



**Testimony In support of H.4121– An Act relative to the reduction of gun violence**

Submitted to the Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security  
By Carolyn Lee and Terry Yoffie, LWVMA Specialists on Public Safety  
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts is pleased that Speaker DeLeo has proposed legislation that addresses steps the Commonwealth can take to further reduce gun violence in our state.

We particularly applaud and support the following elements of the bill:

- 1) Requiring background checks for all gun purchases at every point of sale.
- 2) Bringing Massachusetts into compliance with the National Instant Check System (NICS) regarding mental health records.
- 3) Expanding police discretion to include suitability on issuance of firearms identification cards.
- 4) Requiring law enforcement to collect data on guns.

LWVMA actively supports better controls to prevent so-called straw purchases and gun trafficking. The added requirements for reporting of stolen or missing guns and fines for failure to do so, as well as requiring a list of guns for license renewal, are a great beginning. Those requirements need to be clearly coupled to a database that could be created by collecting data on guns used in crimes. The mandated annual report of summary statistics by the Colonel of the State Police is insufficient for meaningful action based on this data. For the intended research to be accomplished, complete data needs to be available, not simply a summary report.

We believe there should be limits on the number of handguns any person can purchase in a month's time; these limits will minimize straw purchases and help combat urban violence. This is a key element missing from H.4121, which we hope to see added via amendment or by this committee.

We appreciate the concepts in the bill to improve school safety and to address the needs of the mental health community. However, LWVMA strongly opposes unfunded mandates, and we urge legislators to include adequate funding for any of these programs adopted under this bill. It is important not to impose additional requirements on our schools and state mental health facilities without adequate funding to implement them and without careful consideration of any possible unintended consequences of these proposals.

For League members around the state, stronger gun laws such as those proposed in this legislation are extremely important. You heard from LWVMA members at all five of the joint committee hearings, and now we are here to say thank you for the strength of this bill AND to ask that you assure its passage this session without weakening amendments.

Again, we thank the Speaker for submitting a strong bill, and we thank this joint committee for its willingness to hear testimony from citizens throughout the state over the past 12 months.