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**Info on Background Check Legislation to Prevent Gun Violence**

**Support HR 8 (U.S. House Resolution)**

**The Bi-Partisan Background Checks Act of 2019**

**& S 42 (U.S. Senate) The Background Check Expansion Act**

Gun safety advocates welcome the historic introduction of HR 8 and S 42 for Background Checks on all gun sales, including gun shows and on-line. The Presbyterian Church (USA) General Assembly has called for this type of action for 50 years. Reach out to your US officials of both parties to ask them to co-sponsor and/or support HR 8 or S 42. Do postcards, letters, phone calls, social media. To meet with your officials or their staff when they are at home, see their calendar at [www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/Calendars+and+Schedules](http://www.congress.gov/resources/display/content/Calendars%2Band%2BSchedules)

**Love Requires Action** – Act now to protect Americans from gun violence. Hearings on HR 8 are scheduled for Feb. in the Judiciary Committee. **A vote could happen as soon as March or April.** In 2018, we accomplished two steps on the road to preventing gun violence: Congressional action to fix the National Background Check System and the decision of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to prohibit the sale of “bump stocks,” such as the device used by the 2018 Las Vegas shooter to kill 58 people and to injure 851 others. Let’s make 2019 count for saving lives.

**1. Why Universal Background Checks?**

 As described in an Editorial in *The Washington Post* Jan. 8, 2019:

“Under federal law, certain categories of people are not allowed to buy or possess firearms. Background checks, [introduced](https://bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/bcft99.pdf) in 1994, have blocked licensed dealers from making more than 3.5 million gun sales to such people. There is, however, no system to prevent these same prohibited purchasers — felons, domestic abusers, fugitives and others deemed dangerous to themselves or others — from buying at a gun show, over the Internet or through a newspaper ad. No background checks. No questions.

 The situation makes absolutely no sense, as more than [90 percent of Americans agree.](https://poll.qu.edu/national/release-detail?ReleaseID=2521) Democrats and Republicans, gun owners and non-owners favor universal background checks.”

 According to Robin Lloyd, Director of Governmental Affairs for Giffords PAC:

“Closing this background check loophole is critical to making sure criminals and other dangerous people cannot easily access firearms…. Background checks are proven to save lives: States that require a background check on every handgun sale experience 38% fewer gun homicides of women by intimate partners, 53% fewer law enforcement officers shot and killed, and 53% fewer firearm suicides.”

**2. What’s Included?** HR 8 and S 42 require that gun shows, private sales and on-line gun sales comply with the background checks already required for all licensed gun dealers and gun stores. This updates the existing background check system to include all gun sales with only a few reasonable exceptions, such as the temporary transfer of weapons while hunting or at a shooting range, in situations of emergency, and the transfer of firearms within families. No single step can do more to prevent gun violence than vetting every single gun buyer to identify those who do not pass a background check.

Because it is a federal update, HR 8 and S 42 seek to end the practice of persons who cannot pass a background check in their state from crossing state lines to purchase a firearm in

another state with fewer or no state requirements.

See HR 8 text at [https://mikethompson.house.gov/sites/mikethompson.house.gov/files/THOMCA\_001\_xml%20(002).pdf](https://mikethompson.house.gov/sites/mikethompson.house.gov/files/THOMCA_001_xml%20%28002%29.pdf)

The Senate version, S 42, is similar. See S 42 text at https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/s42/text

**3. CALL TO ACTION A vote could happen as soon as March or April.**

Contact our representatives and senators now and urge them to get background checks passed! Pay special attention to all Republican officials to make this historic action bi-partisan. You can find your elected officials’ contact info and website at:

<https://www.commoncause.org/find-your-representative/addr/>

 **a. Letters, phone calls, emails and visits** –Visits and calls with staff in the district office are very important, as well as seeking a visit with your official. Do a special Offering of Letters Service to support HR 8/S 42. See the “Gun Violence Prevention Congregational Toolkit” for a worship service that includes the invitation to write letters to your elected officials as an act of faithfulness. [www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/congregational-toolkit](http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/congregational-toolkit)

 **b. Use Social Media**

In addition to letters, cards, visits and phone calls, here are some sample tweets, Instagram and Facebook posts. Feel free to make them your own. Also, these work best with personal pictures.

