

# **Firearms Task Force**

## **Minutes of July 27, 2009 Meeting**

The first meeting of the Firearms Task Force ("Task Force") was held on Monday, July 27, 2009 in the Office of the Counsel to the Governor, 125 W. State Street, Trenton, New Jersey. The following Task Force members were present: Prosecutor Robert Bernardi (Chair), Lt. Col. Chris Andreychak, Assemblyman John Burzichelli, Senator Sandra B. Cunningham, Senator Fred H. Madden, Bryan Miller, Robert A. Nixon, and Assistant Attorney General Ronald Susswein. Assemblyman Gordon M. Johnson participated via teleconference. Also present were Karen Fiorelli and Sobande F. Afolabi of the Office of the Counsel to the Governor, Joseph Blaney of the Senate Majority Office, and Jenna Lihvarcik, Chief of Staff to Senator Madden's Office.

### **Introductions**

Ms. Fiorelli opened the meeting by welcoming the members and thanking them for agreeing to serve on the Commission on behalf of Chief Counsel William J. Castner. She introduced Prosecutor Bernardi, who is the Chair of the Task Force, and provided a brief outline of the Executive Order ("EO").

Prosecutor Bernardi introduced himself, gave brief remarks and asked that members introduce themselves. Each member also was asked to provide his/her contact information so that a contact list can be prepared and distributed.

Senator Madden, Assemblyman Burzichelli, and Mr. Nixon made comments regarding several issues that have been brought to their attention regarding the one handgun bill's impact on collectors, private sales, and competitive shooters.

### **Vice Chair**

Prosecutor Bernardi indicated that the Executive Order provides that the Task Force appoint a Vice Chair. He recommended Senator Madden. There were no objections. Prosecutor Bernardi's motion to appoint Senator Madden was seconded by Mr. Nixon. The vote was unanimous.

### **Minutes**

Prosecutor Bernardi indicated that he would like to have minutes taken at each meeting. Ms. Fiorelli indicated that Counsel's Office could prepare draft minutes for the committee's consideration.

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## **Future Meetings**

The Task Force agreed that meetings will take place in Counsel's Office. The next meeting will be held on Monday, August 10, 2009 at 1:30pm.

## **Public Hearing Discussion**

There was discussion on whether public hearings should be conducted before the first written report to the Governor is submitted. Discussion was that a public meeting will be held in mid-September, with a tentative date for Monday, September 21, 2009 at 10:30am. Location of the hearing will be determined at a later meeting.

Interested groups will be invited to provide testimony at the hearing and information for the Task Force to consider. Senator Madden asked that Mr. Blaney create a list of potential invited guests and e-mail that list to the Chair for dissemination to the Committee. All members were asked to submit their recommendations to Mr. Blaney as soon as possible. Governor's Counsel will assist in sending out the invitations to guests on behalf of the Task Force, as well as notice for the meetings, with the assistance of Mr. Blaney.

Senator Cunningham suggested that the Task Force hold more than one public hearing — perhaps one in each part of the state. She also suggested that it may be beneficial to have a hearing in the North and receive testimony from people who are victims or have been affected by gun violence and/or straw purchases.

It was also decided that perhaps after the report is due, another public hearing may be warranted.

## **State Police Information Requests and Presentation**

Prosecutor Bernardi asked Lt. Col. Andreychak if State Police could provide the Task Force with certain information: (1) how many people purchase more than one handgun in a month; (2) how frequently do people purchase more than one handgun in a single sale; and (3) what is the time period for issuing permits.

Lt. Col. Andreychak indicated that the State Police track the number of people who have applied for permits and who have made multiple purchases. It is harder to regulate person-to-person transactions. Although there is a statutory timeframe of 30 days to issue permits, Lt. Col. Andreychak indicated that once the applications are received by the State Police, it could take a few months to issue permits. He agreed to provide the information that was available on these issues.

Lt. Col. Andreychak also indicated that roughly 20% of guns used in crimes in NJ originate in NJ. Guns are more likely to be purchased in PA, NC, and GA.

As suggested by Mr. Susswein, the State Police will conduct a presentation on the process of purchasing handguns at the August 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by Prosecutor Bernardi at approximately 3 p.m.