

Governor Markell, Lt. Gov. Denn, AG Biden Unveil Bill to Require Reporting of Lost, Stolen Firearms

(Newark, DE) Surrounded by members of the Delaware State Police and other law enforcement agencies, Governor Jack Markell today joined Lt. Gov. Matt Denn and Attorney General Beau Biden to unveil legislation that would require gun owners to notify police whenever their firearms are lost or stolen.

The bill is one of five gun safety measures being proposed by Gov. Markell, Lt. Gov. Denn and Attorney General Biden in the wake of the Newtown, CT massacre and other recent mass shootings. The prime sponsors of the bill are Sen. Margaret Rose Henry (D-Wilmington East) and Rep. Michael Barbieri (D-Newark).

“Far too often, guns that are stolen or lost wind up being used to commit crimes,” said Governor Markell. “If we’re serious about keeping guns out of the wrong hands, we need to do a better job of accounting for these weapons. Reporting a lost or stolen weapon is easy, it’s responsible, and it makes our streets safer.”

The legislation would require gun owners to report the loss or theft of their firearm to police within 48 hours of discovery. (The reporting obligation does not start until the owner discovers that the firearm is missing.) Owners may report the loss or theft to their local police department or any Delaware State Police Troop. Violators will be subject to a fine of \$100 to \$500 for a first offense. Second and subsequent offenses would be class G felonies.

“This is part of a larger, multi-dimensional approach we are

taking as a state to address gun violence,” said Lt. Governor Matt Denn. “From reporting lost and stolen weapons to ensuring mental health services for our children and more programs for them after school and in the summer, Delawareans should be working together to address the issue of gun violence and moving towards a safer Delaware for all of us.”

“This is a common-sense proposal that will help law enforcement keep guns out of the hands of criminals,” Biden said. “All too often prosecutors in my office are confronted with defendants who claim their weapon was lost or stolen, when in reality that gun was purchased and then immediately handed over to a criminal who is not legally allowed to have a gun. Under this bill, if a gun is legitimately lost or stolen, the police will know right away. This is an important piece of our balanced approach to reduce gun violence and protect our children.”

“It is our intention to promote common sense gun safety legislation. This will be directed towards the safety of all Delawareans and the rights of law abiding and responsible owners of firearms,” said Lewis D. Schiliro, Secretary of Safety and Homeland Security.

“We need to do a better job of tracing weapons used in crimes. This bill will provide police with an important tool in doing just that,” said Sen. Henry. “In addition, this bill will also promote more responsible gun ownership by requiring people to notify law enforcement when their weapon is missing.”

In addition to Sen. Henry and Rep. Barbieri, the other bill sponsors include Sens. Patricia Blevins, Karen Peterson and Nicole Poore, and Reps. Val Longhurst, John Viola, Larry Mitchell, Helene Keeley, Bryon Short, Deb Heffernan, Ed Osienski, John Kowalko and Paul Baumbach.

Photos are on [Flickr](#).