

## November 2017 Public Forum Topic Analysis and Research Guide

**Resolved: The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership.**

**Presented by the Institute for Speech and Debate  
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Before I jump into the topic itself, I want to take a moment to recognize the timing of this resolution and to remind coaches and students that this already sensitive topic area may elicit heightened responses due to firearms-related incidents in recent weeks like the mass shooting in Las Vegas. Every violent incident involving guns is tragic, and as our country continues to debate gun rights, I anticipate that the literature will continue to develop throughout the month of November. With this in mind, I want to issue a word of caution against isolating specific acts of large-scale violence as the thesis behind your debates. Mass shootings only account for two percent of gun deaths in America<sup>1</sup>, and thus I urge debaters to focus on the larger questions posed by the resolution. The analysis you will read here will not address the Las Vegas shooting due to the changing nature of the investigation, but rather we will take a small step back to look at the larger questions posed by universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership.

Before we look at potential arguments on the topic, let's begin by examining its history. There are two key federal statutes that deal with the commerce and possession of firearms: the National Firearms Act of 1934 (NFA) and the Gun Control Act of 1968 (GCA). Federal laws tend to be known as the baseline for firearms legislation, as most laws are passed at the state level. While a state can restrict firearms more than the national government, they cannot override federal law.<sup>2</sup> This reality is important to note, because the resolution poses a question that would apply nationally, and thus it would set a new bar for firearms regulation.

While the NFA and GCA set a national bar with regard to questions of firearms licensing, ownership, and commerce, for this topic more attention should be paid to the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 (Brady Act). The Brady Act strengthened federal gun regulations by introducing the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) for gun sales made by Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL).<sup>3</sup> The NICS was implemented in November of 1998 and has been used by the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) for background checks on gun purchases.

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<sup>1</sup> Godfrey, Elaine. "Is There a Meaningful Legislative Solution for Mass Shootings?" *The Atlantic*, October 11, 2017. Accessed October 13, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/mass-shootings/542535/>.

<sup>2</sup> Krouse, William J. 2013. GUN CONTROL PROPOSALS IN THE 113TH CONGRESS: UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS, GUN TRAFFICKING, AND MILITARY STYLE FIREARMS\*. *Current Politics and Economics of the United States, Canada and Mexico* 15, (2): 215-265. Accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> 2013. "National Instant Criminal Background Check System." *Congressional Digest* 92, no. 3: 14. *MAS Ultra - School Edition*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 13, 2017).

The NICS checks are designed to provide an immediate response once the FFL has used a phone or other electronic means to find out if the sale or transfer of a firearm would violate a federal or state law. There are a variety of laws around our country limiting what guns can be owned and by whom. For example, at the federal level felons are banned from owning firearms.<sup>4</sup> And when an NICS check is run, the federally licensed seller will either be told to proceed, that the sale is denied, or that the sale should be delayed because of a possible record that could prohibit the sale. If there is a delay, it can take up to three days for the NICS officials to confirm the records to decide whether the purchaser is legally allowed to buy the gun. It is important to note that if the FBI/NICS doesn't contact the seller within that three day wait, the seller may proceed with the sale - at which point the sale is considered "open" while the FBI continues to investigate. If during those 90 days it's found that the buyer shouldn't have the weapon, then the FBI will follow up with the seller through NICS and initiate a plan to get the weapon back.

It's important to note that some debaters may attempt to debate questions of privacy on this topic. Under the current system of NICS (which one may advocate would still apply and only be expanded to cover all sales and transfers), the seller is never informed of why the buyer can't have a weapon. This does protect the buyer's privacy in terms of a possible criminal record or court-documented mental health condition.

Additionally, under the 1993 Brady Act, a buyer who is denied a sale based on the NICS may appeal to the agency that denied them (usually the FBI). And once the buyer is made aware of why he or she was denied being able to buy a firearm, he or she may also challenge the record that was used to issue the denial.<sup>5</sup> Assuming the Pro argues that the current system would be expanded to cover all sales and transfers, I would contend that there is a system in place to answer questions of unfair denial of gun sales/prevention of the exercise of the Second Amendment rights.

