



Closing Statement

**Kathy Flicker
Commissioner
New Jersey State Commission of Investigation
Public Hearing
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Thank you very much for your expert testimony. Indeed, the Commission would like to express its appreciation to everyone who has assisted our efforts to marshal the facts and bring to light these very serious matters.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is plain from what we have heard today that public safety in New Jersey is threatened by a flawed and troubled system that routinely delivers the raw material for gun violence into the hands of criminals and others who should have no business possessing it.

It is a system that requires a background check and an official license to own a handgun but, unaccountably and astonishingly, mandates nothing of the sort as a condition for purchasing ammunition to turn that gun, otherwise a benign hunk of machine-tooled metal, into a deadly weapon.

It is a system in which the only check on access to ammunition rests with store-owners who must choose between risking the anger of customers turned away or acting

as enablers, accomplices if you will, in the legal conveyance of lethal merchandise quite possibly destined for the criminal underworld.

It is a system with little in the way of effective oversight, and one that undermines the authority of our police, makes a mockery of our gun control laws and renders the streets of our towns and cities that much more dangerous at the very moment we are struggling to come to grips with a rising tide of drug-based gang violence.

The embedded statutory contradictions and the legal loopholes that gave rise to and sustain this system, of course, are not new. But the circumstances we face today are. And that is why the Commission has seized upon this as an urgent issue demanding careful attention and intensive scrutiny.

Through this investigation, we have developed a factual foundation upon which to develop sensible and practical recommendations for statutory and regulatory reforms. Indeed, some of the witnesses who appeared before us today already have outlined a range of proposals aimed at protecting the public's interest. As the Commission moves forward, we will take into account their suggestions, and we invite additional input from all interested parties as we craft a final report of this investigation.

Thank you again for your time and attention to these most urgent matters.

This hearing is adjourned.