

CeaseFirePA

Taking a Stand Against Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CeaseFirePA Praises Democratic Gubernatorial Candidates for Opposing Dangerous Gun Policies

Philadelphia, March 17, 2014 – The five democratic candidates for Governor– Allyson Schwartz, Rob McCord, Katie McGinty, Jack Wagner and Tom Wolf -- have released a joint statement opposing two bills scheduled to be voted on in the Pennsylvania House Judiciary Committee tomorrow. “Gun violence is a critical issue for Pennsylvania. While we each may approach the problem differently, we all agree that moving these particular bills forward is misguided and will not make Pennsylvania safer.” CeaseFirePA praised the candidates for coming together to issue the unanimous statement, and urged members of the House Judiciary Committee to heed the call of the candidates to withdraw these bills from consideration.

The bills in question are House Bills 921 and 2011. House Bill 921 would dismantle Pennsylvania’s Instant Criminal Background Check System, a system the Pennsylvania State Police stand behind as a critical law enforcement tool. As the joint statement notes, “According to the State Police, Pennsylvania’s background check system not only works to block gun sales to prohibited purchasers but has more data than the federal system and has additional benefits to law enforcement agents.”

House Bill 2011 would confer special legal standing on gun owners and organizations of gun owners to sue Pennsylvania towns that have taken action to protect their communities by enacting their own local ordinances. “This is an unprecedented change in the legal rules regarding standing and would confer a right to sue on those who have not even been impacted by the laws they are challenging,” said the candidates in the joint statement.

The unity of the five candidates competing for the democratic nomination is strong evidence of the desire of Pennsylvanians for commonsense gun policies that keep us safer. “We thank the candidates for their uniform support of commonsense gun violence prevention policies and their opposition to dangerous proposals that will make Pennsylvania less safe. We applaud their willingness to come together in this important way,” said CeaseFirePA Executive Director Shira Goodman.

The joint statement is reproduced below.

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Taking a Stand Against Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

CeaseFirePA is pleased to announce that the five democratic candidates for Governor -- all of whom responded to a questionnaire about gun violence and gun violence prevention in Pennsylvania -- have issued the attached joint statement in response to the announced agenda of the House Judiciary Committee for this week. We thank the candidates for their uniform support of commonsense gun violence prevention policies and their opposition to dangerous proposals that will make Pennsylvania less safe. We applaud their willingness to come together in this important way.

Statement of Gubernatorial Candidates on Upcoming Judiciary Committee Hearing

We, the undersigned candidates running for Governor of Pennsylvania, urge the Judiciary Committee of the House of Representatives to withdraw from consideration at their upcoming meeting House Bills 921 and 2011.

Despite our differences, we all agree that gun violence prevention is a critical issue for this Commonwealth, and that it is important to find commonsense policies that keep us safer without unduly burdening the rights of law abiding gun owners. However, these bills will not make us safer.

HB 921 dismantles the Pennsylvania Instant Criminal Background Check System, a system the State Police calls a critical law enforcement tool that works to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. According to the State Police, Pennsylvania's background check system not only works to block gun sales to prohibited purchasers but has more data than the federal system and has additional benefits to law enforcement agents. We each oppose elimination of the Pennsylvania Instant Criminal Background Check System.

The second bill, HB 2011, would give special legal standing to gun owners and organizations of gun owners to sue Pennsylvania municipalities that have taken action to protect their communities by enacting their own local ordinances. This is an unprecedented change in the legal rules regarding standing and would confer a right to sue on those who have not even been impacted by the laws they are challenging. We oppose this measure.

Gun violence is a critical issue for Pennsylvania. While we each may approach this problem differently, we all agree that moving these particular bills forward is misguided and will not make Pennsylvania safer. That is why we have taken the unusual step of issuing this joint statement. We together call on the House Judiciary Committee to withdraw these bills from consideration, table the vote, or vote against them.

Thank you.

Allyson Schwartz, Rob McCord, Katie McGinty, Jack Wagner, Tom Wolf