

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2020 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader - Revised

House Bill 35
Judiciary

(Delegate Queen)

Judicial Proceedings

Public Safety - Firearm Telematics - Study

This bill requires the Handgun Roster Board under the Department of State Police (DSP) to study and make recommendations about “firearm telematics.” By July 1, 2021, the board must report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: The Handgun Roster Board can handle the bill’s requirements with existing budgeted resources. This assumes that the board can complete the required study and report without the need to hire a consultant. Revenues are not affected.

Local Effect: None.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Bill Summary: In conducting the study and making recommendations, the board must:

- analyze the current research and development of firearm telematics;
- evaluate the technical feasibility of incorporating firearm telematics with previously manufactured firearms;
- determine types of firearms to which firearm telematics may be applied or attached;
- determine whether firearm telematics are currently available for retail sale purposes, and, if not, when firearm telematics are likely to become available for retail sale purposes;

- provide recommendations for the most feasible methods to utilize firearm telematics to recover lost or stolen firearms; and
- provide recommendations for the best use of firearm telematics for various categories of owners and users of firearms, as specified.

“Firearm telematics” means an electronic sensor or equipment installed on a firearm designed to track the location of the firearm if it becomes lost or stolen.

Current Law/Background: The Handgun Roster Board is an entity within DSP. The Secretary of State Police serves as chair. The board must (1) compile and maintain a handgun roster of authorized handguns that are useful for legitimate sporting, self-protection, or law enforcement purposes; (2) annually publish the handgun roster; and (3) semiannually send a copy of the handgun roster to all persons who hold a State-regulated firearm dealer’s license in the State. In general, a person may not manufacture, distribute, or sell a handgun in the State that is not included on the handgun roster.

A dealer or any other person who sells or transfers a regulated firearm must notify the purchaser or recipient of the firearm at the time of purchase or transfer that the purchaser or recipient is required to report a lost or stolen firearm to the local law enforcement agency. If a regulated firearm is lost or stolen, the owner of the firearm must report the loss or theft to the local law enforcement agency within 72 hours after the owner first discovers the loss or theft. On receipt of a report of a lost or stolen firearm, a local law enforcement agency must report to the Secretary and enter into the National Crime Information Center database, to the extent known, the caliber, make, model, manufacturer, and serial number of the firearm and any other distinguishing number or identification mark on the firearm. A knowing and willful first-time violation is a civil offense punishable by a fine not exceeding \$500. A second or subsequent violation is a misdemeanor punishable by imprisonment not exceeding 90 days and/or a fine not exceeding \$500.

Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) device trackers generally can track the location of objects, people, or vehicles with the assistance of satellite technology. GPS technology can offer real time tracking on an item at any point in time. Several companies continue to work to develop “smart” technology for firearms that include GPS-embedded firearms, radio frequency identification embedded technology, fingerprint-enabled firearm locks, and enhanced firearms that alert owners when the firearm is moved.

In Maryland, House Bill 115 of 2014 would have established a Task Force to Study Firearms and Global Positioning Satellite Devices. The bill received a hearing in the House Judiciary Committee; however, no further action was taken. In 2013, the Connecticut legislature studied the feasibility of installing GPS devices on firearms. The resulting [report](#) addresses the potential costs of adding GPS equipment on firearms and the potential

disadvantages of using such equipment. In 2011 and 2013, legislation was introduced in the Massachusetts legislature to create a study commission on firearms and GPS devices. No action was taken on either of those bills.

Additional Information

Prior Introductions: None.

Designated Cross File: None.

Information Source(s): Department of State Police; Connecticut Legislature; Massachusetts Legislature; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 20, 2020
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