



OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF
RICHARD J. DALEY CENTER
COOK COUNTY
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS 60602

THOMAS J. DART
SHERIFF

June 12, 2013

The Honorable Pat Quinn
Governor, State of Illinois
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Governor Quinn:

Every day, we are reminded of the tragic toll gun violence takes on our communities, here in Cook County, throughout Illinois and across the country. On June 5th, HB183 was sent to you for action. As you know, this bill sets forth the requirements and process by which a person, if eligible, could carry a concealed weapon in Illinois.

While I applaud the General Assembly's commitment to meet the June 9th deadline imposed last December by the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, this bill creates a process that is designed to fail and will put Illinois communities at increased risk. The bill is fatally flawed and creates the illusion of public safety.

Section 15, *Objections by law enforcement agencies*, authorizes law enforcement agencies to object to an applicant if they have a "reasonable suspicion that the applicant is a danger to himself or herself of others, or a threat to public safety." It appears that this section is designed to identify people who may be unfit to possess a conceal carry license, but who otherwise meet the criteria set forth under the bill and requires this determination to be made within an impossibly short time frame.

As drafted, the bill would require federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, as well as state's attorney's offices and the Office of the Attorney General to monitor a database of applicants for those who reside in their jurisdiction at the time of the application, who resided in their jurisdiction in the past or for those who they may have had any contact with and to assess whether they have a reasonable suspicion the individual is a risk to themselves or the public.

In Cook County alone, over **358,000** residents have been issued a Firearm Owners Identification ("FOID") card from the Illinois State Police. Statewide, the number of FOID card holders is over **1.5**

million. Under the requirements of section 15, assessments of each and every applicant would be required by law enforcement and prosecutors throughout Illinois.

While the public dialogue has focused on gun violence, we must also acknowledge the connection between guns and suicide. Suicides by gun account for approximately 6 of every 10 firearm deaths and in 2010, over 19,000 Americans killed themselves with a gun, amounting to 61 percent of all firearm deaths that year.¹

I strongly believe it is imperative to identify applicants who may be a risk to themselves or others. Unfortunately, the process set forth in this bill will not accomplish that critical objective. Without a crystal ball, the objection process is unworkable and creates a shockingly false sense of security.

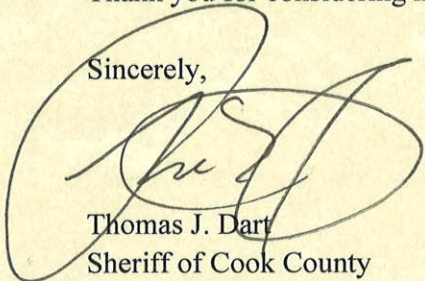
However, of even greater concern is that the bill lacks any process by which law enforcement could object to a person for whom they have reasonable suspicion is a risk to themselves or a threat to public safety *after* they are issued a license to carry a concealed handgun.

We have a seemingly endless list of tragic examples of the devastating harm and loss of life that occurs through gun violence, including when guns are in the hands of those with undiagnosed or unrecognized serious mental illness. We must work to ensure Illinois' regulation of the concealed carrying of weapons is strong, thoroughly vetted and capable of successful implementation.

Most importantly, our law and process must ensure that those who are a risk to themselves or the public will be identified and determined ineligible to carry firearms as long as the risk they pose remains.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Dart', is written over a large, loopy circular flourish.

Thomas J. Dart
Sheriff of Cook County

¹ Drew Desilver, "Suicides Account for Most Gun Deaths," *Pew Research Center*, May 24, 2013