

CeaseFirePA

Taking a Stand Against Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 5, 2013 -- CeaseFirePA, a coalition of Pennsylvanians, mayors, police chiefs, faith leaders, and community organizations, today proudly stood with U.S. Representatives Patrick Meehan (R, Pennsylvania), Carolyn Maloney (D, New York), Scott Rigell (R, Virginia) and Elijah Cummings (D, Maryland) and representatives of law enforcement groups as the Gun Trafficking Prevention Act of 2013 was introduced. This bipartisan bill imposes strong penalties for gun trafficking and straw purchasing. CeaseFirePA Executive Director Shira Goodman explained, "We support this critical legislation which targets criminal activity that floods our communities with illegal guns."

Gun trafficking and straw purchases, through which legal buyers transfer firearms to people who cannot legally purchase guns, are serious crimes of violence which must be dealt with severely. Guns used in crimes are, for the most part, first legally purchased, not far from where the crimes ultimately occur. But through loss, theft or improper transfer, those legal guns are transformed into illegal guns and then into crime guns. "Just as CeaseFirePA supported the Officer Bradley Fox bill in Pennsylvania last fall (H.B. 898), which imposed mandatory minimum sentences for straw purchasers who engage in multiple violations," explained Goodman, "we support this federal bill which attacks the problem of illegal guns at the source."

CeaseFirePA also explained that a comprehensive approach to gun violence is necessary, including enhanced criminal penalties and enforcement action for violations of laws regulating firearms as well as regulatory measures, including background checks for every gun sale, no matter the type of gun, the type of seller or the place of sale, and bans on semi-automatic assault weapons and high capacity magazines. "Success will depend on bipartisan cooperation," Goodman noted, "and we are pleased that a member of Pennsylvania's Congressional delegation, Rep. Meehan, is a key part of this effort. We hope such collaboration will continue and that together we can make Pennsylvania, and America, safer."