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**ROMNEY SIGNS OFF ON PERMANENT ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN**  
*Legislation also makes improvements to gun licensing system*

In a move that will help keep the streets and neighborhoods of Massachusetts safe, Governor Mitt Romney today signed into law a permanent assault weapons ban that forever makes it harder for criminals to get their hands on these dangerous guns.

“Deadly assault weapons have no place in Massachusetts,” Romney said, at a bill signing ceremony with legislators, sportsmen’s groups and gun safety advocates. “These guns are not made for recreation or self-defense. They are instruments of destruction with the sole purpose of hunting down and killing people.”

Like the federal assault weapons ban, the state ban, put in place in 1998, was scheduled to expire in September. The new law ensures these deadly weapons, including AK-47s, UZIs and Mac-10 rifles, are permanently prohibited in Massachusetts no matter what happens on the federal level.

“We are pleased to mark an important victory in the fight against crime,” said Lieutenant Governor Kerry Healey. “The most important job of state government is ensuring public safety. Governor Romney and I are determined to do whatever it takes to stop the flood of dangerous weapons into our cities and towns and to make Massachusetts safer for law-abiding citizens.”

The new law also makes a number of improvements to the current gun licensing system, including:

- Extending the term of a firearm identification card and a license to carry firearms from four years to six years;
- Granting a 90-day grace period for holders of firearm identification cards and licenses to carry who have applied for renewal; and
- Creating a seven-member Firearm License Review Board to review firearm license applications that have been denied.

“This is truly a great day for Massachusetts’ sportsmen and women,” said Senator Stephen M. Brewer. “These reforms correct some serious mistakes that were made during the gun debate in 1998, when many of our state’s gun owners were stripped of their long-standing rights to own firearms. I applaud Senate President Travaglini for allowing the Senate to undertake this necessary legislation.”

“I want to congratulate everyone that has worked so hard on this issue,” said Representative George

Peterson. "Because of their dedication, we are here today to sign into law this consensus piece of legislation. This change will go a long way toward fixing the flaws created by the 1998 law. Another key piece to this legislation addresses those citizens who have applied for renewals. If the government does not process their renewal in a timely fashion, those citizens won't be put at risk because of the 90 day grace period that is being adopted today."

"Never before has there been such bi-partisan cooperation in the passage of gun safety legislation of this magnitude in this nation," said John Rosenthal, co-founder and chair of Stop Handgun Violence. "I applaud the leadership of the Governor, Senate President, House Speaker and entire Legislature for passage of this assault weapons ban renewal. They have shown that Massachusetts can continue to lead the nation in protecting the public and law enforcement from military style assault weapons."

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