

NEW YORK TIMES, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 4,

## Boston Unit Initiates Bill to Ban The Private Possession of Pistols

NYTimes

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Special to The New York Times

BOSTON, Dec. 3—A citizens group here initiated today legislation to ban the possession of pistols by anyone but the police.

The organization, called People Versus Handguns, filed 98,000 signatures—well above the 56,000 it needed—to place the proposal before the state legislature.

The legislature must vote the bill up or down by May, under the state initiative petition procedure. If the legislature rejects the proposal—as its sponsors feel is likely—the sponsors can put it on the ballot as a binding referendum in the November general election by getting 9,274 more signatures.

The ban on pistols would be in addition to a stiff new Massachusetts law imposing a mandatory jail sentence of one to five years on persons convicted of possessing an unregistered firearm away from their home or place of business.

Sheriff John Buckley of Middlesex County, a leader of the initiative drive, described the legislation as a crime-prevention measure. He said that the availability of pistols was a major factor in crimes stemming from family arguments.

“By outlawing the deadly handgun we can prevent many of the 72 percent of all the murders that occur within families of among people who know each other,” Sheriff Buckley said, adding that 52 percent of all murders are committed with pistols.

The signatures were collected in public places in a drive that began at the end of September. It was conducted by a coalition including the League of women voters, the Massa-

chusetts Federation of Women's clubs, the Crime and Justice Foundation and a liberal, political organization known as CPPAX.

Sheriff Buckley, whose district includes the populous areas north and west of Boston said that the large number of signatures represented “a mandate” and that the support in blue collar communities was “a very significant change.”

The approach taken by People Versus Handguns is somewhat different than the existing state law, which does not seek to confiscate unregistered weapons from homes or offices, but to impose swift and certain penalties on those carrying them outside those places.

According to an incomplete survey of the state court system, at least 43 persons are serving one-year sentences under the penalty provisions of the law that went into effect in April. An appeal of the law is pending.

Large signs warning of the gun law have been placed along highways at the Massachusetts border. There was an advertising campaign about the bill after it was passed last August, and the penalty provisions were delayed in order to give more notice.