

HOUSE No. 2520

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Jon Santiago

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to addressing disparities in gun violence and mortality.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Jon Santiago</i>	<i>9th Suffolk</i>	<i>2/19/2021</i>
<i>James J. O'Day</i>	<i>14th Worcester</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Carlos González</i>	<i>10th Hampden</i>	<i>2/26/2021</i>
<i>Vanna Howard</i>	<i>17th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/19/2021</i>

HOUSE No. 2520

By Mr. Santiago of Boston, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 2520) of Jon Santiago and others for legislation to establish a multi-agency illicit firearms task force to coordinating efforts to combat illicit firearm distribution, sales and possession. Public Safety and Homeland Security.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)

An Act relative to addressing disparities in gun violence and mortality.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. (a) There shall be a multi-agency illicit firearms task force, the purpose of
2 which shall include, but not be limited to, coordinating efforts to combat illicit firearm
3 distribution, sales, and possession. The task force shall seek to foster compliance with the state’s
4 firearms laws and ensure appropriate public health and public safety protections. The task force
5 shall support, coordinate, and conduct targeted investigations and enforcement actions against
6 persons distributing and possessing illicit firearms. The task force shall be co-chaired by the
7 attorney general or a designee and the colonel of the state police or a designee and shall also
8 consist of: the secretary of public safety and security or a designee; the commissioner of public
9 health or a designee; a representative of the Massachusetts District Attorneys Association; one
10 municipal chief of police appointed by the governor; and one representative of a major city
11 patrolmen's association appointed by the governor.

12 (b) The task force shall:

13 (i) accept referrals of potential investigative interest from state and municipal law
14 enforcement, other state and municipal agencies and the general public;

15 (ii) facilitate timely information sharing among state and municipal agencies in order to
16 advise or refer matters of potential investigative interest;

17 (iii) identify where illicit firearms distribution, sales and possession is most prevalent and
18 target
19 task force members' investigative and enforcement resources, including through the
20 formation of joint investigative and enforcement teams;

21 (iv) assess existing investigative and enforcement methods in the commonwealth and in
22 other
23 jurisdictions in order to develop and recommend strategies to improve such methods;

24 (v) solicit the cooperation and participation of other relevant enforcement agencies,
25 including federal law enforcement and investigative bodies and establish procedures for referring
26 cases to prosecuting authorities as appropriate; and

27 (vi) provide reports of affirmative investigative findings to the appropriate federal, state
28 and municipal law enforcement agencies.

29 (c) The task force shall meet at times and places to be determined by the co-chairs and
30 may
31 establish working groups, meetings, forums or any other activity deemed necessary to
32 carry out

33 its mandate. At the discretion of the co-chairs, the Task Force may invite participation
34 from other non-voting, non-members, including federal agencies. Due to the sensitive,
35 investigative nature of the task force's work, meetings of the task force shall not be subject to
36 chapter 30A, and all materials other than the Task Force's annual report required by subsection
37 (d) shall not, unless otherwise determined by the co-chairs be considered a public record as
38 defined by clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4.

39 (d) The task force shall submit a report not later than March 1 of each year on the results
40 of its

41 findings, activities and recommendations from the preceding year with the clerks of the
42 senate

43 and house of representatives, the chairs of the senate and house committees on ways and
44 means, the chairs of the joint committee on public safety and homeland security, and the chairs
45 of the joint committee on public health. The annual report shall include, but not be limited to: (i)
46 a description of the task force's efforts and activities during the previous year; (ii) identification
47 of

48 any administrative or legal barriers, including any barriers to multi-agency action or
49 enforcement

50 efforts; and (iii) proposed legislative or regulatory changes necessary to strengthen
51 operations

52 and enforcement efforts and reduce or eliminate any impediments to such efforts.

53 SECTION 2. Notwithstanding any general or special law to the contrary, the
54 commissioner of public health shall declare a public health emergency pursuant to section 2A of
55 chapter 17 of the General Laws regarding gun violence in the commonwealth.

56 SECTION 3. There shall be a special commission to review current laws, regulations and
57 policies to reduce gun violence and mortality within the commonwealth. The commission shall
58 consist of 15 members: 1 of whom shall be the attorney general or a designee, who shall serve as
59 chair; 1 of whom shall be the secretary of public safety and security or a designee; 1 of whom
60 shall be the colonel of the state police or a designee; 1 of whom shall be the commissioner of
61 public health or a designee; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts District
62 Attorneys Association; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Coalition of Police
63 Inc.; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association
64 Incorporated; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts General Hospital Center for
65 Gun Violence Prevention; 1 of whom shall be appointed by the Massachusetts Coalition to
66 Prevent Gun Violence; 1 of whom shall be the director of the division of violence and injury
67 prevention at the department of public health; 1 of whom shall be appointed by Roca, Inc.; 1 of
68 whom shall be appointed by the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute; 1 of whom shall be appointed
69 by the Northeastern University Center on Crime and Community Resilience; and 2 of whom
70 shall be appointed by the governor, both of whom shall have been significantly impacted by gun
71 violence.

72 The commission shall examine current laws, regulations, policies and programs that
73 could be amended to reduce the impact, whether directly or indirectly, of gun violence and
74 mortality in the commonwealth. In making such findings, the commission shall recommend
75 amendments to state law and programming to reduce or eliminate racial and ethnic inequities.

76 The commission shall file the results of its review, together with all potential changes to
77 law, regulation, policy, or programming, whether recommended or not, that commission deems
78 to have a likelihood to reduce gun violence in the commonwealth and the negative downstream
79 impacts thereof, by filing the same with the clerks of the house of representatives and the senate
80 who shall forward a copy of the study to the house and senate committees on ways and means,
81 the joint committee on public safety and homeland security and the joint committee on public
82 health not later than April 1, 2022.