



February 12, 2019

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Representative Mike Thompson
406 Cannon Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
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Re: H.R. 8 Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019

Dear Chairman Thompson:

The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) is a private non-profit organization whose mission is to support and enhance the effectiveness of prosecutors in their efforts to create safer communities. We are a national organization supporting all prosecutors, including both appointed and elected prosecutors, as well as their deputies and assistants. We have reviewed your legislation and support the policy of modernizing handgun background checks.

In 1993, the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act made background checks a requirement for federally licensed gun dealers and created the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) databases maintained by the FBI. Launched by the FBI in 1998, NICS keeps records of dangerous individuals, such as felons and convicted domestic abusers, who are prohibited from purchasing or possessing firearms. Federally licensed dealers must run a check through NICS to determine whether a potential buyer is prohibited from purchasing firearms. If information in NICS shows that a person is indeed prohibited, the dealer must deny the sale. More than 230 million checks have been made, leading to more than 1.3 million denials.

At the time that the Act was passed, the authors of the legislation could not have imagined that the internet would become a global marketplace, or that people prohibited from purchasing firearms would use the internet to circumvent the background check process. H.R. 8 will help the background check system catch up with changes in technology and ensure that individuals who are prohibited from purchasing or possessing a gun cannot easily buy guns online.

On behalf of prosecutors, we support prohibitions on the purchase and possession of weapons for dangerous individuals.

Respectfully Submitted,

David LaBahn
President and CEO