

FOR THE RECORD: **NICS & PUBLIC SAFETY**

In 2015, there were more than 121,000 shootings in the United States, of which over 36,000 were fatal. Worse yet, we know too many of these tragedies are preventable. The National Instant Criminal Background Check System, or NICS, helps keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people—one of the most effective ways of preventing deadly shootings.

WHAT IS NICS?

The National Instant Criminal Background Check System, known as NICS, is one of the most important tools we have in the fight against gun violence. This powerful, necessary set of databases helps stop more than 100,000 prohibited purchasers from buying guns from licensed dealers every year. Unfortunately, far too many others slip through the cracks due to missing or incomplete background check records, often with deadly consequences.

In 2014, there were over 700,000 state protection order records missing from the NICS database.

STRENGTHENING THE BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

Improving the number and quality of records sent to NICS must be a top priority for lawmakers in every state in order to ensure the background check system is as thorough as possible. Our comprehensive report *For the Record: NICS & Public Safety* explores what NICS is, how it works, and why this system is so essential to safeguarding our communities.

By examining existing gaps in federal law and record-reporting challenges at the state level, we can better understand how to strengthen this critical system. Background checks can and do stop the flow of guns to dangerous people, but NICS must be properly maintained and strengthened to maximize its lifesaving potential.



NUMBER OF ILLEGAL GUN SALES
STOPPED BY BACKGROUND CHECKS

2.8 MILLION

SINCE 1993

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THE NICS PROCESS



WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For nearly 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

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