



Jump in FBI Gun Background Checks Indicates Rising Gun Sales

Statistics for NICS firearm background checks reported by the FBI on its website indicate that the system initiated 1,795,102 such checks in September, setting a record for that month. The number represented 335,739 more checks than the previous September high set in 2012 — a 23-percent increase. Another new record was set in October, with 1,976,759 background checks, which was 373,290 more than October 2014, another 23-percent increase.



While the number of background checks conducted does not exactly match the actual number of firearms sold, an increase in the number of such checks almost certainly indicates higher gun sales. If anything, the actual number of guns sold is likely to be higher, since multiple firearms can be sold to the same person by a dealer running a single background check.

A report posted by the *Washington Free Beacon* on October 7 noted that gun sales in the United States set a new record during the summer of 2015 and cited a likely explanation for the increase offered by Alan Gottlieb, founder of the Second Amendment Foundation:

We are seeing new record highs in gun sales due to the increased anti-gun rhetoric from Democratic candidates like Hillary Clinton. Their push for new restrictions on gun ownership is fueling gun sales. If they really want less guns in private hands they should consider what happens every time they open their mouths

Regarding NCIS background checks: NICS is an acronym established by the FBI to refer to its National Instant Criminal background Check System. The FBI posted an explanatory message on its NICS E-check webpage:

On January 16, 2013, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) issued an open letter to all FFLs [Federal Firearms Licensees] regarding the transfer of firearms between unlicensed individuals. This message provides guidance with respect to private sale transfers facilitated by FFLs as unlicensed individuals do not have the ability to use the National Instant Criminal background Check System (NICS) to conduct a background check on a prospective transferee. In addition, several states have state laws which prohibit the transfer of firearms between individuals unless a NICS background check is completed.

Another message on the FBI website paints a rosy picture of the NICS, which, it states, “is all about saving lives and protecting people from harm — by not letting guns and explosives fall into the wrong hands.”

“It also ensures the timely transfer of firearms to *eligible* gun buyers,” continues the message. (Emphasis added.)

Apparently the FBI believes the Second Amendment reads, “A well regulated militia being necessary to



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the security of a free state, the right of *eligible gun buyers* to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed.”

We did not learn the wording of that amendment that way, either.

The FBI explains that NICS was:

Mandated by the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 ... NICS is used by Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) to instantly determine whether a prospective buyer is eligible to buy firearms or explosives. Before ringing up the sale, cashiers call in a check to the FBI or to other designated agencies to ensure that each customer does not have a criminal record or isn't otherwise ineligible to make a purchase. More than 100 million such checks have been made in the last decade, leading to more than 700,000 denials.

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 was one of the major gun-control laws passed in response to senseless violent acts. It was named after James Brady, a White House press secretary who was shot and permanently disabled by John Hinckley, Jr. during an attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan on March 30, 1981. Whenever such a tragic event occurs, such as the mass shootings in 1999 at Columbine High School, in Colorado; in 2012 at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut; in 2014 at Fort Hood, Texas; and this year's church shooting in Charleston, South Carolina, enemies of the Second Amendment seize on the situation and exploit the grief to campaign for more gun control.

Such anti-gun campaigns cater to emotional instead of logical responses to these tragedies, however. They ignore how often mass shootings occur in “gun-free” zones, where the perpetrators know that their victims have no means of defense.

Those who insist on blaming the tools used by violent criminals for the actions of the criminals usually ignore studies indicating that high rates of gun ownership actually result in safer communities.

One such [recently publicized](#) gun study, “[Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?](#)” conducted by two criminologists and published in the *Harvard Journal of Law & Public Policy*, found that there is “a negative correlation” between guns and violence. It found: “Where firearms are most dense violent crime rates are lowest, and where guns are least dense, violent crime rates are highest.”

Ever since the Second Amendment was added to our Constitution when the memory of British attempts to disarm the American colonial militia at Concord was fresh in the memories of our Founding Fathers, Americans have vigorously defended their right to keep and bear arms.

The recent increase in gun sales, motivated partially by the clamor of liberal politicians to further restrict gun rights, is further indication that most Americans have no intention of allowing themselves to be disarmed.

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