Samples: I'm a resident of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_(district/state) and I want this Congress to take action on gun violence in America! I just told my House rep to [#UpdateBackgroundChecks](https://www.facebook.com/hashtag/updatebackgroundchecks?source=feed_text&epa=HASHTAG).

JOIN ME by clicking this link  [https://every.tw/2AyeAYC](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fevery.tw%2F2AyeAYC%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR1-J77oPboZSi-H9XBqL6xUseqRKkpEDmuUFp6siepupp64wHW-o7KVdA4&h=AT1xqlCOvnwX-2MmQRd3s9A2KADiapBujvPtdHBn6dF64ymSAiiW_M0Q_Gs_aOdh9FLvuw2gdQqT5-Ff8RSIiNPillO3RB2km1CogI2E5JV-lcskXg6Gcf332h0URyZpSrVQPutI8a_-UIDXJoFbbAHv3GD2NxEUhuBhRYbm" \t "_blank) @Everytown

It's past time for Congress to #UpdateBackgroundChecks! I just sent my rep an email urging them to support legislation that would strengthen background checks on gun sales. You can too by using this link [https://every.tw/2AyeAYC](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=https%3A%2F%2Fevery.tw%2F2AyeAYC%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR1X52yx0FSfTHh10GxMlfSuO7u4JqN1vlisoiNCoodXQr_5_qCy43jvwD4&h=AT3TzR7nzeuG48Dz6d63B4YWuIpsDSB6JlQNiWHFeRzRwLKWl9twJndHBfPIoti5efIQA3uKLaiLs11rK8cv1jJQkg1S0Pwie18FS4tEb--OZUfG4HfhBb37H1ernVqZlO88EqQFgWHBCgMlDarnU8AjhcECza2URVUnNPkX) @MomsDemand @Everytown

**4. A Kairos Moment for Change** On what else do over 90% of Americans agree? Nonetheless, passing this historic act will be difficult and will require American citizens to take sustained action in face of unprecedented opposition that has already begun by the NRA. As former Rep. Gabby Giffords put it before the US Congress on Jan. 8, **“Stopping gun violence takes courage, the courage to do what’s right, the courage of new ideas. Now is the time to come together, be responsible ― Democrats, Republicans, everyone. We must never stop fighting. Fight, fight, fight. Be bold, be courageous. The nation’s counting on you.”**

**Learn more at**

[**Five Gun Violence Prevention Priorities for the Incoming Congress**](https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/421292-five-gun-violence-prevention-priorities-for-the-incoming-congress)

by Josh Horwitz, Director of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence

https://thehill.com/opinion/civil-rights/421292-five-gun-violence-prevention-priorities-for-the-incoming-congress

[**Policy Recommendations to Reduce Gun Violence for the 116th Congress**](https://giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2019-Federal-Priorities-Memo.pdf)**by** Robin Lloyd, Director of Government Affairs, GiffordsPAC

https://giffords.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/2019-Federal-Priorities-Memo.pdf

[**Gun Violence: A National Sin**](https://www.presbyterianmission.org/opw/2018/12/14/gun-violence-a-national-sin/) by Leslie Woods, Presbyterian Church (USA) Office of Public Witness, Washington DC

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**State Legislation:** Learn more about gun laws and legislation in your state at States United to Prevent Gun Violence [www.supgv.org](http://www.supgv.org) or at Everytown for Gun Safety [www.everytown.org](http://www.everytown.org)

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship GVP Congregational Toolkit also provides a local group contact working in every state. [www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/](http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/)

This information is provided by the Presbyterian Peace Fellowship Gun Violence Prevention Ministry

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