



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 20, 2016

Gun Permit Applications Swamping Local, Federal Agencies

In the month following the San Bernardino shooting, applications for concealed weapons permits in San Bernardino County and neighboring Riverside County jumped from the usual 80 requests per month [to more than 750](#), swamping officials in both counties. In San Bernardino, applications are being delayed up to 18 months, while in Riverside application appointments are being scheduled out to September.



John Lott, founder of the Crime Prevention Research Center, expressed the frustration of many: “It’s ridiculous. Most states in the country will get you a concealed carry permit within at least 60 days. What if you have a woman who is being stalked or threatened? What is she supposed to do — wait a year and a half just to get an appointment?”

There are those who see the problem as a good thing: citizens waking up to the reality that police cannot be everywhere all the time, as well as to the fact that background checks do little good in reining in criminal or terrorist attacks. Others view the obvious solution — hiring more agents to better facilitate the permit process — as an unnecessary and unconstitutional expansion of government caused by illegal government infringements of basic Second Amendment rights.

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The tension was reflected by Riverside County Captain David Teets, who told *USA Today*: “It’s been overwhelming. We have two folks who work in that department and, after the terror attack, they were absolutely inundated with people wanting concealed weapons permits. We received hundreds of phone calls, voicemails and emails — likely upwards of one thousand in the two weeks [after the massacre].”

But Teets’ sheriff, Stan Sniff, is stuck. He can’t speed up the process without pulling deputies off the street, which he is unwilling to do. And he can’t hire more deputies because county leaders think he’s already spending too much money as it is.

This is a microcosm of the problem faced by the National Instant Background Check System (NICS) located on the other side of the country in Clarksburg, West Virginia. There, more than 400 employees labor to handle the accelerating flood of background checks coming from Federal Firearms License (FFL) dealers selling firearms. The dam broke on Black Friday when nearly 200,000 background checks came into the system, and it hasn’t slowed since. According to the *New York Times*, December was the second biggest month for gun sales in history, and every time the president opens his mouth about how he is going to “go it alone” and issue audacious executive actions outside the purview of Congress or the Constitution, more nervous citizens head to the gun store.

FBI Assistant Director Stephen Morris is facing the same problem as Sheriff Sniff, only exponentially greater. He cancelled leave for all 400 of his people in Clarksburg, and is pulling employees from other parts of his agency to deal with the flood of applications. His problem is exacerbated by the requirement that if a background check cannot be completed within three days, the purchase is



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automatically approved.

Morris also is faced with the problem that not all the background information on every citizen is kept in one place. Much of the data about criminal and mental-health issues resides with the states, which at present are not required to keep their databases as current as Morris would like them to be. Many of the records are paper, which causes further delays. Said Morris:

We live off those [state] records. That is our bread and butter.... The [misperception] is that the FBI has everything that exists on criminal history records in some big repository, and that's simply not true. A lot of data sits out in state and local systems. Being able to reach out and get that information can be very, very challenging.

What he needs, by implication, is a national registry of every citizen in the country containing every bit of information that the FBI claims it needs in order to approve or reject those requests. And also by implication, he needs more employees, just as President Obama mandated in his State of the Union speech.

USA Today was quick to point out the failure of the NICS to deny an application made by Dylann Roof to purchase a handgun two months before his attack at the AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina. Wrote the paper:

The Columbia, South Carolina, police report included information that Roof admitted to drug possession, which would have triggered an immediate denial by NICS, according to bureau guidelines. But that information was never seen by the [NICS] reviewer because the FBI's database did not include Columbia police contacts in its list of agency contacts.

Those who view the Second Amendment guarantee as malleable are amenable to the idea of hiring more agents in order to handle the increased flow of applications and checks. This would include Senator Chuck Grassley (R-Iowa), chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, who told *USA Today* that more NICS examiners "might be necessary." It would also include the National Rifle Association (NRA), which approves the hiring of more agents and examiners and inspectors and compliance officers but "only if the addition of these agents [is] used to apprehend criminals [and] not to harass law-abiding gun owners.... If [they] are used to improve the broken NICS system, we would have no objection," said NRA spokeswoman Jennifer Baker.

The conundrum remains: expand government in order to handle government mandated background checks that are being driven to record levels by government threats to precious rights. Nowhere can this writer find any conversation about doing away with the NICS altogether and letting the states do their job as allowed by the Constitution without federal interference. Nor is there any conversation about repealing the pernicious and unconstitutional Gun Control Act of 1968 or the Brady Bill that instituted the NICS in the first place.

Instead, the conversation revolves around how to make the system more efficient in monitoring and recording the details of the private lives of American citizens who are guilty of nothing more than being American citizens.

A graduate of an Ivy League school and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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