

# NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

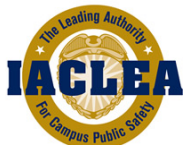


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## STATEMENT BY BALTIMORE COUNTY POLICE CHIEF JIM JOHNSON, CHAIR, NATIONAL LAW ENFORCEMENT PARTNERSHIP TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE, ON THE RECENT SPATE OF MASS SHOOTINGS



The National Law Enforcement Partnership to Prevent Gun Violence (the Partnership) continues to mourn the victims of the shooting last week in Lafayette, Louisiana. Our hearts are with the families and loved ones of Mayci Breaux and Jillian Johnson, who were laid to rest this week. We wish all those injured in this horrific attack rapid recoveries.



Active shooter incidents are on the rise, according to a September 2014 FBI report. And tragically, guns in the wrong hands are claiming too many lives in communities all across the United States. In the wake of the third high profile mass shooting in as many months, Americans are rightfully upset and questioning how this can keep happening.



Rather than prognosticate about what will or won't be done to curb America's gun violence problem, it is time to do what is right and immediately take the necessary steps to prevent future shootings by doing more to block dangerous people from accessing firearms.



As public safety professionals, we know that strengthening and expanding background checks are the most critical steps we can take to prevent gun violence. Background checks are the front line in preventing dangerous people from buying guns. They have successfully blocked more than 2 million prohibited firearm purchases since the Brady Law took effect in 1994.



The gunmen who committed the callous attacks in Charleston, Chattanooga and Lafayette should not have been able to acquire firearms. Yet, reports indicate that the three alleged perpetrators were able to buy guns either through federally licensed gun dealers or through an online website listing firearms for sale, demonstrating the need to both strengthen and expand background checks.



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The Partnership, comprised of nine national law enforcement leadership organizations that have come together to combat gun violence, strongly supports three background check measures that will better keep guns out of dangerous hands.



First, it is essential that we *expand our existing background check system to*

cover *all* firearm sales, no matter where a gun is purchased. While federal law requires background checks for purchases made through federally licensed firearms dealers, no checks are required for private sales. That must change.

Second, we must strengthen the background check system by *ensuring that states and federal agencies share all disqualifying records* with the NICS system. Dangerous people have been able to pass background checks because their criminal and mental health disqualifying records barring them from gun possession were *never shared* with the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).

Third, before a firearm is transferred, we want to ensure the FBI has *enough time* to adequately conduct background checks when further investigation is needed, as it was in the case of the shooting that took nine lives at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston.

According to the FBI, Dylann Roof, who is charged in the massacre, was able to buy the .45 caliber weapon police say was used in the shooting, even though his criminal record should have barred him. That's because under existing law, when the record of a potential buyer necessitates additional review, as was the case in approximately nine percent of NICS checks in 2014 -- and was the case with Dylann Roof's April 2015 purchase -- the FBI can delay a sale for *only three business days* while they investigate further. After three business days, the dealer has the option of selling the gun even if the purchaser's eligibility to possess firearms is still in question. Last year, the FBI reported more than 2,500 guns were sold to people who should have been barred but sales proceeded nevertheless. As the Charleston shooting rampage painfully shows, there are some cases where more time to investigate before a firearm is transferred would mean more lives saved.

The solutions are clear. We can, and we must, do more to prevent guns from getting into dangerous hands by expanding and strengthening background checks for all firearm purchases. Failure to act is costing lives lost and lives shattered every single day in communities all across America.

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