

## The Nation

### Gun Control Bill Heads to California Governor

By Susan Jones

CNSNews.com Senior Editor

September 11, 2007

**(CNSNews.com)** - A gun control group is praising the California Legislature for passing a "microstamping" bill. Supporters say it will help police trace guns used in crimes. But Second Amendment supporters call it back-door gun control, and they are urging Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to veto it.

Microstamping would give police an "important new tool in solving gun crimes," the Brady Campaign said in a news release. But the National Shooting Sports Foundation has called the bill a de facto ban of firearms" that would price guns out of the California market.

The Crime Gun Identification Act (AB 1471) would require all new models of semiautomatic pistols sold in California after 2010 to be microstamped, or microscopically engraved, with their make, model and identification number.

Theoretically, the microstamping would be transferred onto the cartridge casing when the handgun is fired, allowing police to match bullet casings found at crime scenes with the gun that fired the bullet.

Critics say the technology is vulnerable to tampering -- the laser engraving can be scratched and altered. And even if the technology does work, it won't prevent criminals from using the stamped guns, critics argue.

The Golden State 2nd Amendment Council noted that "crime scenes could easily be contaminated by a criminal throwing down a handful of shell casings he picked up from the local gun range."

Law-abiding citizens could have their weapons confiscated - and they might be arrested -- unless they could prove they were nowhere near the crime scene, the group said in a letter to California lawmakers.

But gun control advocates call the bill's passage a "major victory" for California police officers.

"This proven technology will help law enforcement apprehend armed gang members and criminals before they inflict more harm on others, including innocent bystanders," said Brady Campaign President Paul Helmke. "Giving police tools like this is the common-sense thing to do."

Kay Holmen, the president of the California Brady Campaign Chapters, said with nearly half of all crimes going unsolved in California, "microstamping technology will provide our police officers with solid leads to put armed criminals behind bars."

But Second Amendment supporters say the bill is back-door gun control: "Firearm manufacturers have

indicated that passage of microstamping legislation would force them to stop sales in California because they would have to completely reconfigure their manufacturing and assembly process," the National Shooting Sports Foundation said.

"Compelling the use of this unreliable, sole-sourced technology will dramatically reduce the product selection available to law-abiding consumers in California," said Lawrence G. Keane, NSSF senior vice president and general counsel.

"Many manufacturers will choose to abandon the California market rather than incur substantial costs associated with complying with microstamping legislation, he added.

Moreover, Second Amendment supporters point to several studies showing that microstamping technology is unreliable - not proven to work as advertised.

Gov. Schwarzenegger has not said if he'll sign the bill. A similar bill (AB 352) failed in the California Legislature last year.

[Subscribe to the free CNSNews.com daily E-Brief.](#)

[Send a Letter to the Editor about this article.](#)

Copyright 1998-2001, Cybercast News Service