



Legislative Action – *Working for Freedom from Gun Violence*

Fact Sheet
SB21-078 Reporting of Lost & Stolen Firearms
Position: Support

Why a Lost & Stolen Reporting Law for Colorado?

Transfer to Criminals in Other States:

- The FBI reports that from 2015 to 2019, more than \$778 million worth of guns were reported stolen from individuals nationwide, amounting to an estimated 1.7 million guns.
- Firearms are both dangerous weapons and durable goods; once stolen, they do not simply disappear. Traffickers transfer hundreds of Colorado guns to criminals in other states. From 2015-2019, 6,224 guns originally sold in Colorado were recovered at crime scenes elsewhere.
- In the same period, the rate of exported crime guns per Colorado resident has increased by nearly 28%.
- Stolen guns also create challenges for law enforcement officers working to solve gun-related crimes, as these guns become untraceable and cannot be linked to any potential user of the gun.
- A substantial number of gun thefts are not reported to law enforcement. Survey data indicate approximately 40% of losses are not reported.
- Data from over 80 police departments show that from 2010 to 2015, gun thefts have increased by nearly 25%.

Crimes Committed Within Colorado

- Between 2015-2019, the FBI estimates that more than 30,000 guns worth \$13.5+ million firearms were stolen in Colorado.
- A report in 2017 noted that in 6 years, guns stolen in just 4 locales were used in over 600 crimes in Colorado. Those crimes include robbery, assault, and homicide.
- A significant portion of reported stolen guns, were taken from cars, many at sporting events.

Currently No Requirement for Individual Owners to Report

- Federal law requires firearm dealers (not individuals) to report lost or stolen guns.
- 10 states and the District of Columbia already require individuals to report lost or stolen guns. Crime guns originating in states with a lost or stolen reporting requirement are less likely to end up in another state.
- Mandatory reporting would prevent a prohibited offender or abuser from falsely claiming that his or her gun was previously lost or stolen.
- Mandatory reporting would help prevent straw purchases, where a legal buyer provides it to someone who has been prohibited from owning a gun. In the event of a crime committed with the firearm, the previous owner could no longer falsely claim that his or her gun was lost or stolen.

Public Opinion: This proposal was supported by 87% of Colorado voters in a December 2018 poll (survey of 600 registered voters, with a 4% margin of error). The survey found eight in ten Republicans supported the concept and 80% with an NRA household member.

Conclusion:

Lost and stolen guns are responsible for increasing numbers of crimes, both within and outside of Colorado. The lack of a reporting regulation opens up a loophole for those who have been prohibited from owning a gun to obtaining one. This situation should be addressed by enacting a reporting requirement for lost or stolen guns.

Executive Summary: What Does the Proposed Law Require?

Gun Owners Must: Report lost and stolen guns to law enforcement within five days.

Law Enforcement Must: enter information on the lost or stolen firearm into the national crime information database.

Failure to comply

- In the first event, it would be treated as a petty offense punishable by a \$25 fine.
- The second and subsequent offenses would be treated as a misdemeanor.