

# Anti-gun Dems revive 'smart gun,' CDC funding, insurance mandates

by Dave Workman  
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Anti-gun Democrats in Congress have unveiled new versions of old agenda items, but whether these moves are simply to satisfy their political bases or are expected to gain traction in a Republican-controlled Congress remains to be seen.

The Handgun Trigger Safety Act was announced by Sen. Edward Markey (D-MA) and Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney (D-NY), mandating that five years after enactment, all handguns manufactured in the United States must feature so-called "smart gun" technology. The measure would also require that "private dealers" would have to retrofit used handguns within 10 years before those sidearms are re-sold.

There is a provision for reimbursement for the installation of the user recognition technology.

"The majority of Americans support sensible steps to reduce the bloodshed in our streets, schools, churches and other public spaces," Maloney said.

"The epidemic of gun violence in America is not preordained, it is preventable," Markey added. "In the 21st century, we should use research and advances in technology to our advantage and save lives from tragic and needless gun violence."

Markey insisted that this legislation would "keep guns out of the hands of those who shouldn't have them."

But there are many skeptics, and they roundly dismissed this proposal as unworkable, and perhaps even unconstitutional. While there have been attempts to personalize handguns over the years with such things as magnets or electronics, Second Amendment activists are flatly opposed to requiring such technology. They argue that the marketplace should decide whether there is a future for such firearms.

Eric Reed, president and founder of Gun Rights Across America, posted a blog entry on BuzzPro that noted, "This bill is nothing more than a *feel good bill; smoke and mirrors*,' all while squandering your precious tax dollars."

A second piece of legislation that got the attention of gun rights activists

was a proposal to provide \$10 million annually to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to research "gun violence prevention and firearms safety."

Several years ago, angry lawmakers stripped funding from the CDC for such research, determining that it had been biased toward promoting a gun control agenda.

The annual allocations would be for Fiscal Years 2016-2021, but critics asserted that there would undoubtedly be an effort to continue the funding in future budgets.

Maloney made headlines on her own, and in the process infuriated and energized gunowners when she proposed legislation that would mandate liability insurance on all gunowners.

Dubbed the Firearm Risk Protection Act, this is the second time around for Maloney's bill, according to *The Hill*, which broke the story. It followed on the heels of another anti-gun measure introduced by Maloney, the so-called "Gun Show Loophole Closing Act."

Maloney issued a statement justifying her bill with the notation that people are required to have insurance on their cars, and the same should be true about firearms. She asserted that automobile fatalities have declined 25 percent in the past decade, but firearms fatalities "continue to rise."

When various bloggers began writing about this proposal, social media erupted. Alan Gottlieb, chairman of the Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms, told TGM that posts on the CCRKBA Facebook page received some of the heaviest responses he's ever seen.

"This issue hits everybody," he said.

The most recent data available from the FBI Uniform Crime Report for the years from 2009 to 2013 shows a decline in the number of firearms-related homicides. Also, data from the Centers for Disease Control shows that suicide by firearm accounts for just over 50% of all suicides.

Efforts like Maloney's distract attention away from what may be the more important issue: Firearms thefts and the illicit trade in hot guns. That

was underscored in a report published by the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, quoting St. Louis Police Chief Sam Dotson.

According to Dotson, most stolen guns are taken from vehicles, the newspaper reported. One of the contributing factors to this is the so-called "gun-free zone" that prohibits law-abiding citizens from carrying their defensive sidearms into such venues as Busch Stadium. The chief said people leave firearms unsecured in their cars.

"Criminals have figured this out," he told the newspaper, explaining that often in car break-ins, the gun is the only thing taken. "That's what they're looking for."

By forcing people to leave their firearms in their vehicles while they dine, or attend a sporting event, school function or visit a sick family member or friend in the hospital, those firearms are vulnerable to criminal theft.

Dotson told the newspaper that many of the guns his officers are now seizing are confirmed stolen or have had the serial numbers filed or ground off. The chief suggested that gunowners could equip their vehicles with lock boxes.

Of the approximately 32,000 to 33,000 deaths involving firearms in any given year, about 60% are suicides. A small percentage is accidents and the rest are homicides, according to an analysis at one conservative website, About News. It's not clear how forcing liability insurance on someone will prevent a suicide or an accident, nor did Maloney explain how her proposal would cut down on gang- and drug-related homicides, typically committed by people with criminal records who aren't legally allowed to have firearms.

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## Christie Issues second NJ gun case pardon

A New Jersey man who took a plea deal after he mistakenly left his legally owned gun in his car's glove compartment was pardoned recently, becoming the second person this year to have gun charges wiped away by Republican Gov. Chris Christie, who is frequently mentioned in media reports as a possible Republican candidate for president in 2016.

"This is very deserving, and we are very thankful for the governor issuing this pardon," said Evan Nappen, Josey-Davis' lawyer.