



Obama Considering Executive Order Mandating Gun Background Checks

Capitalizing on the October 1 shootings at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, that resulted in the deaths of 10 people, President Obama has tasked his aides with exploring how he can circumventing Congress by using his executive authority to impose new background-check requirements for buyers who purchase weapons from so-called high-volume gun dealers.



Obama said he has asked his team “to scrub what kinds of authorities do we have to enforce the laws that we have in place more effectively to keep guns out of the hands of criminals.”

One senior administration official quoted by the *Washington Post* said: “We are hopeful we can find a way to [impose background check regulations by executive authority].” The official noted that administration lawyers were still working through details to ensure that the rule could pass legal muster. “It’s a lot more clear today than it was a year ago how to work this out.”

Immediately after the October 1 tragedy, Obama issued a statement that devoted one paragraph to thanking the first responders in Roseburg, two paragraphs to offering his condolences to the families of the victims, and 14 paragraphs that either tied the Roseburg shootings to other mass shootings to which they had no connection or made a case for more gun control laws. The president referred to gun laws or gun legislation more than 10 times in the short statement.

In his statement, Obama made it clear that, should future mass shootings occur, he would be following the same game plan: “Each time this happens I’m going to bring this up. Each time this happens I am going to say that we can actually do something about it, but we’re going to have to change our laws.”

Obama made a brief visit to Roseburg on October 9. On the day the White House announced the visit, David Jaques, the publisher of the *Roseburg Beacon*, told Bill O’Reilly on *The O’Reilly Factor* that the president would not be welcome:

I think the president ... is not welcome in our community.

And that isn’t just my opinion. We’ve talked with dozens upon dozens of citizens, some family members of the victims [and] our elected officials....

Our Douglas County commissioners, along with our Douglas County elected sheriff (who is very popular) and our chief of police all came to [the same conclusion] about him not being welcome here to grandstand for political purposes....

We still haven’t finished counting the bodies.... We haven’t identified whose children were killed ... and even at that same moment, [Obama] was saying, “Some people will accuse me of politicizing this issue,” ...

So he’s not only acknowledged that it could be to politicize but was doing so deliberately....



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on October 12, 2015

So now he wants to come to our community to stand on the corpses of our loved ones to make some kind of political point and it isn't going to be well-received — not by our people, not by our families, and not even by our elected officials.

The *Christian Science Monitor* for October 10 reported that the presidential visit to Roseburg was not without negative responses. It noted that more than 200 gun-rights activists gathered outside Roseburg airport — some carrying holstered handguns.

"I'm here to tell Obama he is not welcome in our county. He is exploiting the local tragedy with his gun control agenda," the *Monitor* quoted Bruce Rester, a retired truck driver who was wearing a handgun in a holster over his chest. "Everybody should carry a gun. An armed society is a polite society."

OregonLive (the online version of the *Oregonian*) reported the comments that Obama made on October 9 as he was flanked by Roseburg Mayor Larry Rich and Oregon Governor Kate Brown. However During those remarks, Obama stuck to generalities, such as relating how the families of the victims appreciated "all their neighbors, all their friends, and people all across the country who offered to help (and) sent their thoughts and their prayers." Maybe, after hearing about some of the comments that residents of Roseburg made, he was afraid to mention gun control.

But back in Washington, it was business as usual, and administration officials told NBC News that the White House is reconsidering a major gun control proposal that would set new guidelines legally defining who will be categorized as a licensed gun dealer and therefore required to run background checks on potential buyers.

NBC News reported that, according to their sources, the administration has considered sales of 50 to 100 guns a year as the threshold that would trigger the background check requirements, although they have not formally decided on a number.

"This is a super-complicated policy," said one administration official who was party to discussions about the proposed plan.

This is not the first time that the Obama administration has considered the executive action route to establish stricter background check requirements. A message posted on the White House website notes that on January 15, 2013 — a month after the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut — Vice President Biden delivered his policy proposals to President Obama. The next day, the president put forward a specific plan "to protect our children and communities by reducing gun violence." The message stated: "The plan combines *executive actions* and calls for legislative action that would help keep guns out of the wrong hands, ban assault and high-capacity magazines, make our schools safer, and increase access to mental health services." (Emphasis added.)

The White House post detailed some of the measures that Obama announced he would take, the first being: "Issue a Presidential Memorandum to require federal agencies to make relevant data available to the federal background check system."

Other proposals that Obama stated would be accomplished through presidential memoranda, or presidential directives, rather than through legislative enactment, were:

- "Direct the Attorney General to review categories of individuals prohibited from having a gun to make sure dangerous people are not slipping through the cracks."
- "Issue a Presidential Memorandum to require federal law enforcement to trace guns recovered in criminal investigations."



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- “Issue a Presidential Memorandum directing the Centers for Disease Control to research the causes and prevention of gun violence.”

A revealing explanation appearing on the White House website notes:

White House officials drafted the proposal in late 2013 to apply to those dealers who sell at least 50 guns annually, after Congress had rejected legislation that would have expanded background checks more broadly to private sellers.

As it has done in other areas, such as its decisions to ignore immigration law and apply amnesty to some illegal aliens, the Obama administration has decided to ignore the representatives of the people in Congress and implement its own law by executive actions, instead of sticking to its constitutional mandate to enforce those laws passed by Congress. Where Congress has decided to obey the Second Amendment, however inconsistently, the administration has decided to make its own exceptions.

Photo of President Obama: AP Images

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