

# CeaseFirePA

Taking a Stand Against Gun Violence in Pennsylvania

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **CeaseFirePA Praises Federal Efforts to Improve Background Check System and Calls on Pennsylvania to Take Action**

**Philadelphia, January 3, 2014** – Today, CeaseFirePA thanked President Obama and his administration for taking additional steps to improve the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The administration has announced two additional measures to strengthen the background check system to prohibit firearms sales to the dangerously mentally ill. The proposed rules would refine the wording used in the mental health prohibitions and would make it easier for states to share their mental health records with the national system.

Shira Goodman, Executive Director of CeaseFirePA, praised the proposed measures: "Background checks work; the national system has prevented millions of prohibited purchasers from buying firearms. If enacted, these changes will make the system even stronger and will help keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them."

At the same time, however, CeaseFirePA called on Pennsylvania to strengthen the state's background check system. Like the federal system, the Pennsylvania Instant Criminal Background Check System has been effective in blocking sales to prohibited purchasers. "But," said Goodman, "there is a critical hole in our system. The private sale of long guns -- rifles, shot guns and semi-automatic assault-style rifles -- are exempt from background checks. This could be changed by pending legislation."

House Bill 1010 would eliminate this exemption and ensure that all gun sales (with an exception for close family transfers) regardless of the type of gun or type of seller would be subject to a background check. "This is commonsense," said Goodman, "and it is widely supported by Pennsylvanians across the Commonwealth."

Almost a year ago, Pennsylvania finally began sharing its mental health records with the national background check system, essentially moving from worst to first in compliance in records sharing. "But Pennsylvania can and should do more," said Goodman, "The failure of Harrisburg to advance commonsense legislation that would keep guns out of the wrong hands without infringing the rights of law abiding gun owners is unacceptable. Pennsylvanians deserve better and are demanding that our elected officials take action."