

Talking Points

Background Check Expansion Act

The National Council of Jewish Women's (NCJW) Message

NCJW endorses and resolves to work for laws, policies, and programs that regulate firearms and ammunition to promote gun safety and prevent gun violence. We are guided in this work by the Jewish value of *Kavod Ha Bri'ot*: Respect and Dignity for all Human Beings — we have an obligation to care for and to protect our neighbors. Among the many efforts supported by NCJW that would close deadly gaps in our nation's gun laws, background checks are a proven and effective method of keeping communities safe. The Background Check Expansion Act (S 42), introduced by Senator Chris Murphy (D-CT) on January 8, 2019, would expand the National Criminal Instant Background Check System (NICS) to require a background check on nearly every gun sale or transfer with exceptions for gifts to family members, hunting, target shooting, and self-defense. **Senators must co-sponsor S 42, commonsense gun safety legislation that would expand background checks and save lives.**

- **Background checks save lives.** Background checks are a systematic way to keep guns out of the hands of individuals with dangerous histories. Since NICS was established 25 years ago, background checks have blocked more than three million sales to domestic abusers, individuals with felony convictions, and others prohibited by law from having firearms.
- **Loopholes in federal law allow easy access to guns.** Current federal law only requires background checks for gun sales at licensed dealers. In the US, an estimated one in five gun transfers take place without going through a licensed dealer, including online and at gun shows.
- **Unlicensed gun sales are unregulated and unchecked.** Research indicates that up to a quarter of all gun sales in the United States may occur without a background check. The current background check law was passed before the rise of the internet where a vast digital marketplace for guns has emerged. Everytown for Gun Safety found that just one online gun marketplace — Armslist.com — transfers an estimated 25,000 guns to criminals each year. And in some states, as many as one in ten individuals seeking guns online are prohibited from buying them.
- **Expanded background checks work.** According to the Brady Campaign, states that have expanded the scope of their background checks have seen impressive results — 53 percent fewer law enforcement officers are shot and killed in the line of duty, 47 percent fewer women are shot by intimate partners, and cities in these states see a 48 percent reduction in gun trafficking.
- **The public supports expanded background checks.** A 2018 Quinnipiac study found that 97 percent of Americans, including gun owners and NRA members, support expanding background checks.