



**Governor Ned Lamont  
State of Connecticut**



FACT SHEET  
2023 Legislative Session

**HOUSE BILL 6667  
AN ACT ADDRESSING GUN VIOLENCE**

**I. The Problem**

Connecticut is one of the safest states in the country, but even one incident of gun violence is too many. Worse, gun violence impacts places and people unevenly in our state. Our gun-safety laws, among the strongest of any state in the country, contribute to Connecticut having one of the lowest firearm mortality rates. Keeping residents safe, however, requires continual revision to our laws to keep them current, strong, and enforceable.

**II. Governor Lamont's Solution**

Connecticut's gun-safety laws, which underwent their last major overhaul a decade ago, have not kept pace with the rapid evolution of firearm design and technology or the nature of gun violence. Our laws have become less effective in preventing certain firearms and their parts — assault weapons, ghost guns, and large capacity magazines — from falling into the hands of people who perpetrate violence. And the exploitation of loopholes in Connecticut's laws undermines police and prosecutor efforts to enforce what's on the books. Additionally, reasonable laws many residents assume already exist in Connecticut, such as age restrictions for purchasers of all long guns or the inclusion of a domestic violence conviction as an automatic disqualifier for issuance of a gun permit, are not. The proposals will institute commonsense reforms, close loopholes, and make our gun-safety laws enforceable.

Gun violence is not limited to harm inflicted on other people. Tragically, intentional self-harm is the leading cause of firearm-related fatality in Connecticut. Proposals in this package, including requiring a waiting period following a firearm purchase and expanding our landmark safe storage law, will help prevent self-harm and suicide. Finally, policies increasing education requirements for firearm licensees and improving design safety standards will help lower the risk of unintentional injury.

The proposals preserve an individual right to legal ownership and possession of firearms for self-defense in or outside the home while taking bold steps to prevent and reduce the many forms that gun violence takes. A decade has passed since Connecticut last overhauled its gun laws. A bold, comprehensive approach is needed to prevent tragic loss of life from gun violence.

**A. Preventing and reducing Community Gun Violence**

- i. Investing in community violence intervention strategies*

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The FY 2023 budget adjustment bill that Governor Lamont signed into law last year included \$2.9 million to launch a new statewide community gun violence intervention and prevention program that is being overseen by the Connecticut Department of Public Health's Office of Injury and Violence Prevention with input from the newly established Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention. The DPH office is using a portion of this funding to distribute grants to community-based violence intervention organizations to stop cycles of violence through community-centered, hospital-based, and law enforcement-partnered strategies.

Governor Lamont's FY 2024 and FY 2025 budget proposal includes \$3.3 million in additional support: \$2.5 million in ARPA in FY 2024 for grants to community programs and \$800,000 total in state funds over the biennium for DPH personnel administering the statewide program along with operating expenses.

*ii. Aligning open carry laws with the reasonable expectations of many Connecticut residents*

Many Connecticut residents are surprised to learn that openly carrying firearms on the street, in stores and restaurants, and in other public and private locations, is permitted under state law for individuals who have a permit. Public safety challenges result from this law. Law enforcement, potentially in high-risk situations, are forced to distinguish rapidly whether a person with an open, visible firearm represents a credible public safety threat. Additionally, the presence of a visible firearm can instigate or aggravate an argument between two people, leading to community violence incident.

The proposal generally bans the open carry of firearms in public, except for a list of enumerated exceptions, and prohibits the carry of firearms in alcohol-serving establishments. This change will help prevent the intimidation of residents at certain locations such as protests and polling places. Additionally, it will enable law enforcement to respond to community gun violence incidents more effectively.

*iii. Prohibiting the bulk purchasing of handguns to discourage straw purchases*

Under current law, there are no limits on the number of firearms consumers can purchase within any period of time. This makes it easier for criminals to purchase firearms in bulk before illegally selling them on the underground market, where many guns used in crimes are obtained. To discourage the illegal straw purchasing of guns, Governor Lamont is proposing to limit the number of handguns an individual can purchase to one per 30-day period. This proposal is limited to handguns and does not impact rifles used for hunting or any other long guns.

*iv. Stopping the flow of illegal "ghost guns" into communities*

In 2019, Governor Lamont signed legislation into law banning untraceable ghost guns unless the owner obtains and engraves the weapon with a serial number that is registered with the state (Public Act 19-6). That law only applies to those ghost guns assembled after the legislation went into effect, however, and grandfathers in all of those that were pre-enactment.

