



Text File

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Bill No: 2016-0852, **Version:** 1

Committee: City Council

Status: Adopted

WHEREAS the city of Pittsburgh is struggling to reduce the rising tide of gun violence in our community; and

WHEREAS despite overwhelming evidence that the vast majority of gun crimes are committed by “prohibited purchasers” using illegal guns obtained through loss, theft, straw purchases, or trafficking, the State Legislature of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has refused to take any action to address illegal gun trafficking, and in 2008 rejected a proposal to enact a statewide lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement; and

WHEREAS in order to reduce the supply of illegal guns resulting from theft, loss, or illegal transfers, in 2009 Pittsburgh City Council adopted a lost or stolen handgun reporting ordinance, requiring that missing firearms be reported to law enforcement upon discovery their absence; and

WHEREAS Pittsburgh is one of 48 communities that took action in favor a lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement, including 29 that adopted the reform as local law; and

WHEREAS Pennsylvania courts have allowed the local lost or stolen handgun reporting laws set by the cities of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia to remain on the books seven times, including Allegheny and Philadelphia Courts of Common Pleas, Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court, and the Pennsylvania Supreme Court; and

WHEREAS the Pennsylvania State Legislature is once again considering bills--HB 2258 and SB 1330--created by the gun lobby to threaten financial penalties for cities and towns in Pennsylvania that have taken proactive steps to crack down on criminals who illegally use and traffic firearms, terrorizing our communities; and

WHEREAS HB 2258 and SB 1330 will encourage frivolous, costly lawsuits against the City of Pittsburgh by extreme gun advocacy groups and gun owners, even if no evidence is presented indicating that their rights have been infringed upon; and

WHEREAS if the City of Pittsburgh successfully defends itself against such lawsuits, no compensation is provided for wasted city time and financial resources; and

WHEREAS HB 2258 and SB 1330 were considered by the State House Judiciary Committee and the State Senate Local Government Committee, respectively, without a public hearing or either public/private testimony from local municipal and law enforcement officials; and

WHEREAS HB 2258 and SB 1330, for the first time in the history of this Commonwealth, grants organizations like the National Rifle Association automatic standing to file lawsuits against municipalities, without having suffered any tangible, provable damages; and

WHEREAS the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania District Attorneys' Association, the Pennsylvania Association of County Commissioners, and the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities are all organizations dedicated to public safety, and all have all indicated their extreme opposition to "firearms pre-emption" bills like HB 2258 and SB 1330; and

WHEREAS the only organizations actively in favor of HB 2258 and SB 1330 are the National Rifle Association and other arms of the gun lobby; and

WHEREAS the National Rifle Association has already drained resources from the City of Pittsburgh by litigating a losing lawsuit to try to strike down an ordinance that did not restrict how guns are possessed, purchased, or used, but simply required gun owners to report lost or stolen guns to law enforcement in an effort to protect the public safety and security of the City of Pittsburgh;

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh does hereby oppose HB 2258 and SB 1330; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh, does hereby call upon the Allegheny County delegation of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives and Pennsylvania Senate, as well as Governor Wolf, to join us in opposition to these politically motivated bills that gut the very bedrock upon which our legal system is founded in this country and this Commonwealth and exist only to bankrupt towns while lining the pockets of the gun lobby; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Pittsburgh urges that General Assembly and Governor Wolf to reconsider adopting a statewide lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement (currently circulating in our state House as HB 1020), establishing a uniform system of accountability for missing firearms across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.