



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on February 28, 2013

## Background Check Bill for Private Gun Sales Is Stalled

The one-two punch of separate [pushbacks](#) against any gun control legislation that involves a national database of gun owners has stalled in the Senate, perhaps permanently. First, Oklahoma Senator Tom Coburn told Fox News on Sunday that any inclusion of a national registry in legislation will kill it. He said that there “absolutely will not be record-keeping of legitimate, law-abiding gun owners.” This was followed by comments from House member Robert Goodlatte (R-Va.), head of the House Judiciary Committee, that he would oppose any such legislation as well. His committee would oversee any such gun bills in the House.



Expanded background checks that include all gun transactions, including those between private citizens, have been a priority of the Obama administration. The *Los Angeles Times* called it Obama’s “[centerpiece](#)” legislation. That such legislation is now effectively stalled was signaled by Vice President Joe Biden in remarks on Wednesday to the National Association of Attorneys General: “They want the law to say no record would be kept. How in the h—l would you know if that transaction would be real if no record can be kept?”

And that is precisely the point. Wayne LaPierre of the National Rifle Association told Fox News that such record-keeping wouldn’t work in reducing crime simply because criminals wouldn’t sign up. So such legislation must be aimed at law-abiding gun owners instead, meant to get their information into a national database for use in the future. Goodlatte agreed, saying that such legislation is “not a very practical thing to do ... [and that] you’re not going to keep many weapons out of the hands of people who are misusing them.”

This is disappointing news to Biden’s “[working group](#),” formed just after the Newtown, Connecticut, shooting, which included Dan Gross, head of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence; Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum; and New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg. As noted by the *Washington Post*, the group was “seriously considering measures ... that would require universal background checks for firearm buyers [and] track the movement and sale of weapons through a national database.”

Such efforts appeared to be gaining traction earlier in the week, with the *Washington Post* posting a headline on Saturday, February 23, that “Senators near a deal on background checks for most private gun sales,” claiming that a bipartisan group of senators were “on the verge of a deal that would expand background checks to all private firearms sales.” On Monday Bloomberg.com (owned by Mayor Michael Bloomberg) happily announced that “Senators Close in on Background Check Agreement on Guns,” noting that anti-gun Senators Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and pro-gun Tom Coburn (R-Okla.) “have worked out 90 percent of their differences over a measure that would expand criminal background checks to



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most private sales of guns.” The agreement was, according to Bloomberg.com, “within reach” and would include increased funding for the NICS (National Instant Check System) to handle the additional workload along with penalties on states that refused to go along with the measure.

All of this is necessary, according to Democrats, to reduce crime. [The Post explained](#):

Democrats say that keeping records of private sales is necessary to enforce any new law ....

Records of private sales also would help law enforcement track back the history of a gun used in a crime.

But Republicans were resisting such a move, complained the *Post*, because it “could be perceived by gun rights advocates as a precursor to a national gun registry.” Yet such legislation meets with the approval of Senators John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Susan Collins (R-Maine) said the *Post*, while Senator Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) was “still reviewing the proposal.”

The proposed legislation would be designed to make it easy for private buyers and sellers to register themselves online through a new “online portal,” or through retailers like Walmart or Dick’s Sporting Goods, which would be allowed to charge a small fee for the service.

But none of this going anywhere in light of those remarks by Coburn and Goodlatte. And that’s just as well, if the Canadian experience has anything to show for such efforts. The [Canadian long gun registry](#) was instituted in 1993, and for the past 20 years law-abiding citizens have found themselves to be targets of the law, with many of them losing their weapons to bureaucrats without due process of law. Brian Lilley, host of *Byline* on Canada’s Sun News Network, noted that the Canadian law passed into history in April last year, leaving behind a dreadful legacy of governmental overreach and confiscation of weapons from innocent Canadians. [As Lilley noted](#),

Last year Canada ended its national long gun registry, a national database of every rifle and shotgun in the country that was supposed to help police track the movement of and sale of weapons. When it was introduced twenty years ago critics said the registration of firearms would eventually lead to confiscation, a criticism dismissed as ridiculous, yet that’s what happened and more right up until its dismantling.

For instance, an unelected bureaucrat decided that a popular .22 rifle that had been legally owned for years all of a sudden became a threat and was therefore subject to confiscation under the law. Wrote Lilley,

Hundreds if not thousands of people who had legally purchased [the .22 rifle] were informed that their rifles had been deemed illegal and must be surrendered.

Those owners received a chilling demand in the mail from the Canadian Firearms Centre that read:

You are required by law to return your firearm registration certificates, without delay, either by mail to the address shown in the top left corner of this page or in person to a peace officer or firearms officer.

You have 30 days to deliver your firearms to a peace officer, firearms officer or Chief Firearms Officer or to otherwise lawfully dispose of them.

The Canadian government regained some common sense when it finally moved to repeal the onerous firearms act, proving that “it’s easier to stay out than to get out.”

It is to be hoped that senators and representatives in Washington exercise the same kind of common



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sense and drop this move toward gun confiscation in the United States down the memory hole so that free citizens may continue to exercise their Second Amendment rights without interference by totalitarians who have other purposes than reducing crime in proposing such legislation.

*Photo: AP Images*

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