

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT GUN OFFENDER REGISTRIES**

### **What are they?**

Gun Offender Registry Acts, like those passed in New York City and Baltimore, require defendants convicted of specified gun crimes to register their addresses with the police, verify them in person every 6 months, and promptly notify the police if they change addresses for a period of time following their conviction or period of incarceration. In both cities, failure to abide by these conditions is a misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail or a fine up to \$1000 or both.

### **Why a Gun Offender Registry?**

A key component of cities' strategies against gun crime is targeted enforcement against those who carry illegal guns, because they are more likely to be rearrested for more violent crimes. Both New York City and Baltimore developed a GORA in response to data showing high recidivism rates among gun offenders. In New York City, for example, those convicted of felony gun possession in 2000 were four times more likely to be arrested for homicide compared to other felons – 4% compared to 1%. Similarly, recent Baltimore statistics show that 42% of defendants charged with felony gun crimes have prior gun arrests. GORAs help combat gun violence by requiring pro-active monitoring of gun offenders, which discourages them from re-offending while ensuring prompt apprehension if they do engage in criminal activity. GORAs build upon Megan's Laws, which have proven to be effective enforcement tools against sex offenders in New York City and elsewhere.

### **How does a person get on the Gun Offender Registry?**

Adults convicted of certain gun crimes are required to register with the local police department as gun offenders. Each city's ordinance lists specific crimes that are tied to high recidivism rates in data about that city.

### **How long does a person remain on the Gun Offender Registry?**

A period of years – three in Baltimore, four in New York City – from the date of conviction or release from imprisonment, whichever is later.

### **Who enforces the Gun Offender Registry?**

Enforcement mechanisms vary. The NYPD, for example, has formed a specialized Gun Offender Monitoring Unit to register gun offenders, verify the information they provide, and develop leads derived from debriefing gun offenders. Baltimore has a multi-jurisdictional Gun Trace Task Force led by the Baltimore Police Department.

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