

1999 SESSION

ENROLLED

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 377

Directing the Virginia State Crime Commission to study the technology known as "personalized" or "smart" handguns.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 9, 1999

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 25, 1999

WHEREAS, a personalized handgun is a firearm that cannot be fired by an unauthorized user, including a child or criminal; and

WHEREAS, personalized handgun technology may help to establish future statewide handgun safety standards and thereby help to prevent needless firearm deaths and injuries; and

WHEREAS, unlike a trigger lock that must be removed and replaced each time a handgun is used, a personalized handgun contains a mechanism that is incorporated into the design of the handgun; and

WHEREAS, 14 different personalized handgun technologies are under research and development and range from low-tech combination locks built into the grip of the handgun to high-tech devices that can recognize an authorized user's fingerprint; and

WHEREAS, personalized handguns are technologically feasible; and

WHEREAS, the integration of electronics into law-enforcement and consumer handguns and rifles is a natural evolution of technology which can be used for safety, performance and reliability; and

WHEREAS, national consumer initiatives and legislation have challenged consumer industries to improve the safety and design of several products, including automobiles, pharmaceutical packages and cigarette lighters; and

WHEREAS, firearms presently are the second leading cause of death among children and youth, guns presently are the leading cause of death for young African-American males, and, in 1995, 440 American children and teenagers were unintentionally killed by firearms in the United States; and

WHEREAS, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, 63 children and adolescents under the age of 18 were killed by gunfire in 1994, and such deaths were the second leading external or unnatural cause of death for this age group; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the Virginia State Crime Commission be directed to study the technology known as "personalized" or "smart" handguns. The Commission shall (i) review the status of present technology to develop "smart" guns, and the present and future accessibility and availability of such technology, and (ii) determine the feasibility of developing future legislation which conforms with the Commission's findings regarding "personalized" or "smart" guns.

All agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.

The Virginia State Crime Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 2001 Session of the General Assembly, and shall submit an interim report to the Governor and the 2000 Session of the General Assembly, as provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents.

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