

# ***NEW MEXICO SENATE DEMOCRATS***

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## **Controversial Gun Bill Runs Out of Ammo at Close of Session**

A highly charged gun bill that would have required all buyers of firearms at gun shows to undergo background checks missed the target on Saturday as senators debated a pair of eleventh-hour reload amendments.

Senators were still debating House Bill 77, sponsored by Miguel P. Garcia (Bernalillo, District 14), when the clock ran out on the 60-day legislative session at noon sharp on Saturday. HB 77 would have required buyers of firearms at gun shows to submit to a background check before they could legally purchase a gun at the event.

The bill would also have required gun-show operators to provide the services of an FFL (federal firearms licensed) to immediately conduct background checks on gun buyers at a show and clearly post the background-check requirement and charge a fee at their gun-buying events. The FFL would have access to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System to determine a buyer's legal status.

"The governor and I don't see eye to eye on many things, but on this bill, we do," Senate Majority Floor Leader Michael S. Sanchez said during debate of the second amendment just before the noon hour. "But this bill showed a true spirit of cooperation."

Representative Garcia said the bill, which had the endorsement of Governor Susana Martinez, indicated that the legislation would have closed a loophole in the law that currently allows private gun sellers to conduct transactions at show without conducting a background check on buyers.

Senator Sanchez (Bernalillo, Valencia, District 29) ruled during the closing seconds of the session that the bill be put on call and revisited during the interim. Many members of the public showed up during all the entire legislative-committee process and passionately spoke on both sides of the issue, leaving many senators and representatives caught up in the crossfire.

For the past 1 ½ years, the state's Administrative Office of the Courts has been reporting court information to the national system regarding individuals in the state with a record of mental commitment, records of criminal adjudication, misdemeanor convictions of domestic violence or subjects of a related restraining order, undocumented citizenship, among other criminal categories. Such people would not be legally able to purchase firearms at gun shows.

The bill in its last form would have exempted those purchasing antique firearms or private transactions among individuals or family members.