



CITY OF BOSTON • MASSACHUSETTS

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MARTIN J. WALSH

September 3, 2019

Senator Michael O. Moore
Chair, Joint Committee on Public Safety &
Homeland Security
State House, Room 109-B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Harold P. Naughton
Chair, Joint Committee on Public Safety &
Homeland Security
State House, Room 167
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Chairman Moore, Chairman Naughton and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to you today in support of H.2039, *An Act Concerning the reporting of information relating to certain firearms*, filed by Representative Daniel Cullinane. This bill will improve upon the already strong firearms regulations in Massachusetts, with a focus on firearms and ballistic evidence analysis and tracing.

This legislation aims to increase the utilization of the National Integrated Ballistics Information Network (NIBIN), across the Commonwealth, allowing local and state law enforcement agencies to better connect ballistics and firearms information related to criminal activity across the state, generate better investigatory leads, and expand utilization of advanced technology to law enforcement agencies statewide for all criminal activity that involves the use of a firearm, not just homicides.

This bill has two major components: it requires all law enforcement agencies in Massachusetts to track all recovered firearms and ballistic evidence to the centralized national tracing systems and it requires all law enforcement agencies to opt-in to ATF's eTrace Collective Data Sharing initiative. While many local police departments are currently part of ATF's Collective Data Sharing initiative and access eTrace, anecdotal evidence suggests that in most cases, local law enforcement agencies are only utilizing the eTrace and submitting ballistics evidence to the State Police for specific cases in which a firearm was used in or recovered from the scene of a crime.

By increasing the number of agencies inputting trace information into eTrace, we can provide better insight into gun trafficking across Massachusetts. Since 2014 to date, the Boston Police Department's Ballistics Unit has accepted 4,620 firearms. This number breaks down to 1,127 surrendered firearms, 657 buy back guns, and 2,836 crime guns recovered on the streets or on individuals. Requiring all law enforcement agencies to trace every recovered or seized firearm, even those that are turned in during local gun buyback programs, would add more data to a network and system that could bring about faster resolution to criminal activity, provide better investigatory leads to law enforcement, and enhance the local, state, and federal understanding of how firearms move into and out of Massachusetts.

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Despite the daily heroic efforts of our police force, Boston alone this year has had 147 shooting victims, many of which have been young adults throughout the City and 24 of which have lost their lives. Information sharing as a strategy has great potential to complement our existing violence reduction efforts. I respectfully request your support of this bill and thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly or you may reach Alyssa Ring in the Mayor's Office of Intergovernmental Relations at (617) 635-3817.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Walsh', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Martin J. Walsh
Mayor of Boston