

New Jersey State Commission of Investigation



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SCI TO FOLLOW UP ON INVESTIGATIONS FIRST UP: ACCESS TO FIREARMS AMMO

TRENTON – Calling it a matter of “accountability in government,” the State Commission of Investigation today launched an effort to periodically examine the results of its work. The first such “follow-up” report focuses on what has occurred in the decade since the SCI revealed the ease with which anyone – including convicted felons – could legally obtain handgun and other firearms ammunition.

The Commission revisited its 2007 report, *Armed and Dangerous: Guns, Gangs and Easy Access to Firearms Ammunition*, and found that while legislation enacted in response to the SCI’s findings and recommendations made it more difficult for anyone who is not a gun owner to legally obtain bullets, the measure does not nearly go far enough to ensure that ammunition sales are free from abuse. The Commission tested the law and found

that a primary intent of the statute – to prevent “straw” purchases in which a surrogate purchases ammunition on behalf of someone seeking to conceal his/her own identity – was easily circumvented because State-issued firearms purchaser credentials do not contain a photograph of the cardholder. In its initial 2007 report, the Commission recommended incorporating photos into the ID cards.

In its follow-up, the Commission also found that efforts by law enforcement authorities to monitor and oversee ammunition sales remain stymied due, in part, to an antiquated system used for logging ammo sales transactions. The current system is completely reliant on handwritten logs maintained by vendors. In the follow-up report, the Commission renewed its call to upgrade and modernize the way information is collected by ammunition sellers by equipping the vendors with computer technology that would permit them to forego paper logs and enter all sales information into a central database accessible to law enforcement.

“The creation of this type of central database in the realm of ammunition sales would allow law enforcement agencies to coordinate and share criminal intelligence data related to suspicious sales or firearms-related investigations,” the SCI found.

Legislation is pending in both houses of the New Jersey State Legislature that would address these recommendations.



The State Commission of Investigation is an independent New Jersey watchdog agency established in 1968 to investigate organized crime and corruption, waste of tax money and other abuses of the public trust. Copies of public reports are available at the Commission’s offices or via its Website at www.state.nj.us/sci.