



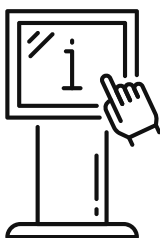
BACKGROUND CHECKS SAVE LIVES: THEY SHOULD BE UNIVERSAL FOR ALL GUN SALES

Pennsylvania's background checks system is one of the best in the nation. But, a critical loophole allows the purchase of semi-automatic military style assault rifles and other long guns from an unlicensed seller without a background check. That endangers the public.

These specific types of firearms have become the weapon of choice in the uniquely American epidemic of mass shootings at schools, grocery stores, houses of worship, and other public places. The long gun loophole in our background check system allows someone who is prohibited from owning a gun to still easily obtain one.

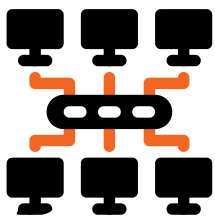
It's simple: every gun sale should have a background check.

HOW IT WORKS



BACKGROUND CHECKS ARE USUALLY INSTANT

For most gun transfers in Pennsylvania, including handguns sold by unlicensed sellers, the seller will use the State Police's Pennsylvania Instant Check System (PICS) through a computer terminal at a local gun dealer. In the vast majority of cases, the buyer has no record that prohibits them from owning a gun, and the transfer is approved within minutes.



WHEN A BUYER IS FLAGGED

The PICS system instantly cross-references the gun buyer with eight comprehensive state and federal databases maintained by a variety of law enforcement and court agencies that contain millions of records. If the buyer's record includes a felony conviction or other violent crimes, an involuntary commitment to a mental health facility, a final protection from abuse order, or another notable flag, the sale is denied. The denial can be further investigated the PA State Police or appealed by the attempted purchaser.



THE DEADLY LOOPHOLE


The process described above is used for most gun sales in Pennsylvania – even for long guns purchased from licensed firearm dealers. But a nonsensical, fatal loophole exempts this exact same type of weapon from a background check when it's bought from a private, unlicensed seller. This makes it too easy for a prohibited purchaser to evade safety systems and obtain a powerful firearm.

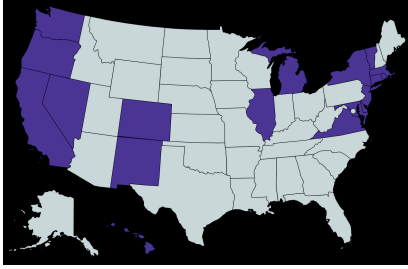


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Background checks are universal in 18 states. PA should be next.

In 2019, a gunman killed 7 and injured 25 more in a killing spree in Odessa, Texas. He bought the semi-automatic military style rifle from a unlicensed seller. It was his only option to buy a gun and he knew it. A few years earlier, he'd been denied a sale at a licensed firearm dealer due to mental health records revealed during a background check.

That same loophole exists in Pennsylvania. You do not need a background check to buy a long gun such as rifles, shotguns or military-style assault weapons from unlicensed individuals who are not in the business of selling guns. Think about it: private sellers, with arguably the least amount of accountability in the event of a tragedy, can sell the deadliest guns that can fire 100 bullets in minutes. They can sell those guns in a parking lot, or at someone's home, or after arranging online to meet in person without so much as asking for a name, let alone running a background check.

SAVING LIVES

Here's the truth: background checks work. Stopping a gun at the point of sale is the most effective way to prevent a potential weapon of war from getting into the hands of someone who wants to inflict mass harm. And universal background checks are also broadly popular and enjoy bipartisan support.



1.2 mil

attempted firearm purchases
in PA in 2022



22.5K

purchase denials due to
failure to pass a background
check



91

people with active arrest warrants were
identified by PICS and apprehended while
attempting to buy a firearm in 2022




89%

of all PA voters support universal
background checks, including 85%
of PA gun owners

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