There have been several attempts to mandate universal background checks. One of the most notable is the Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act of 2013 (S.649) which was proposed in the wake of the Newtown elementary school shootings in 2012. This act would have required background checks for all gun sales and transfers<sup>6</sup>, closing the loophole we examined earlier and thus affirming the question of our resolution, but the legislation died at the end of the legislative session. From the Safe Schools Act, the Manchin-Toomey Amendment was proposed but failed by a narrow margin in 2013 as well as again in 2015 following the San

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<sup>4</sup> Savage, David G. 2017. Justice dept. balks at ex-cons' gun rights. *Chicago Tribune*, May 28, 2017. Accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Krouse, William J. 2013. GUN CONTROL PROPOSALS IN THE 113TH CONGRESS: UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS, GUN TRAFFICKING, AND MILITARY STYLE FIREARMS\*. *Current Politics and Economics of the United States, Canada and Mexico* 15, (2): 215-265. Accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>6</sup> S. 649 - safe communities, safe schools act of 2013. 2013. *Targeted News Service*, Apr 11, 2013. Accessed October 13, 2017.

Bernardino mass shootings. This amendment specifically focused on purchases and transfers made at gun shows and other events but did not address transfers between friends and family.<sup>7</sup>

In 2015 the United States had approximately 300 million guns that were privately owned and approximately 88 U.S. residents died each day from firearm-related injuries (these numbers are not just related to violent incidents but also include self-inflicted harm as well as accidental discharge of weapons). However, the status quo is still that background checks only cover weapons purchased by federally-licensed dealers, and while numbers vary, it's estimated that approximately 40% of gun sales and transfers are not through these dealers and instead happen at gun shows and between individuals.<sup>8</sup>

But what is the question of the resolution? In order to better understand how to affirm or negate the resolution, we first have to understand the terms and possible interpretations of the question posed that would lead to us to this debate.

**Resolved: The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership.**

The beginning of the resolution clearly identifies the United States as the actor, which would lead me to contend this is a national-level action. Some debaters may try to work around this term as it does not say "federal government," but in this case I would contend it is still a national affirmation of the question. Since we would not be proposing a specific plan text in this event, the specific actor should matter less than the national focus of the resolution. Those who want to be specific about the actor could safely conclude that the only way to affirm would be through a national manner in order to assure a uniform check system is in place.

"Should require" again does not prescribe a specific policy be debated but rather if the question of the resolution is a good idea or not. A lot of material has been written in debateland about the term "should" being a moral obligation; however, Merriam-Webster has five different definitions of the term, Oxford has eight, and while some of these definitions might indicate an obligation, others do not. Thus, I would encourage debaters to avoid reading too much into the word choice of "should" and instead focus on the substance of the topic. With this in mind, though, being prepared to encounter these debates would be wise.

I would contend the remainder of the resolution is where you will need more clarity, as there isn't a clear piece of legislation that exists on the floor of Congress that would meet the terms in the resolution. One might look to the Safe Schools, Safe Communities Act of 2013 for some guidance, as it met the terms of the resolution. However, it was not specific to just the burdens in the resolution and thus could only serve as a guideline. Instead, one might clarify the question

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<sup>7</sup> Mimms, Sarah. "In Wake of San Bernardino Shooting, Manchin-Toomey Gun-Control Bill Fails Again." *The Atlantic*, December 23, 2015. Accessed October 12, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/in-wake-of-san-bernardino-shooting-manchin-toomey-gun-control-bill-fails-again/450852/>.

<sup>8</sup> McCarthy, Michael. 2015. US medical societies call for action on gun violence. *BMJ : British Medical Journal (Online)* 350, (Feb 24), Accessed October 13, 2017.

of the resolution to whether or not the NICS should be expanded to cover all sales and transfers of firearms. However, as you will read in the Con argument strategies below, there is some concerns about what a transfer of ownership entails. This is a question that state legislatures have grappled with as they pass their own versions of the Public Forum resolution, including not legislating transfers of ownership within families.<sup>9</sup>

The most straightforward way to frame this debate is to examine if affirming the resolution, on balance, improves our country. This framework can be applied on both sides of the debate and is accessible to all levels of debaters. From this point, debaters can contextualize in their analysis why the arguments for their side are an improvement or a detriment to the nation.

Depending on where in the country you live and your personal experiences, you may believe the question of the resolution has a particular bias; however, I believe there are strong arguments to be made by both sides in this debate.

