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GUN LAW TRENDWATCH

A roundup and analysis of the latest state firearms legislation.

POSITIVE TRENDS

Last week the California senate passed 11 gun violence prevention measures, all of which will now head to the assembly. The measures include a bill to close a loophole in the state’s assault weapon ban (SB 880), a background check requirement for the purchase of ammunition (SB 1235), a bill establishing a firearm violence research center (SB 1006), and a bill that tightens firearms lending restrictions (AB 1511).

Even if the measures are not ultimately enacted, many of the policies are included in the Safety For All ballot initiative that will be voted on in November. The initiative will prohibit possession of large-capacity ammunition magazines, require background checks for ammunition sales, provide a firearms relinquishment process, require reporting of lost or stolen guns, and mandate that records are submitted to the FBI.

In Connecticut, HB 5054 has been sent to the governor, who has already committed to signing it. The measure will deny concealed carry permits and firearms and ammunition certificates, to any person who is the subject of an ex parte domestic violence protective order (“DVPO”). Subjects of DVPOs will also be required to transfer firearms already in their possession within 24 hours of being served with the order.

In Hawaii, HB 625 is still awaiting signature. The bill would prohibit stalking misdemeanants and sexual abusers from possessing firearms or ammunition.
NEGATIVE TRENDS

Although Tennessee SB 2376 become law this month, allowing employees to carry firearms on the campuses of public colleges and universities, two other campus carry bills were defeated in May.

On May 3, Georgia’s Governor Nathan Deal vetoed a bill that would have allowed guns on university and college campuses. Governor Deal originally said he supported the policy of allowing firearms on campuses but back-pedaled after overwhelming opposition from students, faculty, gun violence prevention groups, and many others. In his veto statement, Deal cited the US Supreme Court’s Heller decision for the proposition that the Second Amendment, like all rights, is subject to limited regulation, including regulation in sensitive places. Pointing to the long history of prohibiting weapons on college campuses, Deal noted that Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were part of a group of officials who decided to ban guns on the campus of the University of Virginia in 1824.

Alaska’s SB 174, which would have prohibited the Board of Regents of the University of Alaska from regulating firearms on university campuses, died when the legislative session adjourned. The bill had passed the senate and had passed two house committees before it was stopped in the house finance committee.

BILL TO WATCH

Arizona’s legislature adjourned this month. Bills that became law include HB 2338, which allows firearms to be carried on public rights of way that cross through college and university campuses, and SB 1266, which imposes punitive preemption provisions against local governments.

SB 1257, which would have allowed firearms to be carried into public buildings and at public events, failed during concurrence in the senate. Several bills that would have nullified federal law died when the legislative session adjourned, and Governor Doug Ducey vetoed HB 2524, which would have created an illegal compact between states to allow nonresidents to sue state and local governments for regulating firearms.

ABOUT THE LAW CENTER TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Founded in the wake of the July 1, 1993, assault weapon massacre at 101 California Street in San Francisco that left eight dead and six wounded, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence is now the premier resource for legal expertise and information regarding state and federal firearms laws. We track and analyze gun laws in all 50 states, file amicus briefs in Second Amendment cases across the country, and work with lawmakers and advocates to craft and promote legislation that will reduce gun violence and save lives. We regularly partner with law firms and nonprofit organizations dedicated to combating the epidemic of gun violence in our country, and we invite you to learn more about our work by visiting our website or connecting with us on social media.