

Equity Impact Statement
File number: 220420

1. Describe the proposed ordinance or resolution.

This ordinance requires a firearm owner to properly store and supervise the whereabouts of any firearm. It also requires the firearm owner to report the theft or misplacement of any firearm to the police within 24 hours of discovery. The ordinance also regulates the storage of a firearm in an unoccupied vehicle to ensure the firearm is securely locked in a vehicle compartment or in a secure locking device not visible from outside the vehicle. The ordinance imposes a forfeiture on the firearm owner of not less than \$2,500 nor more than \$5,000, together with the costs prosecution, if the firearm, which has not been reported as stolen, is determined by the courts to have been used in the commission of a either a felony or misdemeanor.

2. Identify the anticipated equity impacts, if any, of this proposal.

1. *Penalty/Enforcement*: The demographics of firearm owners in Milwaukee is unavailable; there is no national registry that records who owns guns and when they purchase them. As such, it is difficult to determine whether penalty provisions of this ordinance would have an equity impact on members of local minority groups and communities. However, there is some evidence to suggest that gun ownership is on the rise amongst minority groups, and Black Americans in particular. According to the 2021 Firearms and Ammunition Sales survey released by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, a trade group that surveys the owners of establishments selling firearms, almost 30% of individuals who purchased guns in 2021 were first time buyers. While Blacks and Hispanics make up only about 20% of gun purchasers overall, 44% of retailers reported an increase in purchases by Black customers. This is in line with overall trends in Wisconsin, specifically. While demographic breakdowns are not available, annual gun sales have risen by 114% in Wisconsin since 2000.

2. *Gun Violence*: It is anticipated that enforcement of this ordinance would eventually help to reduce gun violence. Gun violence in Milwaukee, including perpetrators, victims, witnesses and family members, is primarily experienced by members of minority communities. According to 414Life's Milwaukee Blueprint for Peace, in 2013, 79% of all homicide victims in Milwaukee, and 88% of all non-fatal shooting victims, were Black.

3. Identify which minority groups, if any, may be negatively or positively impacted by the proposal.

A March, 2021, study by the Medical College of Wisconsin and The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health reports firearm-related homicides among non-Hispanic African American in Milwaukee are 14.6 times greater than

among Whites. According to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, 89% of the victims of the 92 homicides in Milwaukee through June 9, 2022, were African American, and 89% of all these homicides were firearm-related.

To the extent this ordinance reduces the incidence of “stray” firearm purchases and illegal firearm trafficking, and causes firearm owners to exercise greater oversight of their firearms, homicides are expected to decrease, which will more positively impact African Americans in Milwaukee. While research on guns is limited by a lack of nation-wide databases and inconsistent reporting, there is some evidence to suggest that more-stringent reporting requirements for stolen guns may have a positive impact on crime. According to a report done by the non-profit journalism outlet The Trace, of the 23,000 stolen firearms recovered by police between 2010 and 2016, the majority were connected with some sort of crime besides the initial theft. This included more than 1,500 violent acts such as carjackings, kidnappings, armed robberies, sexual assaults and murders. There is therefore evidence that fewer stolen guns would translate into fewer crime committed with those guns.

There is also evidence that reporting requirements do have an impact on the movement, and therefore availability of stolen guns. One study found that lost and stolen reporting laws reduced traced illegal gun movement from one state to another by 46% compared to states that do not have such a law. This indicates that reporting requirements make it more difficult to traffic stolen guns, guns which have a good chance of being used during some sort of crime.

Furthermore, according to a recent study by the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, in 2020, over half (52 percent) of the guns that were reported stolen were stolen from vehicles. This represents a significant increase from just 10 years earlier, when the majority of gun thefts were from burglaries (45 percent), and under a quarter (24 percent) were from cars. In fact, according to Everytown, the overall increase in gun thefts over the past decade has been driven in large part by the rise in gun thefts from cars.

4. Describe any engagement efforts with minority communities potentially impacted by the proposal.

The sponsor will work with relevant departments to develop outreach materials and to schedule public information sessions and town hall meetings to explain the new reporting requirements created by the ordinance, with an emphasis on minority communities that may be impacted by enforcement of the ordinance.

5. Describe how any anticipated equity impacts of the proposal will be documented or evaluated.

The demographics of individuals receiving citations may can be obtained from the police and through Municipal Court records.

6. Describe strategies that will be used, if any, to mitigate any anticipated equity impacts.

One strategy that will be used to mitigate any disproportionate impacts when it comes to enforcement will be community outreach and engagement concerning the specifics of this ordinance. In particular, outreach will emphasize the importance of reporting any stolen or lost firearms as well as the process for doing so, while also making it clear that penalties are for a failure to report lost or stolen firearms, not for losing them or having them stolen. This will be done with an eye towards increasing compliance in affected communities.

Finally, outreach will emphasize prevention by sharing information of where residents may obtain free gun locks (which include all Milwaukee Fire Department stations and health centers run by the Milwaukee Health Department, as well as numerous community centers and City Hall) and prompting better gun storage, including encouraging residents not to store guns in vehicles, where they are far more likely to be stolen.

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