



## **Keeping Guns out of Dangerous Hands: Background Checks Support HB 259, Rep. Anchia, and HB 2034, Rep. Blanco**

### **The Need**

Every year, 3,500 Texans are killed or injured by firearms. While Texas' 7,400 federally licensed dealers perform background checks before every gun sale, experts estimate that one in five guns are purchased without a background check<sup>i</sup>. Without background checks, individuals prohibited from buying guns due to criminal records, domestic abuse, or high-risk mental illness purchase a gun. The Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms, and Federal Bureau of Investigation report that gun trafficking is a big problem in Texas. Texas is the fourth largest U.S. exporter of crime guns to Mexico.

Background checks have also helped reduce suicides. States that have a universal background check requirement have reduced suicide rates, and states without them have experienced increased rates.

A growing number of states, including Michigan, Colorado, and Washington, have reviewed the facts and taken steps to protect citizens by passing universal background check laws.

### **Don't gun purchasers already get background checks? Will this require a second check?**

No. Only licensed dealers are required to perform background checks. Private sellers at gun shows and online sites are not required to take any measures to screen purchasers prior to sale.

### **How long does it take to get a background check?**

Background checks are instant and generally require only a few minutes to process. By federal law, if the check is still not complete after three days, the sale, by default, may proceed.

### **Won't criminals find a way to get guns anyway?**

While background checks won't stop all illegal sales, states that do require a background check on every sale see 46% fewer women killed by intimate partners, 48% fewer law enforcement officers killed with guns, and 48% fewer suicides with guns. A 2016 study led by Boston University concluded that background checks for all people buying guns and ammunition, including through private sales, are the most effective laws we have to reduce the number of gun deaths in the U.S.

### **Solutions for Texas**

Nationally, background checks have successfully blocked almost two million prohibited gun purchases. Strengthening the background check system in Texas would reduce crime and save lives. Texas can encourage private sellers to finalize sales at federally licensed dealers.

Texas can require that all sales at gun shows require a background check (HB 259, Rep. Anchia);

Texas can require that all internet gun sales require a background check (HB 2034, Rep. Blanco).

**Contact:** Andrea Brauer, Executive Director, [andrea@txgunsense.org](mailto:andrea@txgunsense.org), 512.565.4480

*Texas Gun Sense is a nonprofit organization that advocates for common sense,  
evidence-based policies to reduce gun injuries and death. 2/13/17*

---

<sup>i</sup> *Firearms Acquisition Without Background Checks: Results of a National Survey*, Annals of Internal Medicine, American College of Physicians, January 3, 2017.