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Rep. Kane opposes gun reform compromise
*Calls legislation an ‘overreach’ that will
negatively impact lawful, licensed gun owners*

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane (R-Shrewsbury) recently opposed a House-Senate conference committee report to reform the state’s gun laws, calling it an “overreach” and “a solution in search of a problem” that will negatively impact the Second Amendment rights of lawful gun owners and will do nothing to reduce crime in Massachusetts.

House Bill 4885, *An Act modernizing firearms laws*, was released on July 17 following four months of negotiations by a six-member legislative conference committee that worked out the differences between the initial House version of the bill that was engrossed on October 18 and the Senate version that passed on February 1. The conference committee report was accepted on July 18 by a 123-33 vote in the House and a 35-5 vote in the Senate, and is now on Governor Maura Healey’s desk for her review and signature following its enactment in both branches.

Representative Kane said she supports several provisions contained in the bill, including regulating ghost guns, expanding the state’s Extreme Risk Protection Order statute, and language expanding the collection of data related to firearms licensing, crimes committed with firearms, firearm deaths and firearm related accidents. She also supports the bill’s provisions strengthening the penalties for using a firearm while intoxicated and for intentionally or recklessly discharging a firearm that strikes a residential dwelling or other building but said many of her concerns about the bill still remain.

Representative Kane raised questions about how the initial gun reform bill came before the House last October, when it bypassed the traditional legislative committee process and was attached to a supplemental spending bill by the House Ways and Means Committee, where it was reported out “in part” with only the gun bill language included. She also cited the absence of a fiscal note detailing how much the bill would cost, along with the restrictions it would have imposed on law enforcement officers that threatened to compromise their ability to perform their job.

The original House gun bill drew unanimous opposition from the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association (MCOPA), as well as the Gun Owners Action League (GOAL). At the time, one of the biggest concerns raised by the MCOPA was the bill’s “prohibited areas” provision – which was included in response to the Supreme Court’s 2022 ruling in *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* – contained no comprehensive carve-outs for off-duty and retired police officers.

According to Representative Kane, House Bill 4885 addresses these concerns by creating an exemption to the “prohibited areas” provision – which bans the carrying of all firearms in government buildings, polling places, and schools – so it will not apply to current and retired Law Enforcement Officer Safety Act-certified law enforcement personnel. However, she said many of the previous underlying concerns remain about how the bill will adversely impact lawful gun owners.

Representative Kane noted that Massachusetts already has some of the strictest firearms laws in the country, with the gun control advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety ranking the state's gun laws as the fifth strongest in the country (<https://everytownresearch.org/rankings/state/massachusetts/>). Everytown for Gun Safety also reports that Massachusetts has "one of the lowest rate(s) of gun deaths" with a gun violence rate of 3.7 deaths per 100,000 residents, compared to a national average of 14.2. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Massachusetts' rate is the second lowest in the nation, behind only Rhode Island, which has a gun violence rate of 3.1 deaths per 100,000 residents.

Representative Kane also noted the vast majority of gun-related crimes are committed with illegal weapons, not with legally owned firearms. She said the conference committee bill wrongly targets law-abiding citizens when it should instead be focused on punishing those who break the law.

Governor Healey now has 10 days to act on House Bill 4885.

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