



**SUFFOLK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE
DISTRICT ATTORNEY RACHAEL ROLLINS**

Harold P. Naughton, Jr.
Massachusetts House of Representatives
Chairman, Joint Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security
24 Beacon Street, Room 167
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

August 28, 2019

Dear Chairman Naughton,

As a prosecutor and the chief law enforcement officer for Suffolk County, I am committed to proactive strategies and protocols that aim to reduce crime and keep our communities safe. I urge you and the Committee to support H.3780, H.3781, H.3782, H.3783, and H.3927.

If we fail to take every possible measure to prevent gun-violence, we fail the people who entrusted us with their safety. The bills in question collectively work to thwart the illegal trafficking of firearms by:

- (1) limiting the number of firearms an individual is able to purchase within a thirty-day period;
- (2) preventing gun dealers from delivering a firearm within a ten-day period;
- (3) requiring gun dealers to submit to ballistic reports and gun characteristic data collection for the Massachusetts Instant Record Check System (MIRCS) and Firearm Records Bureau;
- (4) demanding all firearms registered in the Commonwealth to be subject to annual inspections;
and
- (5) creating stricter penalties for straw purchasers who use their firearm licenses for the purpose of purchasing a firearm for the unlawful use of another, or for resale to or giving to an unlicensed person.

While Massachusetts has some of the country's strongest gun control legislation and one of the lowest gun death rates, there have already been 30 homicides this year. This past weekend alone, there were multiple shootings in our Boston neighborhoods, one of which resulted in death.

Oversight of gun dealers is critical to reducing the number of lives threatened or lost because they are often the major source of illegally trafficked firearms.

It is not enough to hold buyers of these guns accountable. We must hold the sellers accountable too, as well as anyone who engages in a straw purchase. Regulation and accountability at each end of the transaction is critical to our efforts in effectively reducing gun-related violence in our communities.

We cannot allow gun dealers to wipe their hands clean once the transaction is completed. They must be vigilant. We must make them vigilant.

I want to be clear, however, that while gun regulation laws are important, they are not enough to keep our communities safe. We must also commit to investing resources in public health prevention and intervention programs that are proven highly effective at reducing gun violence. I encourage our leaders to truly embrace comprehensive prevention strategies that will yield the most life-saving results.

I am at the scene of the majority of the homicides that occur in Suffolk County. I see the pain that this violence causes. It reverberates throughout the community, destroying lives far beyond those lost when a trigger is pulled.

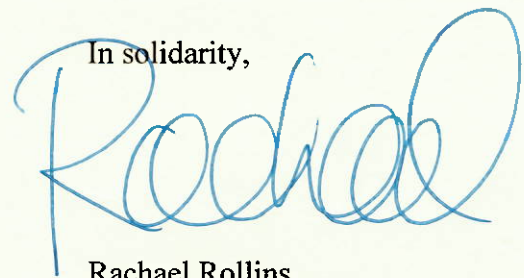
I've met mothers and fathers who have lost their sons and daughters, family members who wonder why their grandmother was a collateral death in a shoot-out. I've attended vigils and peace walks to stand in solidarity with those who have been intimately affected by gun-violence. I've witnessed relatives of victims turn their pain into power, offering counseling to those who join a familiar, tragic club.

Sadly, these stories of tragedy and resilience are too common. They are a part of a seemingly endless cycle of violence we thus far have failed to address with the urgency it deserves.

Thoughts and prayers do not keep our festivals, stores, nightclubs, schools, marathons, movie theaters, churches, or streets safe. We must do more.

Change begins with those who commit to it. Commit to change today and prioritize these bills. We owe it to the people who elected us and to the communities we serve.

In solidarity,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachael". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping tail.

Rachael Rollins
Suffolk County District Attorney