
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE BILL

No. 979 Session of
2021

INTRODUCED BY DOWLING, METCALFE, GREINER, HERSHEY, RYAN,
KAUFFMAN, ECKER, DIAMOND, DUNBAR, ROTHMAN, KEEFER, SAYLOR,
ROWE, JOZWIAK, OBERLANDER, IRVIN, BERNSTINE, JAMES, SCHLEGEL
CULVER, MOUL, O'NEAL, KNOWLES, COOK, FEE, BOROWICZ, WHEELAND,
COX, MUSTELLO, STRUZZI, SMITH, SCHEMEL, HAMM, JONES, HELM,
B. MILLER, PUSKARIC, HICKERNELL, STAATS, METZGAR, KAIL,
ORTITAY, ZIMMERMAN, GILLEN, MALONEY, HEFFLEY, MARSHALL,
BONNER, SAINATO, LEWIS, R. MACKENZIE, SNYDER, PYLE, GROVE,
CAUSER, PEIFER, BROOKS, E. NELSON, EMRICK, ARMANINI, WARNER,
KLUNK, RADER, RAPP, DAVANZO, PENNYCUICK AND STAMBAUGH,
MARCH 19, 2021

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY, MARCH 19, 2021

AN ACT

1 Amending Titles 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and 53 (Municipalities
2 Generally) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in
3 firearms and other dangerous articles, further providing for
4 limitation on the regulation of firearms and ammunition; and,
5 in preemptions, providing for regulation of firearms and
6 ammunition.

7 The General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
8 hereby enacts as follows:

9 Section 1. Section 6120 of Title 18 of the Pennsylvania
10 Consolidated Statutes is amended to read:

11 § 6120. Limitation on the regulation of firearms and
12 ammunition.

13 (a) General rule.--No county, municipality or township may
14 in any manner regulate the lawful ownership, possession,
15 transfer or transportation of firearms, ammunition or ammunition

1 components when carried or transported for purposes not
2 prohibited by the laws of this Commonwealth.

3 (a.1) No right of action.--

4 (1) No political subdivision may bring or maintain an
5 action at law or in equity against any firearms or ammunition
6 manufacturer, trade association or dealer for damages,
7 abatement, injunctive relief or any other relief or remedy
8 resulting from or relating to either the lawful design or
9 manufacture of firearms or ammunition or the lawful marketing
10 or sale of firearms or ammunition to the public.

11 (2) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed to
12 prohibit a political subdivision from bringing or maintaining
13 an action against a firearms or ammunition manufacturer or
14 dealer for breach of contract or warranty as to firearms or
15 ammunition purchased by the political subdivision.

16 (a.4) Relief.--The following shall apply:

17 (1) A person adversely affected by any manner of
18 ordinance, resolution, rule, practice or other action
19 promulgated or enforced by a county, municipality or township
20 in violation of subsection (a) or 53 Pa.C.S. § 306(a)
21 (relating to regulation of firearms and ammunition) or
22 2962(g) (relating to limitation on municipal powers), may
23 seek declarative and injunctive relief and the actual damages
24 attributable to the violation in an appropriate court.

25 (2) If a person adversely affected under paragraph (1)
26 is a plaintiff who provided 60 days' prior written notice of
27 the person's intention to file a claim under this subsection
28 to the defendant, the court shall award reasonable expenses
29 to the person adversely affected if the claim under paragraph
30 (1) results in:

1 (i) a final determination by a court in favor of the
2 person adversely affected; or

3 (ii) rescission or repeal of the challenged manner
4 of regulation or enforcement after suit has been filed
5 under paragraph (1) but prior to a final determination by
6 a court.

7 (3) If a person is a defendant in a proceeding asserting
8 a defense under subsection (a) or 53 Pa.C.S. § 306(a) or
9 2962(g), the court shall award reasonable expenses payable by
10 the county, municipality or township to the person if the
11 defense results in the withdrawal or dismissal of the
12 proceeding, an entry of nolle prosequi or an acquittal on the
13 basis of the defense.

14 (b) Definitions.--As used in this section, the following
15 words and phrases shall have the meanings given to them in this
16 subsection:

17 "Dealer." The term shall include any person engaged in the
18 business of selling at wholesale or retail a firearm or
19 ammunition.

20 "Firearms." This term shall have the meaning given to it in
21 section 5515 (relating to prohibiting of paramilitary training)
22 but shall not include air rifles as that term is defined in
23 section 6304 (relating to sale and use of air rifles).

24 "Person adversely affected." Any of the following:

25 (1) A person who has standing under the laws of this
26 Commonwealth to bring a claim under subsection (a.4) (1).

27 (2) A resident of this Commonwealth who may legally
28 possess a firearm under the laws of the United States and
29 this Commonwealth.

30 (3) A membership organization, the members of which

1 include a person described under paragraph (1) or (2).

2 "Political subdivision." The term shall include any home
3 rule charter municipality, county, city, borough, incorporated
4 town, township or school district.

5 "Reasonable expenses." The term includes, but is not limited
6 to, attorney fees, expert witness fees, court costs and
7 compensation for loss of income.

8 Section 2. Title 53 is amended by adding a section to read:
9 § 306. Regulation of firearms and ammunition.

10 (a) Preemption.--The General Assembly has always intended
11 and continues to intend to occupy the entire field of regulation
12 of firearms, ammunition, magazines, accessories, firearms
13 components and ammunition components in this Commonwealth,
14 including the purchase, sale, transfer, taxation, manufacture,
15 ownership, possession, use, discharge, transportation and
16 reporting of loss or theft of firearms, ammunition, firearms
17 components and ammunition components in this Commonwealth, to
18 the exclusion of any existing or future ordinance, resolution,
19 regulation, rule, practice or other action adopted by a
20 municipality. The Commonwealth, by this section, preempts and
21 supersedes any manner of ordinance, resolution, regulation,
22 rule, practice or other action promulgated or enforced by a
23 municipality of firearms, ammunition, firearms components or
24 ammunition components in this Commonwealth, and any such action
25 is declared null and void.

26 (b) Continuing effect.--The provisions of section 2962(g)
27 (relating to limitation on municipal powers) and 18 Pa.C.S. §
28 6120(a) (relating to limitation on the regulation of firearms
29 and ammunition) shall continue to preempt and supersede a local
30 ordinance, resolution, regulation, rule, practice or other

1 action insofar as the local ordinance, resolution, regulation,
2 rule, practice or other action is inconsistent with the
3 provisions of section 2962(g) or 18 Pa.C.S. § 6120(a).

4 Section 3. Within 30 days of the effective date of this
5 section, the Attorney General of this Commonwealth shall notify
6 in writing all municipalities of the provisions of 53 Pa.C.S. §
7 306 and amendments to 18 Pa.C.S. § 6120.

8 Section 4. This act shall take effect as follows:

9 (1) The following shall take effect in 90 days:

10 (i) The addition of 53 Pa.C.S. § 306.

11 (ii) The amendment of 18 Pa.C.S. § 6120.

12 (2) The remainder of this act shall take effect
13 immediately.