

# NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

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## LAW ENFORCEMENT LEADERS SAY EXPANDED BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR GUN PURCHASERS CRITICAL TO PUBLIC AND OFFICER SAFETY

### *AMBUSHES LEADING CAUSE OF OFFICER FIREARM FATALITIES FOR TWO YEARS IN A ROW*

Philadelphia, PA – At a press conference today at the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) conference, the National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (the Partnership), a coalition of nine national law enforcement leadership organizations, emphasized the need to expand background checks for firearm purchasers, warning of the dangers to public and officer safety when guns are sold without background checks. Law enforcement leaders also expressed grave concerns that ambushes of police have risen dramatically and for the last two years in a row have been the leading cause of officer firearm fatalities.

“We in law enforcement are on the front lines, and we see the unacceptable toll gun violence takes in communities across America -- every single day,” said Baltimore, MD Police Chief Jim Johnson, who Chairs the Partnership. “That includes law enforcement officers who are increasingly the targets of gun violence. In 2012 and as of mid-year 2013 – ambushes have been the leading cause of officer firearm fatalities. This is an alarming phenomenon that we cannot allow to continue.”

In 2012, the number of officers killed by gunfire in ambushes jumped to 15, up from five in 2011, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. As of mid-year 2013, seven of the 17 officers killed by gunfire were targeted in ambushes. In 2011, for the first time in 14 years, firearms were the number one cause of death for officers killed in the line of duty, and gunfire continues to be a leading cause of officer fatalities.

“Gun violence is killing us – citizens and law enforcement alike. There are more than 30 Americans killed by firearms everyday. This madness has to stop,” said Philadelphia, PA Police Commissioner Charles Ramsey, the host

Chief for IACP's conference who opened the press conference. "We must do all we can to keep guns out of dangerous hands by ensuring that we require background checks on all gun purchasers." Commissioner Ramsey also serves as President of the Major Cities Chiefs Association (MCCA) and the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF), two member organizations of the Partnership.

The 1968 Gun Control Act prohibits anyone from possessing a firearm if he or she is a convicted felon, under indictment, a fugitive from justice, an unlawful user of or addicted to any controlled substance, an illegal alien, adjudicated as a mental defective or committed to a mental institution, dishonorably discharged from the military, or has renounced U.S. citizenship. The Act was later amended to include those under a restraining order for, or convicted of a crime of domestic violence. Currently, the Brady Law requires background checks for firearms purchased through federally licensed dealers. However, no background checks are required for firearms purchased in private sales, such as at gun shows or over the Internet.

"Up to 40 percent of firearm purchases are private, and thus do not require a check under federal law," said Chief Johnson. "That's like permitting 40 percent of passengers to board an airplane without going through airport security."

Noting that October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Chief Johnson said, "Those convicted of domestic violence offenses or under a domestic violence restraining order are prohibited from possessing firearms, but because we do not require background checks at all transaction points, they are still able to get guns, and the results are tragic."

"Background checks work and have stopped more than two million prohibited purchases since 1994, when the Brady Law took effect," said Wellesley, MA Police Chief Terry M. Cunningham, 4<sup>th</sup> Vice President of IACP. As law enforcement professionals, we know countless lives have been saved because background checks thwarted those two million purchases. It is obvious we can save so many more lives if we expand background checks to all sales."

"Large or small, urban, suburban or rural, gun violence impacts communities all across America. Law enforcement is united in the fight to prevent gun violence," said Pittsburgh, PA Assistant Police Chief Maurita Bryant, Immediate Past President of the National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE). "We are speaking out as public safety professionals because we know background checks save lives," she added.

The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (the Partnership) [lepartnership.org](http://lepartnership.org) is an alliance of the nation's law enforcement

leadership organizations concerned about the unacceptable level of gun violence in the United States. The Partnership is working to address the pervasive nature of gun violence and its horrific impact on community and officer safety. The Partnership is comprised of:

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

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