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M E M O R A N D U M

To: Joint Interim Commission on 21st Century Firearm Laws

From: John E. Treadwell

Date: October 19, 2017

Re: Concealed Pistol Permit and Firearm Sale Data

During the first meeting of the interim commission, members requested that this office research: (1) how many Alabamians have purchased concealed pistol permits; and (2) how many firearms are sold in the state.

I. Concealed Pistol Permits.

Due to the fact that concealed pistol permits are issued by each county sheriff, there is no central repository for information related to the number of concealed pistol permits issued statewide. Therefore, due to the diversity in recordkeeping protocol in each county, it is difficult to determine an exact number of concealed pistol permits issued statewide.

However, this year, the Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC)¹ completed a study comparing the number of concealed carry permit holders across the United States. Based upon its research, the CPRC found that, as of June 2017, **there were an estimated 755,618 active concealed carry permits in Alabama.** Due to the lack of statewide data, the CPRC surveyed seven counties in Alabama to determine a base number of active permits in the county and extrapolated those numbers into the 755,618 estimate.² The report also ranks states by percentage of the adult population with concealed carry permits. The CPRC concluded that **approximately 20.07 percent of Alabamians have a concealed carry permit**, the highest concealed carry percentage in the United States.

¹ According to its website, "the Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC) is a research and education organization dedicated to conducting academic quality research on the relationship between laws regulating the ownership or use of guns, crime, and public safety; educating the public on the results of such research; and supporting other organizations, projects, and initiatives that are organized and operated for similar purposes. It has 501(C)(3) status, and does not accept donations from gun or ammunition makers or organizations such as the NRA or any other organizations involved in the gun control debate on either side of the issue."

² The counties used in the study include: Baldwin, Cullman, Madison, Montgomery, Jackson, Jefferson, and Shelby Counties and used data from December 31, 2016, to June 30, 2017. This office has not verified the methodology used by the CPRC to calculate the estimate cited in the report.

The CPRC reported Florida as the state with the most concealed carry permits at 1.78 million, followed by Pennsylvania with 1.28 million. The following chart depicts a sample from the CPRC of other state data with regard to the number of active concealed permits in the state:

State	Active Permits
Arizona	316,948
Arkansas	22,224
Georgia	979,005
Kansas	93,092
North Carolina	604,737
Texas	1,200,746
Washington	578,299
Wyoming	31,758

Nationally, the CPRC reports that there are a total of 16,358,844 active concealed carry permits as of June 2017.

Staff of this office conducted a survey of certain counties in the state and retrieved the following number of concealed pistol permits sold in a particular year by the sheriff of the county.³ Information received includes the following:

COUNTY	YEAR	NUMBER OF PERMITS SOLD OR RENEWED
Baldwin	2016	18,043
Cullman	2016	8,081
Dallas	2016	3,044
Houston	2016	5,522
Jackson	2015 ⁴	7,256
Jefferson	2016	33,988
Lee	2016	14,000 ⁵
Montgomery	2016	13,905

II. FIREARMS SOLD IN ALABAMA AND FIREARM OWNERSHIP.

Although Alabama law requires firearm dealers to permanently maintain sales records on handguns, there is no statewide repository for these records that would reflect the number of firearms sold in the state in a particular year. However, an evaluation of other information relating to firearm ownership in the state

³ This figure includes new concealed pistol permits and those permits that were renewed.

⁴ In 2016, Jackson County transitioned to a 5-year permit. Therefore, they reported the numbers from 2015 in order to accurately reflect the numbers for a year in which all permits were required to be renewed.

⁵ According to Sheriff Jones, this number is an estimate of the number sold.

may give the interim commission an approximate reflection of the number of firearms possessed by Alabamians in comparison to the number of concealed carry permits issued.

According to the United States Department of Justice Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), in February of 2016, there were **134,687 registered weapons** in the state of Alabama. According to a study published in the Journal of Injury Prevention, in 2013, **48.9 percent of adult Alabamians own firearms.**⁶ The report cites that the national gun ownership rate is 29.1 percent. The following chart depicts the top ten states with the highest percentage of adult gun owners according to the study:

State	Gun Ownership Percentage 2013
Alaska	61.7
Arkansas	57.9
Idaho	56.9
West Virginia	54.2
Wyoming	53.8
Montana	52.3
New Mexico	49.9
Alabama	48.9
North Dakota	47.9
Louisiana	44.5

The total number of required criminal background checks for firearm purchases may also give some indication as to the number of firearms purchased in the state. According to data compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United States Census Bureau, from January 2016 to August 2016, Alabama ranked fourth in the nation with regard to the number of criminal background checks for firearm purchases per 100,000 residents with a rate of 8.64. During this time period, Kentucky had the highest number of criminal background checks for firearm purchases at 51.33 per 100,000 residents.

Persons must be licensed by the ATF to engage in the business of selling firearms. According to the ATF, as of September 10, 2017, there were **2,323 active federal firearm licenses (FFLs) in Alabama.**⁷ As of December 10, 2016, there were 2,303 FFLs in Alabama.

The National Firearms Act (NFA) was enacted in 1934 to impose an excise tax and registration requirements on a narrow category of firearms, including machine guns, short-barreled shotguns or rifles, silencers, and certain other weapons.⁸ The ATF provides a breakdown of the type of weapons registered in

⁶ Kalesan, Villarreal, Keyes, and Galea. Gun Ownership and Social Gun Culture, Journal of Injury Prevention (June 29, 2015).

⁷ United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. Available at: <https://www.atf.gov/firearms/listing-federal-firearms-licensees-ffls-2017>.

⁸ 26 U.S. Code § 5849 et al.

Alabama pursuant to the NFA. The following chart reflects this data and was current as of February 2015:⁹

National Firearms Act Registered Weapons in Alabama (Feb. 2015)¹⁰						
Destructive Device	Machine Gun	Silencer	Short Barreled Rifle	Short Barreled Shotgun	Any Other Weapon¹¹	Total
74,778	18,212	15,501	2,550	2,224	1,154	114,419

Please do not hesitate to contact our office with any questions or to request a copy of any of the reports cited in the memorandum.

⁹ Note that the transfer and possession of machineguns are prohibited under the Firearm Owners Protection Act, 26 U.S.C. §922(o), with certain limited exceptions.

¹⁰ United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Firearms Commerce in the United States, Annual Statistical Update (2015).

¹¹ The term “any other weapon” means any weapon or device capable of being concealed on the person from which a shot can be discharged through the energy of an explosive, a pistol or revolver having a barrel with a smooth bore designed or redesigned to fire a fixed shotgun shell, weapons with combination shotgun and rifle barrels 12 inches or more, less than 18 inches in length, from which only a single discharge can be made from either barrel without manual reloading, and any weapon which may be readily restored. The term also includes a pistol or a revolver having a rifle bore, or rifled bores, or weapons designed, made, or intended to be fired from the shoulder and not capable of firing fixed ammunition.