

**BOROUGH OF SWARTHMORE
COUNTY OF DELAWARE
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

RESOLUTION NO. 2010-

**A Resolution Encouraging the Pennsylvania General
Assembly to Pass a Statewide Lost or Stolen Handgun
Reporting Law**

WHEREAS, gun violence is a public health, safety and welfare threat to citizens across Pennsylvania, threatening families, tearing at the fabric of neighborhoods, and reducing the appeal of communities to homeowners and businesses alike; and

WHEREAS, assaults on police officers – who put their lives on the line day in and day out to protect our communities from dangerous criminals armed with illegal handguns – have increased 76 percent since 2002; and in those same seven years, 20 law enforcement officers have been shot and killed in the line of duty in Pennsylvania – more than half of whom were murdered using illegal guns; and

WHEREAS, according to the Uniform Crime Report, more than 1,200 people die from firearms related injuries in Pennsylvania every year, including homicides, suicides, and accidental shootings; and the vast majority of gun-related shootings and homicides in Pennsylvania are committed using illegal handguns; and

WHEREAS, the vast majority of crimes committed with guns are committed by individuals who are already prohibited from bearing arms because of a previous felony conviction or other exclusion – who obtain handguns illegally through straw purchases, traffickers, or theft, and

WHEREAS, in Pennsylvania there is no legal duty for handgun owners to report missing firearms to the police, and

WHEREAS, requiring that lost or stolen handguns be reported to the police within a reasonable time after their absence is discovered would help law enforcement officers identify and prosecute criminals who use and traffic in illegal handguns, while encouraging responsible practices among law abiding handgun owners, and

WHEREAS, seven states including: Michigan, Ohio, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, and the District of Columbia have already adopted lost or stolen handgun reporting laws; and

WHEREAS, those states that already implement a lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement exhibit a two thirds reduction in crime guns traced back to those states; and

WHEREAS, numerous cities and towns across Pennsylvania have already taken action to require that lost or stolen handguns be reported to the police if an owner discovers his

or her handgun missing; and

WHEREAS, those cities and towns include nearly every major city in the state and are home to more than two million Pennsylvanians; and

WHEREAS, those local ordinances simply require that a firearm owner report their handgun lost or stolen to the police within a short (1-3 day) time period after discovering the weapon missing, or else face penalties; and

WHEREAS, these lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement ordinances apply to handguns only and only come into to effect upon the discovery of a loss or theft – in no way impacting the rights of authorized citizens to legally own, transfer, or use guns for collecting, sport, or self-defense; and

WHEREAS, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, the Pennsylvania Chiefs of Police Association, the Pennsylvania District Attorney’s Association, the Pennsylvania State Police, and our own local highest ranking law enforcement officer have considered a lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement and determined that it would be a valuable tool to reduce accessibility to illegal handguns; and

WHEREAS, reporting a missing a handgun to the police is commonsense, and responsible law abiding gun owners would already report a missing handgun to the authorities; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania General Assembly has yet to pass this commonsense lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement into law, ignoring the advice of mayors, city councils, law enforcement, and citizens – and thus endangering the lives of Pennsylvania’s citizens and its police and law enforcement officers;

THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, that Swarthmore Borough Council calls upon the Pennsylvania General Assembly – particularly our own Delaware County delegation – to follow the example set by numerous Pennsylvania communities by supporting state legislation requiring handgun owners to report missing handguns to the police within three days of discovering a loss or theft, in order to help police crack down on illegal handgun trafficking and to reduce accessibility to illegal handguns in Pennsylvania; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution shall be transmitted immediately to the Pennsylvania General Assembly and to the Governor of Pennsylvania with a request that the Legislature and Governor take prompt action to address the epidemic of illegal handgun trafficking in our Commonwealth by passing a statewide lost or stolen handgun reporting requirement law.

APPROVED this 8th day of March, 2010

Susan Smythe
President of Borough Council

Richard H. Lowe
Mayor

ATTEST:

Jane C. Billings
Borough Manager