing Task Force to work with local and federal partners to stop the flow of illegal guns into our state. The task force will take advantage of the interstate compact to share eTrace reports that the administration entered into last year. This will be supported by \$2.5 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Create a statewide community violence intervention program

- **Background:** Connecticut has strong local violence intervention programs. These programs provide a crucial service to the community: they reduce violence by working with law enforcement, hospitals, and the people most at risk of perpetrating and experiencing violence. However, they are not present in every community, they face limited resources, and there is little statewide coordination and evaluation.
- **Proposal:** Direct the DPH Office of Injury Prevention to create a statewide community violence intervention program. The program will fund and support individual programs, and it will evaluate programs to create a statewide strategy for the most effective violence intervention approaches in the future. This will be supported by \$3.6 million in American Rescue Plan Act funding.

Stop the flow of illegal "ghost guns"

- **Background:** Untraceable "ghost guns" without serial numbers have been showing up with rapidly increasing frequency in crime in Connecticut. These guns are typically sold as partially-assembled kits and can be easily finished into operable weapons. "Ghost guns" are banned in Connecticut, but those that were manufactured prior to 2019 were grandfathered in, making the law nearly impossible to enforce.
- **Proposal:** Require registration of pre-2019 "ghost guns," much like registration was required for large-capacity magazines in 2013.

Ensure gun stores take their obligations seriously

- **Background:** While most Connecticut gun dealers take their obligations under state law seriously, a few do not scrupulously follow Connecticut's laws. The lack of state licensing for gun dealers makes it difficult for the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to enforce those laws, and lax security or inventory tracking can lead to diversion of guns into the wrong hands.

- **Proposal:** Create a state license for all gun dealers in Connecticut, so the state can provide oversight and guidance to gun dealers as they comply with state law. Existing businesses would receive a license without needing to pay the application fee.

Modify carry laws

- **Background:** Gun owners are allowed to open and concealed carry essentially everywhere in Connecticut, even in many sensitive locations like polling places and protests. Police officers cannot ask those openly brandishing weapons, even on the streets of our center cities, for their permit unless they suspect they've committed a crime.
- **Proposal:** Make it easier for our law enforcement officers to request the gun permits of those openly carrying firearms, and ban the carrying of firearms in polling places, in public buildings, on public transit, and at demonstrations.

Close loopholes in assault weapons laws

- **Background:** Gun manufacturers have ramped up production of assault-like weapons that evade assault weapons bans in Connecticut and other states. Those guns are functionally identical to the banned guns.
- **Proposal:** Expand the assault weapons ban to include guns with so-called "arm braces" and open a registration period for those who own these weapons.
- **Background:** Guns manufactured before 1993 are exempt from the assault weapons ban and can be sold and transferred, including those from out-of-state into Connecticut. Out-of-state gun dealers collect older assault weapons from other parts of the country and ship them into Connecticut.
- **Proposal:** Expand the assault weapons ban to include pre-1993 guns and open a registration period for those who own these weapons.

Make domestic violence convictions an automatic disqualifier for holding a carry permit

- **Background:** Anyone who has been convicted of domestic violence is automatically disqualified from owning a gun federally, but not from holding a state permit, and the definitions differ. This forces the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection to hold a time-consuming suitability hearing in each case.
- **Proposal:** Automatically disqualify anyone who has been convicted of a family violence crime from holding a state gun permit.

Strengthen laws on safe storage of firearms

- **Background:** Accidental deaths and illegal weapons frequently originate from improperly stored firearms. While Ethan's Law – which Governor Lamont [signed in 2019](#) – banned the negligent storage of a firearm, the law should provide more guidance to gun owners on what quantifies as safe storage. One example is that trigger locks are only currently required for handguns.
- **Proposal:** Require all firearms, not just pistols and revolvers, to be sold with a trigger lock.