Let's first examine some arguments that fall under the Pro side of the resolution. The largest is the prevention of gun violence, which needs to be further broken down in order to be tackled. First, let's look at firearm-related homicides, where studies that have examined states with universal background checks contend closing the loophole created by the Brady Act would reduce the number of gun-related homicides nationally.<sup>10</sup> The implications of this argument are obvious, as reducing the number of people being murdered with guns is a preferred world.

One of the reasons violence is prevented with universal background checks is that it decreases the likelihood individuals will try to secure a weapon. This might mean a criminal doesn't try to buy a gun at an event, but it could also potentially decrease suicide rates, as individuals would be required to go through additional steps to procure a weapon.<sup>11</sup> Suicides by firearm are more successful than other means of suicide, and thus reducing the likelihood of firearms acquisition would save lives.<sup>12</sup> It should be noted, though, that as long as criteria for "prohibited persons" varies state by state and only deals with documented incidents of risk like hospitalizations or convictions<sup>13</sup>, the Pro team can probably only claim deterrence for some suicides, while other solutions such as a cooling off period or permitting requirements might be able to achieve more solvency.

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<sup>9</sup> Drange, Matt. "Gun transfers among family members remain largely unregulated." *Reveal News* (blog). Entry posted July 2, 2015. Accessed October 16, 2017. <https://www.revealnews.org/article/gun-transfers-among-family-members-remain-largely-unregulated/>.

<sup>10</sup> Kalesan, Bindu, Matthew E. Mobily, Olivia Keiser, Jeffrey A. Fagan, and Sandro Galea. 2016. Firearm legislation and firearm mortality in the USA: A cross-sectional, state-level study. *The Lancet* 387, (10030) (Apr 30): 1847-1855. Accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>11</sup> Andres, Antonio Rodriguez, and Katherine Hempstead. "Gun control and suicide: The impact of state firearm regulations in the United States, 1995-2004." *Health Policy* 101, no. 1 (June 2011): 95-103. Accessed October 14, 2017. doi:10.1016/j.healthpol.2010.10.005.

<sup>12</sup> Sumner, Steven A., Peter M. Layde, and Clare E. Guse. "Firearm Death Rates and Association with Level of Firearm Purchase Background Check." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 35, no. 1 (May 16, 2008): 1-6. Accessed October 14, 2017. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2008.03.023.

<sup>13</sup> Lewiecki, E. M., and Sara A. Miller PhD. 2013. Suicide, guns, and public policy. *American Journal of Public Health* 103, (1) (01): 27-31. Accessed October 14, 2017.

The Pro team can argue that background checks keep guns out of the hands of criminals. In 2011, 78,211 denials were issued through the current background checks, and the top reason for denial was a misdemeanor punishable by more than two years.<sup>14</sup> Expanding background checks to cover all sales and transfers would mean more checks to keep firearms out of the hands of criminals. This could also reduce the incidents of gun-related domestic violence<sup>15</sup>, as it would limit the ability of many abusers to purchase firearms.

In addition to the prevention of violence within the United States, there is also a possibility for an international argument to be made by looking to our neighbors in Mexico. The United States is one of the largest sources of firearms for Mexican drug cartels, with the primary source for these firearms being gun shows.<sup>16</sup> Universal background checks may alleviate some of these purchases which have implications beyond domestic gun violence.

Turning back to domestic issues, there is also a possibility to reduce illegal arms trafficking in the United States. Although many states have closed the gun show loopholes, not all have, and states without universal background checks have a uniquely higher level of illicit gun dealings, which could be reduced with a federally mandated universal background check.<sup>17</sup>

One of the areas where I see the Con team attacking the Pro will be on solvency. Remember the Pro team does not need to solve for all gun violence, but rather that it is on balance a good idea to affirm. While Con teams may attempt to argue for more extreme measures, the Pro team has to walk a fine line, balancing Court-confirmed Second Amendment rights<sup>18</sup> and trying to reduce gun violence in America. I think the Pro team can successfully make this argument - as long as they do not attempt to claim full solvency but instead frame the debate with a "does affirming improve our nation's health?" approach.

