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Senate of Pennsylvania

MEMORANDUM

TO: All Senators

FROM: Senator Tim Solobay 

DATE: January 12, 2011

SUBJECT: Co-Sponsorship Memo #3: National integration of Pennsylvania's Instant Check System for Firearms purchase

In the near future, I will be introducing legislation that would revise Pennsylvania's system of background checks for firearms dealers. Under this legislation, the Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) would be integrated into the FBI's National Instant Check System (NICS).

As you may know, the Department of Justice's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives currently oversees a national effort to oversee the eligibility of a vendor to sell or transfer ownership of a firearm to an individual. The ATF division works in concert with the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Criminal Justice Information Services Division to allow vendors to quickly determine the eligibility of a consumer to purchase a firearm. States are not required to participate in the national system.

The Pennsylvania Instant Check System is overseen by the Pennsylvania State Police. The FY 2010-11 budgets allocated approximately \$2.7 million for activities associated with purchasing firearms in Pennsylvania, including PICS. A 2006 report by the Legislative Budget and Finance Committee noted that integration into the NICS could save the state \$2+ million.

Especially in difficult economic times, integration into the FBI's instant check system can be an effective manner by which the State Police conserves resources. While a \$2 million savings will not solve the impending budget woes that await the Commonwealth, small cuts from all agencies along this line will do a lot to fill the gap.

If you have any questions or would like to co-sponsor this legislation, please contact Rachel Moore at rmoore@pasenate.com or 7-1463.