Introduced by Senators Baruth, Sirotkin, Clarkson, Ingram, Lyons, McCormack, and Pearson

Referred to Committee on

Date:

Subject: Crimes and criminal procedures; firearms; background checks

Statement of purpose of bill as introduced: This bill proposes to require that a background check be conducted on the proposed transferee before a firearm may be transferred unless the transfer is between immediate family members, by or to a law enforcement agency, or by or to a law enforcement officer or member of the U.S. Armed Forces acting within the course of his or her official duties.

An act relating to requiring background checks for the transfer of firearms

It is hereby enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Vermont:

Sec. 1. 13 V.S.A. § 4019 is added to read:

§ 4019. FIREARMS TRANSFERS; BACKGROUND CHECKS

(a) As used in this section:

(1) “Firearm” shall have the same meaning as in subdivision 4016(a)(3) of this title.
“(2) “Immediate family member” means a spouse, parent, stepparent, child, stepchild, sibling, stepsibling, grandparent, or grandchild.

(3) “Law enforcement officer” shall have the same meaning as in subdivision 4016(a)(4) of this title.

(4) “Licensed dealer” means a person issued a license as a dealer in firearms pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 923(a).

(5) “Proposed transferee” means an unlicensed person to whom a proposed transferor intends to transfer a firearm.

(6) “Proposed transferor” means an unlicensed person who intends to transfer a firearm to another unlicensed person.

(7) “Transfer” means to transfer a firearm by means of sale, trade, or gift.

(8) “Unlicensed person” means a person who has not been issued a license as a dealer, importer, or manufacturer in firearms pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 923(a).

(b)(1) Except as provided in subsection (e) of this section, an unlicensed person shall not transfer a firearm to another unlicensed person unless:

(A) the proposed transferor and the proposed transferee physically appear together with the firearm before a licensed dealer and request that the license dealer facilitate the transfer; and
(B) the licensed dealer agrees to facilitate the transfer and determines that the proposed transferee is not prohibited by State or federal law from purchasing or possessing the firearm.

(2) A person shall not, in connection with the transfer or attempted transfer of a firearm pursuant to this section, knowingly make a false statement or exhibit a false identification intended to deceive a licensed dealer with respect to any fact material to the transfer.

(c)(1) A licensed dealer who agrees to facilitate a firearm transfer pursuant to this section shall comply with all requirements of State and federal law and shall, unless otherwise expressly provided in this section, conduct the transfer in the same manner as the licensed dealer would if selling the firearm from his or her own inventory.

(2) A licensed dealer shall return the firearm to the proposed transferor and decline to continue facilitating the transfer if the dealer determines that the proposed transferee is prohibited by federal or State law from purchasing or possessing the firearm.

(3) A licensed dealer may charge a reasonable fee to facilitate a firearm transfer between a proposed transferor and a proposed transferee pursuant to this section.

(d)(1) An unlicensed person who transfers a firearm to another unlicensed person in violation of subdivision (b)(1) of this section shall:
(A) for a first offense, be imprisoned not more than one year or fined not more than $500.00, or both;

(B) for a second or subsequent offense, be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than $1,000.00, or both.

(2) A person who violates subdivision (b)(2) of this section shall:

(A) for a first offense, be imprisoned not more than one year or fined not more than $500.00, or both;

(B) for a second or subsequent offense, be imprisoned not more than five years or fined not more than $1,000.00, or both.

(e) This section shall not apply to:

(1) the transfer of a firearm by or to a law enforcement agency;

(2) the transfer of a firearm by or to a law enforcement officer or member of the U.S. Armed Forces acting within the course of his or her official duties; or

(3) the transfer of a firearm from one immediate family member to another immediate family member.

Sec. 2. EFFECTIVE DATE

This act shall take effect on July 1, 2017.