Unfortunately, when examining the Con side of the debate, we find that background checks may prove to be inconclusive and full of gaps as states are not required to turn over mental health records, while other state records are usually based only on court decisions about mental health, not a doctor's record. While the debate between mental health and gun violence is a hotly contested one, the risk of self-inflicted gun violence is real. And in 2012, gun suicides

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<sup>14</sup> 2013. "National Instant Criminal Background Check System." *Congressional Digest* 92, no. 3: 14. *MAS Ultra - School Edition*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 13, 2017).

<sup>15</sup> 162 Cong. Rec. H4199-H4200 (July 5, 2016) (statement of Donna Edwards). Accessed October 16, 2017. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2016-07-05/html/CREC-2016-07-05-pt1-PgH4199-3.htm>.

<sup>16</sup> *Review of ATF's Project Gunrunner*. Report no. I-2011-001. Department of Justice, 2010. Accessed October 13, 2017. <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/ATF/e1101.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Sargent, Greg. "Why expanding background checks would, in fact, reduce gun crime." *The Washington Post*, April 3, 2013. Accessed October 16, 2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/04/03/why-expanding-background-checks-would-in-fact-reduce-gun-crime/?utm\\_term=.13fb8371b328](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/04/03/why-expanding-background-checks-would-in-fact-reduce-gun-crime/?utm_term=.13fb8371b328).

<sup>18</sup> Charles, Patrick J. 2015. THE SECOND AMENDMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: WHAT HATH HELLER WROUGHT? *The William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 23, (4) (05): 1143-1183, Accessed October 16, 2017.

outnumbered homicides at a significant margin.<sup>19</sup> But the current reporting system wouldn't necessarily solve for this violence if it can't be caught. The Con team should make sure to prevent the Pro team from being able overgeneralize gun violence solvency.

Opponents of background checks for "transfers of ownership" argue that the term is vague and leaves questions of well-meaning owners who may simply allow a friend to hold a weapon. For example, while specifically examining the Safe Schools 2013 legislation (S.649), David Kopel contends that the legislation was so broad it would go beyond controlling a sale of firearms to make it a felony for an a member of the Army Reserve to leave a weapon with a family member for safe-keeping while serving on an overseas deployment. This overarching law could potentially turn numerous law-abiding gun owners into felons by, as Kopel contends, "outlawing the ordinary, innocent, and safety-enhancing ways in which firearms in the United States are 'transferred' millions of times every year."<sup>20</sup>

The transfer of ownership is a concern in terms of self-defense for those taking classes as well as victims of domestic violence. Kopel, a vocal advocate against a number of laws that have been proposed and/or enacted, explains how various versions of legislation based on Michael Bloomberg's Everytown for Gun Safety lobby have made it illegal for a victim of domestic violence, who may not be able to afford a gun of their own, to borrow a gun for self-defense from a friend or family member. And in gun safety classes, Kopel contends that a weapon may be "transferred" between a student and instructor several times, because possession would be ownership.<sup>21</sup> This type of situation proves problematic for legislators who will more than likely need to make blanket legislation to avoid overly specific exceptions as the creation of exemptions might mean 14th Amendment due process infringements<sup>22</sup> or another loophole like the current gun show one.

An important note for Con teams to remember is that background checks under the resolution would only cover sales and transfers, but would not cover how most criminals secure weapons. According to one study done in Pittsburgh, 79% of the crimes studied involved perpetrators acquiring guns illegally<sup>23</sup>. This means that the goal of keeping weapons out of the hands of

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<sup>19</sup> Ferris, Sarah. "Lack of data makes it hard for background checks system to work properly." *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2014. Accessed October 12, 2017.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/lack-of-data-makes-it-hard-for-background-checks-system-to-work-properly/2014/08/28/d166c1b4-2ed8-11e4-be9e-60cc44c01e7f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.ffd90f65fd54](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/lack-of-data-makes-it-hard-for-background-checks-system-to-work-properly/2014/08/28/d166c1b4-2ed8-11e4-be9e-60cc44c01e7f_story.html?utm_term=.ffd90f65fd54).

<sup>20</sup> Kopel, David B. *The Costs and Consequences of Gun Control*. Report no. 784. Cato Institute, 2015, 5-6. Accessed October 14, 2017. <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa784.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Kopel, David. 2015. How everytown's background check law impedes firearms safety training and self-defense. *Washington Post – Blogs* (Nov 03), Accessed October 13, 2017.

