

Shooters Committee on Political Education

Position Paper



Requires that the sale or transfer of rifles and shotguns between unlicensed persons shall be through a federally licensed dealer

PURPOSE

The proposals seek to impose additional restrictions on private sale or transfer of rifles and shotguns by requiring that all such transactions take place through a federally licensed dealer and thus be subject to a NICS¹ check. The sponsors state as justification that “the unregulated secondary market provides an easy avenue for prohibited persons to purchase weapons.”

POSITION

We stand in opposition to these proposals. They are directed at imposing additional restrictions on legal firearms owners who are engaged in perfectly legitimate activities and already operate under a plethora of regulations. These restrictions are offered without any evidence that they represent an effective approach to fulfilling a legitimate government objective, nor do they promise any perceivable benefit to the general public.

Theft and the illicit gun market is the source of all but a miniscule number of the weapons used in the commission of violent crimes. The illicit market is called the illicit market because it operates outside of the law. It is not going to be impacted in the slightest by further restrictions or prohibitions imposed on the legal owners of firearms, be they rifles, shotguns, or handguns.

Private sales of rifles and shotguns have never been shown to be a significant source of weapons used in violent crime.

With handguns representing about 85% of the weapons used in violent crime and with theft and the illegal market being the prime source of all crime weapons, imposing additional restrictions on private transactions between law-abiding individuals would impose a significant burden with no appreciable reduction in an offender’s ability to secure weapons. The majority of these now-legal transactions would appear to be between family members or individuals known to each other, such as fellow shooting-club members or hunting companions, not ineligible individuals.

The real purpose of these proposals appears to be to further restrict the legal and already regulated use of firearms, rifles, and shotguns through the arbitrary imposition of additional constraints that serve no legitimate purpose. These proposals are based on conclusions that are speculative or specious. Casual private transfers of long guns have never been shown to be a source of weapons used by violent criminals.

¹ National Instant Check System. Operated by the FBI, NICS is a national system that checks available records on persons who may be disqualified from receiving firearms.