

March 28, 2019

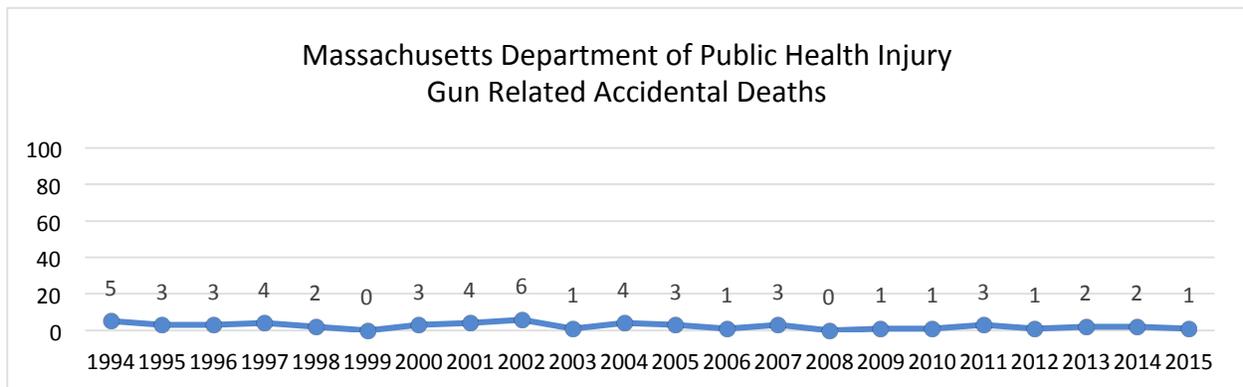
RE: GOAL's Opposition to Mandatory Live Fire Training for MA Gun License Applicants

Dear Legislator,

Some of you have approached Gun Owners' Action League concerning a recent legislative proposal that would mandate live fire training for those who seek to acquire a Massachusetts License to Carry (LTC) or Firearm Identification Card (FID). Other than this being another roadblock to our civil rights and especially for citizens of low income, our first question is:

What problem exists that this proposal is supposed to solve?

The simple answer is that there isn't one.



Massachusetts gun owners have an exemplary safety record and have had so well before the current mandates of training established in 1998. In 1994 the state, through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's Injury Surveillance Program, began tracking a host of injuries and deaths by many different means. Since the reports became public, it has become quite clear that the Commonwealth does not statistically have an accidental gun death problem. That may seem harsh to the very few families that are affected by these rare tragedies, but when viewed with other accidental deaths there is no comparison.

In the latest ISP report (2015) **Massachusetts lost 1,751 to overdoses/poisons, 732 to falls and 416 people to transportation related accidents.** Only one person was killed that year in a gun related accident and the data does not reflect if that may have been a result of criminal activity. There are approximately 11 times more licensed drivers than licensed gun owners, yet the **accidental death comparisons are 416 to 1!**

Of the very few gun-related accidental deaths that happen annually, our observation is that they are most likely unlawful gun owners that will not be curtailed by any law. The evidence clearly shows that Massachusetts gun control laws, including mandatory gun storage laws, have had no effect on accidental deaths.

Gun Safety Education

The **exemplary safety record of gun owners**, specifically in Massachusetts, is due directly to the dedication of our cadre of instructors from the National Rifle Association (NRA), GOAL, and our affiliated clubs around the state. These are the people that provide first class gun safety education without the help, or rather the interference, of government.

On the other hand, it is clear that the Commonwealth is not interested in supporting gun safety education. Of the millions of dollars collected annually through gun license fees, the State does not dedicate a single penny to safety education. As an example, in the 2014 gun bill, language was added that mandated the State Police conduct Public Service Announcements (PSAs). This effort was supposed to educate the public on the safe storage of guns and the importance of and how to seek out gun safety training. Five years later, not a single PSA.

Rather than the Commonwealth passing another useless law, we would respectfully suggest that we put our collective efforts to matters of truly great importance. The overwhelming drug (opioid) epidemic, violent crime, and meaningful suicide prevention. I would strongly suggest your support of the following two pieces of legislation. These bills would begin to address three areas that desperately need attention without placing needless mandates on good people.

H 3398 “An Act relative to illegal drug and firearm trafficking” – Rep. Joseph McKenna

H1740 “An Act relative to mental health needs and suicide prevention” – Rep. Lenny Mirra

Should you need any further information regarding any of these matters, please feel free to reach out to me.

Sincerely,

James L. Wallace
Executive Director