

# NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## STATEMENT BY BALTIMORE COUNTY, MD, POLICE CHIEF JIM JOHNSON, CHAIR, NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE, ON 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF BRADY LAW IMPLEMENTATION

Good morning. I am Jim Johnson, Chief of Police of Baltimore County, Maryland. I am here as the Chair of the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence, known as “the Partnership.” We are an alliance of nine national law enforcement leadership organizations working together to make our citizens and our officers safer by keeping guns out of the hands of criminals and other dangerous individuals. The Partnership includes:

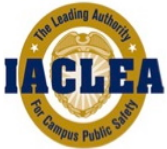
- the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA);
- the Hispanic American Police Command Officers Association (HAPCOA);
- the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators (IACLEA);
- the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP);
- the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA);
- the National Association of Women Law Enforcement Executives (NAWLEE);
- the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE);
- the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF); and
- the Police Foundation (PF)

Today marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the implementation of the landmark Brady Law, which requires nationwide background checks for guns purchased through federally licensed firearm dealers.

I am proud to stand here today with Sarah Brady who, along with her husband Jim, have made a remarkable contribution to this nation. Law enforcement across the United States worked hard with Sarah and Jim to get the Brady Law enacted and, unquestionably, this law has been a tremendous public safety success.

Since its implementation in 1994, background checks have blocked more than two million prohibited firearm purchases. There is no way to quantify how many lives have been saved as a result of this law, but it is obvious that more than 2 million guns in the wrong hands is a recipe for more than 2 million catastrophes.

The Brady Law has been crucial in reducing firearm access to those that are not legally permitted to possess them, including criminals and the dangerously mentally



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ill. But there remain other avenues for dangerous purchasers to acquire firearms, and these must likewise be shut down. Up to 40 percent of firearm purchases take place between private parties, without a licensed dealer, and thus do not require a background check under federal law. As we in law enforcement have been warning, that is tantamount to allowing 40 percent of passengers to board an airplane without undergoing any security screening. The honor system would not work at airports and it does not work when it comes to buying guns.

As public safety professionals, we see every day the devastation caused by gun crime. All across America, gun violence is claiming the lives of more than 30 people each day. Law enforcement officers are not only on the front lines working to protect the public, but are increasingly the targets of gun violence. Ambushes of law enforcement have risen dramatically, and were the leading cause of fatal shootings of officers for two years in a row, in 2012 and 2013. This is unacceptable.

We may not be able to eliminate all gun violence, but that shouldn't mean we do nothing. We should take the obvious and reasonable step of requiring background checks for private sales to prevent dangerous people from acquiring guns. The nine law enforcement organizations that comprise the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence are united in support of expanding background checks to all firearm purchases, regardless of where the sale takes place. This is not just common sense – lives depend on it.