

Legislation Text

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Urging the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to pass Senate Bill 501, which would require the relinquishment of all guns within 24 hours by individuals who are the subject of Protection from Abuse orders, shorten the time defendants convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence must surrender their guns from 60 days to 48 hours, and prohibit allowing friends and family members outside of abusers' households to store firearms surrendered by these individuals.

WHEREAS, On March 28, 2017, Senator Thomas Killion, a Republican serving parts of Chester and Delaware counties, introduced Senate Bill 501, legislation designed to enhance safety for all parties involved in Protection From Abuse (PFA) orders and convictions of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence that require relinquishment of firearms; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 501 (SB 501) has bipartisan support and is co-sponsored by Senators Costa, Dinniman, Farnese, Haywood, Hughes, Leach, McGarrigle, McIlhinney, Sabatina, Schwank, Street, Tomlinson, Williams, Blake, Fontana, and Tartaglione; and

WHEREAS, SB 501 received unanimous support in the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Senate Appropriations Committee, before being referred to the full Senate for a vote; and

WHEREAS, The Senate unanimously passed SB 501 on March 21, 2018 with a 50-0 vote, and the bill was referred to the House Judiciary Committee on March 26, 2018; and

WHEREAS, The intent of this bill is to enhance safety for individuals and their children in domestic violence and PFA situations. Enhancing their safety during these difficult times helps not only these families, but also law enforcement charged with overall public safety; and

WHEREAS, SB 501 would require for the first time in Pennsylvania the relinquishment of all guns by individuals who are the subject of Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders, within 24 hours; and

WHEREAS, The bill would also shorten the time defendants convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence must surrender their guns from 60 days to 48 hours; and

WHEREAS, Furthermore, SB 501 would remove third-party safekeeping as an option for a defendant ordered by the Court to relinquish firearms, weapons, and ammunition. Moving forward, firearms shall only be relinquished to the County Sheriff or other law enforcement agency or to a Federal Firearms Licensed dealer. No longer would a person be able to transfer the firearms to a relative, friend, neighbor, etc.; and

WHEREAS, A similar version of SB 501, House Bill 2060, was introduced by Rep. Marguerite Quinn, a Republican serving Bucks County, on February 26, 2018. Her bill also has bipartisan support; and

WHEREAS, Unfortunately, HB 2060 remains in Committee, and since being referred to the House, there has been no movement on SB 501, and it has sat in the House Judiciary Committee; and

WHEREAS, Despite repeated calls from numerous Senators, as well as Governor Tom Wolf, the House has yet to act on SB 501. The House has only a limited number of days of voting scheduled before the end of the legislative session; and

WHEREAS, Enactment of SB 501 could make a real difference for victims of domestic violence, their families, and law enforcement across the state, and particularly in Philadelphia. For example, in Philadelphia alone, there have been 21 domestic killings in 2018, up from 14 this time last year; and

WHEREAS, SB 501 was introduced in a bipartisan manner, and brought all stakeholders to the table. Victims rights' organizations and organizations that provide support to domestic violence victims have been united in their support of the bill, and pro-gun groups have been neutral; and

WHEREAS, Every day there is inaction by the House on SB 501 is a disservice to all victims of domestic violence, including those that are sadly no longer with us; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That it hereby urges the Pennsylvania House of Representatives to pass Senate Bill 501, which would require the relinquishment of all guns within 24 hours by individuals who are the subject of Protection from Abuse orders, shorten the time defendants convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence must surrender their guns from 60 days to 48 hours, and prohibit allowing friends and family members outside of abusers' households to store firearms surrendered by these individuals.