This year, Governor Lamont is proposing that this law be updated to eliminate this exemption and require all ghost guns — including those assembled prior to the enactment of this 2019 law —to be registered with the state. Eliminating this exemption will better enable police and prosecutors to enforce this ban. Pre-2019 firearms need not be engraved with a serial number, only registered.

v. *Ensuring gun stores take their obligations seriously*

While the vast majority 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 impossible to know for sure. Importantly, this makes it difficult for the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (DESPP) to enforce our state laws, and lax security or inventory tracking can lead to guns winding up in the wrong hands.

Governor Lamont proposes creating a state license for all gun dealers in Connecticut, so the state can provide oversight and guidance to gun dealers complying with state law and respond quickly and effectively when bad actors threaten public safety. Existing businesses would receive a license without needing to pay the application fee.

**B. Stopping Mass Shootings**

i. *Closing loopholes in the state's assault weapons ban*

Connecticut's existing assault weapons ban, which was adopted in 1993 with significant modifications in 2013, has loopholes that the gun industry has learned to exploit cleverly. Firearm manufacturers are skirting these laws by making slight modifications to assault weapons with the intention of excluding them from the ban.

To close these loopholes, Governor Lamont is proposing to expand the assault weapons ban to include the following. The proposal includes a new registration period for these weapons to allow current owners to continue possessing them and bar future purchases and sales.

- *Pre-September 13, 1994 firearms*: This category is frequently referred to as pre-ban weapons because they refer to the group of assault weapons that have been grandfathered in under Connecticut's 1993 assault weapons ban. Pre-ban weapons, which include AR-15 pistols and rifles, are legal to be sold, possessed, and carried into the state whether or not they have forward pistol grips, flash suppressors, barrel shrouds, or other banned features under the 2013 law. Gun dealers in other states are known to collect pre-ban weapons and ship them to Connecticut for sale at premium prices. These weapons are available today on private gun sale websites or at gun stores in the state.



*A legal pre-ban Colt AR-15 available February 7, 2023 on gunbroker.com*

- *So-called “other” weapons:* This category includes those assault weapons in which manufacturers have made attempts to evade the 2013 law through a technical loophole. The law regulates three specific categories of firearms: pistols, rifles, and shotguns. These are categories defined under Connecticut law do not encompass all weapons. Because the definition is non-exhaustive, manufacturers are selling weapons specifically designed to fall into this loophole, such as having a barrel length longer than 12 inches to avoid classification as a pistol and a so-called “pistol brace” on the back to avoid classification as a rifle.



*Two legal “other” weapons with pistol braces*

- **Rimfire rifles:** This category includes those assault weapons that are typically used for hunting but may be customized into assault-weapon-style rifles to evade bans like Connecticut’s. Because rifles subject to Connecticut’s assault weapons laws are specified as centerfire, rimfire rifles are currently allowed if they have fewer than two banned features. Thus, rimfire rifles possessing a banned feature are emerging as a popular product bypassing Connecticut’s existing assault weapon ban.



*A CT legal Smith and Wesson M&P 15-22 Sport rimfire rifle*

*ii. Strengthening penalties related to the state’s ban on large-capacity magazines*

In 2013, Connecticut banned large-capacity magazines and required anyone who owned such items before the ban to register them with the state by January 1, 2014. The penalty for a first-time offense for possession of an unregistered large-capacity magazine obtained before the law’s 2013 effective date is an infraction, or a \$90 fine. (Any subsequent offense is a class D felony carrying more serious penalties.) Penalties for large-capacity magazines obtained post-2013 are

more severe: a first-time offense is a Class D felony. Because of the lower penalty for pre-2013 magazines, on a first offense, prosecutors must prove in court whether the unregistered magazine was obtained pre- or post-2013. And since magazines are not serialized like firearms, this is nearly impossible to prove.

To make the law enforceable, the proposal eliminates the first-offense provision, making all penalties for this statute a class D felony.

*iii. Increasing the age to purchase all firearms to 21*

Under existing federal and state laws, anyone seeking to purchase handguns must be 21 or older, and anyone seeking to purchase most types of long guns must be 18 or older.

The proposal would align these age limits by enacting a 21-or-older requirement for the purchase of all types of firearms. Raising the age allows young people's brains to develop — especially parts of the brain managing impulse control, judgement, and long-range planning — before they are legally able to purchase a long gun.

A person aged 18, 19, or 20 may still go hunting with a long gun owned by a parent or other person, as the purchase requirements will not impact the ability of anyone under the age of 21 to use firearms as permitted under existing law.

**C. Saving Lives from Self-Harm and Domestic Violence**

*i. Requiring a ten-day waiting period before purchasing a firearm*

Current state law allows residents with the appropriate documentation to walk into a gun store, purchase an unlimited number of firearms, and walk out with them immediately.

