

Sen. Darling: Governor signs bill closing loophole in firearm purchasing

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Governor Signs Bill Closing Loophole in Firearm Purchasing

(Madison) – It will be easier to prosecute illegal straw purchasing of firearms after Governor Scott Walker signed a bill authored by State Senator Alberta Darling (R-River Hills) on Wednesday. Senator Darling says her bill is based on recommendations from the Milwaukee Police Department.

“Criminals were very aware of these loopholes,” Darling said, “Thanks to Governor Walker, prosecutors should be able to make gun charges stick and get dangerous criminals off the streets.”

According to the Milwaukee Police Department, 2,420 guns were recovered in 2016, a rate of 407 per 100,000 people. Chicago, a much larger city, recovered guns at a much lower rate of 247 per 100,000 people.

Wisconsin’s new gun laws will:

- **Clarify Straw Purchaser Law:** Often, individuals who cannot legally purchase firearms will have someone purchase a firearm on their behalf – also known as “straw purchasing.” While it is already illegal to be a straw purchaser, this bill better defines the crime and makes straw purchasing a felony.

- **Create Mandatory Minimum for Repeat Offenders:** Repeat offender convicted of illegally possessing a firearm or committing a crime involving a firearm will receive a mandatory minimum sentence of four years. The bill defines a repeat offender as an individual who has committed three misdemeanors or one felony within a five-year period. These individuals have often committed more serious crimes or crimes with firearms, but plead down to lesser offenses.

Milwaukee Police often say they arrest the same offenders over and over again.

- **Create Penalties for Human Holsters:** Another loophole criminals exploit is to have someone else carry the weapon for them. This bill makes it a felony for an individual to provide or possess a firearm for a person who is prohibited from possessing a firearm.

Governor Walker also signed Senator Darling’s and Representative Dan Knodl’s bill allowing private industries to compete in a fair and open process with Badger State Industries in sign making. Badger State Industries is a program which uses prison labor in an effort to rehabilitate inmates. The change is expected to save taxpayers money through competitive bidding.

Senator Darling represents portions of Milwaukee, Ozaukee, Washington and Waukesha Counties.