

# ***Albany Times Union***

## **N.Y. needs gun microstamping law**

By JERRY JENNINGS, DANIEL squadron and brian kavanagh

Published 12:01 a.m., Tuesday, June 14, 2011

In 2009, 481 people in New York were murdered with guns, including seven in Albany. Some 2,797 robberies were committed with firearms around the state, 96 of them right here in Albany.

Law enforcement officials use the tools available to them to solve these crimes. But, unfortunately, not all crimes are solved. In a significant number of these unsolved crimes, shell casings are retrieved, but no gun is left behind.

There are tools that would make it possible to determine key facts about the guns used in these unsolved crimes. Yet the state Senate's Republican majority refuses to allow a vote on "microstamping" legislation to provide these tools to law enforcement across the state.

Microstamping technology imprints a tiny code (or "microstamp") on the shell casings that are ejected from the gun every time a bullet is fired. It's a simple technology that would help police link shootings to guns -- and to criminals.

Microstamps on recovered shell casings provide police with key information, including the first dealer who sold the weapon at retail and the buyer who purchased it. That's the same information that police are able to identify when the actual gun is recovered at a crime scene. While buyers and sellers are not necessarily directly connected to the perpetrator, the chain of custody of the gun can generate critical investigative leads. A prior owner could be a friend or relative of a suspect in the crime, or the gun could have been stolen in a break-in where a suspect's fellow gang members were implicated.

In fact, this legislation protects gun owners, too. Any increased cost from microstamping is capped at \$12 per firearm, and the technology will help lawful owners recover stolen guns.

A coalition of legislators has been working with mayors and law enforcement throughout New York in the effort to enact microstamping legislation.

The state Assembly again has passed a bill that would require handguns sold in New York to be equipped with microstamping technology. Last year, under Democratic control, the bill was brought to the Senate floor and came within two votes of passage. Unfortunately, no Republican stood with law enforcement and supported the bill. This year, the Republican Senate majority refuses to even consider the legislation. And as the clock ticks down to the end of the legislative session this week, time is of the essence.

Blocking this vital legislation without even a vote is just plain wrong: wrong for law enforcement, wrong for public safety, and wrong for New York.

Jerry Jennings is the mayor of Albany. Daniel Squadron is a state senator from Brooklyn. Brian Kavanagh is an assemblyman from Manhattan and a member of the State Legislators Against Illegal Guns steering committee.

Read more: <http://www.timesunion.com/opinion/article/N-Y-needs-gun-microstamping-law-1422678.php#ixzz1PG7FLxUa>