

## **NEWS:**

# **Bill Seeking to Ban Specific Semi-Automatic Firearms Fails to Clear Senate Committee**

**JUNE 8, 2018** -- A bill to ban the manufacture, sale, transport, and transfer of "assault weapons" in Delaware failed to clear the Senate Judicial & Community Affairs Committee this week.

The [legislation](#) is based on a 2013 Maryland law.

Gov. John Carney called for the measure in the days following an attack at a Florida high school on Valentine's Day, saying it was "important legislation that will make our state safer."

Jeff Hague, President of the Delaware State Sportsmen's Association, disputed that notion saying the bill would not curb violent crime. "In the last ten years, only four long guns have been used to commit murder in Delaware and this bill would have done nothing to prevent those crimes," he said.

The measure would explicitly ban dozens of semi-automatic rifles, shotguns, and pistols by model and manufacturer. It would also prohibit copycat rifles -- defined as any semi-automatic centerfire rifle that accepts a detachable magazine and has at least two of the following attributes:

- a folding stock;
- a grenade or flare launcher;
- a flash suppressor;
- a fixed magazine exceeding a 10-round capacity;
- has a length not exceeding 29-inches.

The bill would allow Delawareans already owning weapons banned by the legislation to retain those firearms, but it would restrict where they could be possessed and how they could be displayed, transported, and stored. During committee testimony on Wednesday, the bill's lead sponsor, Sen. Bryan Townsend, D-Newark/Bear, reportedly conceded there was no agreed-upon method for identifying the gun owners who would be grandfathered under this provision.

Following the vote, committee member State Sen. Greg Lavelle, R-Sharples, released a statement saying he did not support the bill's release. He said his decision was based on his discussions with constituents and because he believes the legislation violates the state constitution's gun ownership protections.

Sen. Lavelle accused State Senate Majority Leader Dave McBride, D-Hawk's Nest, of deliberately manipulating the process, noting he could have assigned the bill to a committee where its release would have been assured.

"The failure of SB 163 to pass out of committee was the preferred and designed outcome of the Senate Democrats," Sen. Lavelle said. "Senator McBride and his leadership team never wanted this bill to see the floor, and they want to pin its demise on me for political gain in an election year."

Senate Democrats hold a one-vote majority and could still bring the bill to the floor for a vote by the chamber if they chose to do so before the current session ends on July 1st.