

Press Release

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Massachusetts Citizens Form State Ballot Committee to Suspend & Rescind Controversial Firearm Law, H4885

Boston, MA, August 22, 2024 – A group of concerned Massachusetts citizens has formed a State Ballot Committee named The Civil Rights Coalition to suspend and ultimately rescind the recently enacted H4885, An Act Modernizing Firearm Laws. This new law, passed under the pretext of modernization, threatens the constitutional and civil rights of all Massachusetts residents.

The 116-page law, now Chapter 135 of the 2024 session, does nothing to address violent crime by criminals. It imposes no additional penalties for crimes committed with firearms by criminals. Instead, it mandates law abiding citizens to full registration of all guns, including muzzle loaders, enforces burdensome licensing on retailers, and bans magazines over 10 rounds, even prohibiting the transfer of those legally owned. The law also requires a live-fire test, despite limited access to public ranges, state not owning and operating any public ranges, and establishes multiple government registration and tracking databases, including one for lawful gun owners and another for issuing firearm serial numbers.

The Slippery Slope of Surrendering Civil Rights

The Civil Rights Coalition is dedicated to raising public awareness about the dangers of H4885. This law sets a dangerous precedent for the erosion and denial of fundamental freedoms guaranteed by both the U.S. and Massachusetts Constitutions.

“Imagine the consequences of an ‘Act Modernizing the Freedom of Speech,’ where the government dictates where, how, and what citizens can say, or an ‘Act Modernizing the Freedom of Religion,’ restricting worship to government-approved practices,” said Toby Leary, Chairman of The Civil Rights Coalition. “This law is a calculated political attack on everyone’s civil rights. Today it’s firearm laws, but tomorrow it could be our right to speak, worship, gather, and be free.”

Real-World Impacts of H4885

The intentional consequences of this law are far-reaching and deeply concerning. For example, how does prohibiting a father and his 17-year-old son from CT, RI or NH from hunting in MA

reduce crime? How does changing the licensing process to an almost impossible standard in urban areas help reduce crime where law abiding residents lack access to live-fire ranges?

Moreover, the financial burden this law places on law-abiding citizens, particularly those in urban areas or struggling financially, is significant. “This law disproportionately impacts those who can least afford it, creating unnecessary financial hardships that hinder their constitutional right to protect their families and property,” added Leary.

One particularly egregious example is how H4885 could result in the imprisonment of two 17-year-old girls for two years—simply because they bought a two-pack of pepper spray and split the cost. How does this reduce crime?

Call to Action: Protect Your Rights

The Civil Rights Coalition is urging all Massachusetts voters to stand against this intentional governmental overreach. We must protect our civil liberties from being eroded under the guise of modernization. The right to bear arms is just one aspect of the larger framework of freedoms that defines us as a society.

“We are asking those who care about civil rights and the violence affecting our communities to join us in this effort,” said Leary. “Let’s work together to find real, common-sense solutions to address the real causes of violence and deaths across our state.”

In Massachusetts, 10 times more people die from opioid addiction and overdose than by firearms. Yet, when crimes are committed with guns, prosecutors often plea bargain away the gun charges, allowing criminals to escape with minimal consequences to return to the streets to be repeat offenders over and over. Violent offenders are released on \$500 bail, while law-abiding citizens are turned into felons for exercising their constitutional rights. Why should law abiding citizens be criminalized when they have done nothing wrong?

Over the next 30 days, The Civil Rights Coalition must collect 50,000 certified MA registered voter signatures to place this issue on the November 2026 ballot. To support our efforts, learn more, or get involved, please visit <https://FightBackMA.org> or contact us at (978) 481-6990 or thecivilrightscoalition@gmail.com.

About The Civil Rights Coalition

The Civil Rights Coalition is a grassroots organization formed by private citizens in Massachusetts committed to protecting and preserving the constitutional rights of all residents. Our current focus is on repealing H4885, An Act Modernizing Firearm Laws, and ensuring that similar unconstitutional legislation does not erode the civil liberties that are the cornerstone of our democracy.