

CeaseFirePA

Taking a stand against gun violence in Pennsylvania



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Protect the PA Instant Check System!

The Pennsylvania Instant Checks System (PICS)--which has been in place since July 1, 1998 and works in conjunction with NICS, our national background checks system--keeps Pennsylvanians safe by preventing gun sales to those who are not eligible to legally own a gun. PICS provides dealers near-instantaneous access to critical information about a potential purchaser including certain Protection from Abuse (PFA) orders and juvenile records that NICS does not.

Representatives from the PA state police and its Bureau of Information and Records, as well as PA gun vendors and buyers, have told our lawmakers that PICS is a valuable and effective deterrent to keeping guns out of the hands of those who should not have them. Unfortunately, some of our state legislators are refusing to listen to this broad-based coalition of PICS supporters. **House Bill 921, which is currently before the House Judiciary Committee, calls for a variety of actions that would endanger Pennsylvanians, including the full dismantling of PICS.**

Fast Stats and Facts

- Since its inception, PICS has processed over 12.3 million calls for background checks – an average of more than 750,000 calls per year. In 2015, the PICS Instant Check Unit processed 989,298 calls for background checks. So far in 2016, over 400,000 calls have been processed.
- This past year, the PICS unit was directly involved in the capture of 153 individuals with active warrants attempting to purchase firearms.
- Since its inception, PICS has been responsible for the apprehension of 1,971 fugitives at the point of purchase.
- When a background check call is forwarded to a legal assistant and the subject has an outstanding Protection From Abuse (PFA) order, PICS personnel immediately notify the appropriate law enforcement agency that the subject is attempting to acquire a firearm.

NICS Is Not Enough

- PICS has a waiting period of 15 days instead of the 3 afforded by NICS if a check cannot be concluded at the point of sale. If the check can not be completed, it automatically results in an “undetermined” status, not allowing the person to complete the sale. A similar system could have prevented the deadly Charleston shooting where Dylann Roof was allowed to buy the gun used in the shooting after the 3 day waiting period on his NICS background check lapsed.
- The state police have been very clear that the PICS system has many more records than the national system.
- Records of PFA orders that lack sufficient numeric identifiers (e.g., Social Security number or date of birth) are often not entered into the federal databases used in a NICS background check. These records, however, are included in the Pennsylvania PFA database and would result in a denial based on a PICS check .

Help us Protect PICS! Call you legislator and tell them you support the Pennsylvania State Police and the safety of Pennsylvanians and ask them to vote no on HB 921! Call us at 215-923-3151 if you need help finding your Rep.