In conjunction with the above bulk purchasing limit, this proposal institutes a ten-day waiting period on sales of all firearms in Connecticut. Delaying instant access to firearms creates a cooling-off period that can help prevent impulsive acts of gun violence and suicides.

*ii. Requiring safe storage regardless of who lives at a given residence*

In 2019, Governor Lamont and the General Assembly enacted the landmark Ethan's Law, a crucial step towards ensuring that all firearms are stored safely (Public Act 19-5). That law currently applies when minors, people prohibited from possessing firearms, or people likely to cause harm have access to a residence.

This proposal seeks to expand the law to prevent firearms from being stolen and used in future crimes by making all firearm owners responsible for storing firearms safely regardless of who else has access to the residence.

*iii. Making commission of a family violence crime or being a fugitive an automatic disqualifier for holding a pistol permit*

Anyone who has been convicted of domestic violence offense is automatically disqualified from owning a gun under federal law, but not from holding a state permit, and the definitions differ. Consequently, the DESPP must hold a time-consuming suitability hearing in each case.

Instead, this proposal automatically disqualifies anyone who has been convicted of a family violence crime from holding a state gun permit. A similar provision applies to someone who is a fugitive from justice.

#### **D. Strengthening User Safety Protections**

##### *i. Prohibiting the carrying of any loaded long gun in a vehicle*

Governor Lamont is proposing to enact a law clarifying that all long guns, including ones categorized as “other,” must be carried unloaded in a vehicle. Existing law contains this requirement for rifles.

##### *ii. Increasing education requirements for firearm licenses*

Firearm permits can currently be obtained with only a short course approved by the NRA. Crucially, there is no requirement that these courses inform users on how to follow Connecticut’s high standards for responsible gun ownership.

The proposal modestly expands the requirements for the initial application for a pistol permit to four hours of classroom training and two hours of shooting practice, and set a one-year deadline so knowledge must be fresh.

##### *iii. Improving the design safety standards for semiautomatic handguns*

Users sometimes miss that a semiautomatic pistol may still have a round chambered when the magazine is removed. This issue can lead to accidents when a gun is being disassembled or cleaned. Modern models can have a “loaded chamber indicator,” a visual indication that a round is chambered, and a “magazine disconnect lockout,” a switch that prevents the trigger being pulled if the magazine has been removed.

This proposal requires that all semiautomatic handguns sold in the state after January 1, 2024, possess both a loaded chamber indicator and a magazine disconnect lockout. .

##### *iv. Requiring trigger locks for all firearm purchases*

The proposal requires that all guns, not only handguns, be sold with a trigger lock to enable safe storage.

### **III. The Lamont Administration’s Record of Support for Gun Safety**

These proposals build on the Lamont administration’s record improving gun safety in Connecticut, including:

- Expanding the state’s “Red Flag Law” by enabling family members and medical professionals to raise a “red flag” themselves if they believe someone is at immediate risk of causing personal injury to themselves or others with a firearm. (Public Act 21-67)
- Banning untraceable “ghost guns” unless the owner obtains and engraves the weapon with a serial number received from the state. (Public Act 19-6)
- Prohibiting the storage of firearms in unattended motor vehicles unless the firearm is locked in the trunk, a glove box, or a securely locked safe. (Public Act 19-5)

- Enacting “Ethan’s Law” to close a loophole in state statutes on the safe storage of unattended firearms in homes. (Public Act 19-7)
- Entering into a memorandum of understanding with the neighboring states of New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania to share crime gun data across state lines in order to detect, deter, and investigate gun crime, as well as identify and apprehend straw purchasers, suspect dealers, firearm traffickers, and other criminals. ([October 2021](#))
- Creating a statewide violence intervention program at the Connecticut Department of Public Health to use evidence-based strategies to stop cycles of community gun violence. ([October 2021](#))

Additionally, Governor Lamont has released more than \$32 million in state funding to support statewide gun violence prevention efforts. Among those investments are:

- \$2.9 million for the Connecticut Department of Public Health’s newly established Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Program.
- \$5.4 million to support Project Longevity sites in Waterbury, New Haven, Hartford, and Bridgeport, plus housing vouchers for clients.
- \$11.4 million to support law-enforcement-led strategies and partnerships, including the Gun Trafficking Task Force, regional crime reduction strategies involving car thefts and violent crime, violent crime task forces, and rural road speed enforcement and safety.
- \$4.1 million for forensic science initiatives to investigate and clear criminal cases more swiftly.
- \$8.3 million to support temporary prosecutors and public defenders to work collaboratively to resolve accumulated criminal court cases.