<sup>22</sup> Doherty, Brian. "Gun Rights Groups in California Sue to Take Away Some Gun Rights from 'Retired Peace Officers.'" *Hit & Run* (blog). Entry posted April 7, 2017. Accessed October 16, 2017. <http://reason.com/blog/2017/04/07/gun-rights-groups-in-california-sue-to-t>.

<sup>23</sup> Fabio, Anthony, Jessica Duell, Kathleen Creppage, Kerry O'Donnell, and Ron Laporte. "Gaps continue in firearm surveillance: Evidence from a large U.S. City Bureau of Police." *Social Medicine* 10, no. 1 (July 2016). Accessed October 16, 2017.

<http://www.socialmedicine.info/index.php/socialmedicine/article/view/852/1649>.

criminals (the group most likely to be declined in a background check) would not be met by affirming the resolution for the majority of cases. But affirming continues an incrementalist movement towards solving for gun violence and while it may be in the bigger picture, politicians will claim to have solved the issue and gun rights advocates will contend gun-control advocates have gotten some form of control so no more control is needed.<sup>24</sup>

Ultimately in my opinion, this is a debate that will come down to a question of rights and solvency. Without a clear piece of legislation defined in the resolution, the question of solvency will be difficult to debate, especially with a coin-flip where the Con could go first and define what the Pro world looks like and the Pro will speak second with a case that might be framed under a different understanding of what “The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership” looks like. However, there is a right for all people in this country to feel secure, and there is also a right for self-defense. And these questions do come into conflict, with both rights being able to be supported on each side of the resolution. Are we more secure with universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership? Are our rights better protected? Or, do we create bigger problems in terms of illegal trafficking while making law-abiding civilians suddenly lawbreakers by creating unmanageable background checks for the transfer of weapons between family and friends? Do we mask the real problems with violence in our country, or is this an important step to solving them? Will affirming the resolution mean a political trade-off with the possibility of stronger gun control, or is it the gateway to securing firearms in this nation?

This is a timely and debatable topic and I wish you all the best of luck in the month of November.

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<sup>24</sup> Goss, Kristin A. *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

## **WORKS CITED**

**162 Cong. Rec. H4199-H4200 (July 5, 2016) (statement of Donna Edwards). Accessed October 16, 2017. <https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CREC-2016-07-05/html/CREC-2016-07-05-pt1-PgH4199-3.htm>.**

Representative Donna Edwards spoke before Congress on the need to close the background check loopholes, among other measures, to reduce the incidents of gun-related domestic violence.

**2013. "National Instant Criminal Background Check System." *Congressional Digest* 92, no. 3: 14. *MAS Ultra - School Edition*, EBSCOhost (accessed October 13, 2017).**

This is a Congressional Briefing on the National Instant Criminal Background Check System and explains how the system works and how the federal government determines eligibility to purchase firearms. The NICS was implemented in 1998 as part of the Brady Act of 1993.

**Andres, Antonio Rodriguez, and Katherine Hempstead. "Gun control and suicide: The impact of state firearm regulations in the United States, 1995–2004." *Health Policy* 101, no. 1 (June 2011): 95-103. Accessed October 14, 2017. doi:10.1016/j.healthpol.2010.10.005.**

This study examines how reducing access to lethal means is an effective means of suicide prevention. Specifically access to firearms and the reductions deterrent effect on male suicide.

**Bowers, Becky. "GUN-RIGHTS GROUP SAYS SENATE BILL PROPOSES 'UNIVERSAL REGISTRATION OF ALL FIREARMS AND THEIR OWNERS'." *Tampa Bay Times* [St. Petersburg, FL], April 16, 2013. *General OneFile* (accessed October 13, 2017).**

Article addresses Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act of 2013, which would have made all gun sales subject to the nation's background check laws, with limited exceptions. Concerns are raised about a federal registry of gun ownership being created. This bill died when the session ended but the concerns raised about this legislation may be applied to concerns about any form of mandatory checks.

**Charles, Patrick J. 2015. THE SECOND AMENDMENT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY: WHAT HATH HELLER WROUGHT? *The William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 23, (4) (05): 1143-1183, Accessed October 16, 2017.**

This article examines the impacts of the Heller case on gun-rights and gun-control as well as frames the political division that was further created by the decision. There is also a focus on what is to come. The article also pinpoints the Heller case as one of the dividing moments on universal background checks.