Juvenile Crime

Connecticut has seen incredible progress in criminal justice reform over the past decade not through being soft or hard on crime, but by being smart on crime where necessary and investing in the next generation. That approach has focused on data and outcomes, and a willingness to tweak old policies when they are not working. Our laws are working well for the vast majority of children who become involved in the criminal justice system. That said, a very small number of children need the system to provide more accountability and oversight. Governor Lamont is proposing a set of targeted changes to enable the system to work more effectively with that small number of children to get them back on the right track and protect the public.

Extend the six-hour hold time to eight hours in certain situations

- **Background:** Children cannot currently be held by police for more than six hours, which can be a limited amount of time for an officer to contact parents and seek an order to detain if necessary.
- **Proposal:** Extend the six-hour maximum hold time to eight hours if the officer is seeking to contact parents or file an order of detention.

Designate auto theft and related offenses as serious juvenile offenses on a second offense

- **Background:** In some instances, children have been released by police even after committing repeated auto thefts in a short period of time.
- **Proposal:** If a child has already been adjudicated delinquent once for auto theft, designate subsequent offenses as serious juvenile offenses, making it easier to detain those children temporarily in the limited circumstances where it is necessary.

Allow local police to access juvenile records directly

- **Background:** While the state has made progress in the past year in providing police and judges full information regarding juvenile records, the protocol is still cumbersome. It requires police to contact probation officers to access records and wait for those records to be returned manually.
- **Proposal:** Police officers should be able to access recent juvenile records (within 90 days) through direct electronic means, while they continue to be able to make requests for full records if necessary.

Require electronic monitoring after repeat auto thefts

- **Background:** A very small fraction of children engage in rapidly repeated auto theft, victimizing residents and endangering other people on the road.
- **Proposal:** Require children arrested for auto theft or related offenses who have previously been adjudicated delinquent for one of those offenses to be placed on electronic monitoring if released from detention.

Budget

In addition to those statutory changes, the Governor’s proposed budget adjustment invests in Connecticut communities at levels not seen in decades. Governor Lamont is proposing to address the root causes of community instability and respond to violence comprehensively, using both law enforcement and community-based approaches. The budget includes not only hundreds of millions of dollars for education, workforce development, and mental health to prevent crime before it happens but also a landmark \$64 million investment in public safety that both addresses current needs and lays a foundation for lasting impacts. Governor Lamont's public safety plan will make communities safer, justice swifter and more accurate, and victims that much closer to recovery.

Those investments will make a meaningful and tangible difference in public safety: law enforcement can count on additional resources and partnership to address crime challenges, services for crime victims will be protected when they are needed the most, criminal investigations will speed up with the aid of state-of-the-art forensic sciences, and the court system will receive assistance clearing cases that have accumulated due to the pandemic.

\$19 million to prevent and reduce repeat crime

- Addressing violent crime and motor vehicle theft by providing police departments funding to put more cops on the street to focus on these issues.
- Creating municipal real-time crime centers to use data and technology to prevent or respond in real-time more precisely to high-risk factors driving violence.
- Launching a statewide gun buyback program to get more firearms off the street.
- Training officers in highway interdiction techniques and deploying those officers strategically to stem the flow of guns into the state.

\$4 million to speed up criminal investigations using forensic science

- Deploying Mobile Crime Labs directly to crime scenes and hot spots for rapid forensic-science analysis.
- Advancing the state’s high-tech forensic-science capabilities — including DNA, ballistics, drug, and computer-crime technology — to process investigations with greater speed and precision.

\$23 million to clear accumulated court cases

- Funding will help clear cases that have accumulated during the pandemic in criminal court, evictions and foreclosures, child support, family and support matters, infractions, and family services.
- Clearing these backlogs will allow the system to respond more swiftly and effectively to crime challenges.

\$18 million to help crime victims recover from crime

- Filling an urgent gap left by disappearing federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) funding for victim services, including crisis intervention, safety planning, behavioral health counseling, and access to legal services.
- Providing shelter, housing, and transitional services for domestic violence victims facing heightened safety risks during the pandemic.