


[NYSRPA-alert] Nine bills on guns scheduled in Albany

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Nine gun-control bills are slated to come before the state Assembly this week.

One of the bills would impose new requirements on firearm dealers, including more stringent record-keeping and employee training and prohibition of so-called straw purchases, when someone purchases a firearm on behalf of someone prohibited from carrying such a weapon. Dealers also would need to carry at least \$1 million in liability insurance for criminal acts committed using weapons they sold.

"The additional requirements set forth in this bill will help to reduce the diversion of firearms to the illegal market and will also assist police departments, prosecutors and other law enforcement officials in their efforts to trace and recover illegal weapons," the bill summary says.

Another bill would require firearm license holders to renew them every five years and take safety courses.

"It is incumbent upon us to make sure that handguns are kept out of dangerous hands so that we may better protect our citizens and prevent further tragedies like the melee in Binghamton," the bill summary says.

Other bills being considered are listed on the National Rifle Association's Web site.

"They've got enough laws on the books now," said Donald W. Sawyer, president of the Lewis County Sportsmen's Association and the Lowville Fish and Game Club.

Mr. Sawyer, a former Lewis County undersheriff, said the key is to enforce current gun laws.

He also expressed concern that any new laws increasing regulation — and taxes — on ammunition would price more people out of the hobby, leading to a less protected populace.

"The ammunition is so expensive now that some target shooters are giving it up," Mr. Sawyer said.

Thomas H. King, president of the New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, said, "None of these

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bills are going to do anything to make the people of New York any safer. It's all feel-good legislation. "

The Assembly initially was expected to consider the gun control bills Wednesday, but it now appears they will be discussed today, Mr. King said. Some association members will be in Albany to lobby against the proposals, and many more plan to be there Wednesday.

With Democrats this year taking control of both the Assembly and the Senate, Mr. King said, his organization will be more dependent on upstate Democratic senators — like Darrel J. Aubertine of Cape Vincent and David J. Valesky of Syracuse — to fulfill campaign promises to support gun owners' rights.

"The Assembly passes a series of anti-gun legislation every year, much of which, quite frankly, goes too far," Mr. Aubertine said through a spokesman. "I voted against those bills when I was an assemblyman, and I will continue to oppose bills that infringe on the rights of law-abiding gun owners. I don't see the Senate rubber-stamping these bills. Instead, I am working with my colleagues to reach out to sportsmen and gun-rights advocates to make sure that legislation necessary for protecting our communities is sensible and effective, not punitive to responsible gun owners."

State Sen. Joseph A. Griffo, R-Rome, said he was unaware of any gun control bills coming before the Senate in the near future. However, he said he will remain wary of "any perceived threat to the Second Amendment."

With the Assembly in session, north country representatives in that body could not be reached for comment Monday afternoon.

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