**Doherty, Brian. "Gun Rights Groups in California Sue to Take Away Some Gun Rights from 'Retired Peace Officers.'" *Hit & Run* (blog). Entry posted April 7, 2017. Accessed October 16, 2017. <http://reason.com/blog/2017/04/07/gun-rights-groups-in-california-sue-to-t>.**

This article discusses a lawsuit filed in California arguing the constitutionality of exceptions made in California's gun control legislation. It is a good example of how exceptions made in legislation could prove questionable under the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment.

**Drange, Matt. "Gun transfers among family members remain largely unregulated." *Reveal News* (blog). Entry posted July 2, 2015. Accessed October 16, 2017. <https://www.revealnews.org/article/gun-transfers-among-family-members-remain-largely-unregulated/>.**

This article examines the question of weapons being transferred between family members and the status of laws around the country on this question. It finds this issue is largely unregulated.

**Fabio, Anthony, Jessica Duell, Kathleen Creppage, Kerry O'Donnell, and Ron Laporte. "Gaps continue in firearm surveillance: Evidence from a large U.S. City Bureau of Police." *Social Medicine* 10, no. 1 (July 2016). Accessed October 16, 2017. <http://www.socialmedicine.info/index.php/socialmedicine/article/view/852/1649>.**

This study examines 762 cases in Pittsburgh to analyze how guns recovered in the cases were acquired. It affirms the difficulty in tracking weapons while also affirming that the majority of perpetrators did not legally purchase the weapons recovered by the policy.

**Ferris, Sarah. "Lack of data makes it hard for background checks system to work properly." *The Washington Post*, August 28, 2014. Accessed October 12, 2017. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/lack-of-data-makes-it-hard-for-background-checks-system-to-work-properly/2014/08/28/d166c1b4-2ed8-11e4-be9e-60cc44c01e7f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.ffd90f65fd54](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/lack-of-data-makes-it-hard-for-background-checks-system-to-work-properly/2014/08/28/d166c1b4-2ed8-11e4-be9e-60cc44c01e7f_story.html?utm_term=.ffd90f65fd54).**

This newspaper article examines current issues with the NICS including lack of state reporting which make the system less effective. It also makes suggestions to fix some of these problems with the lack of data.

**Godfrey, Elaine. "Is There a Meaningful Legislative Solution for Mass Shootings?" *The Atlantic*, October 11, 2017. Accessed October 13, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2017/10/mass-shootings/542535/>.**

This article addresses the question of how to possibly solve for mass shootings through legislative means. Although background checks is mentioned, it is argued that it would need to be combined with other forms of firearms regulations in order to be effective.

**Goss, Kristin A. *Disarmed: The Missing Movement for Gun Control in America*. Princeton University Press, 2010.**

This book examines the gun control movement as well as gun rights movement in order to understand why there hasn't been a large-scale control of firearms in America.

**Kalesan, Bindu, Matthew E. Mobily, Olivia Keiser, Jeffrey A. Fagan, and Sandro Galea. 2016. Firearm legislation and firearm mortality in the USA: A cross-sectional, state-level study. *The Lancet* 387, (10030) (Apr 30): 1847-1855. Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This study examines state laws and their impact on gun-related mortalities. One of the conclusions is that comprehensive universal background checks did reduce firearms-related homicides.

**KOPEL, DAVID B. 2016. "BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR FIREARMS SALES AND LOANS: LAW, HISTORY, AND POLICY." *Harvard Journal On Legislation* 53, no. 1: 303-367. *Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost* (accessed October 13, 2017).**

This article examines the history of background checks and permissions that have historically been legislated with relation to firearms. It also analyzes the Bloomberg model of universal background checks which apply to sales as well as transfers or loans of firearms including arguing the unconstitutional nature of such laws while examining alternative solutions to the problems the Bloomberg model tries to solve.

**Kopel, David B. *The Costs and Consequences of Gun Control*. Report no. 784. Cato Institute, 2015. Accessed October 14, 2017. <https://object.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/pa784.pdf>.**

This article reviews proposals for gun control and examines the problems with them including questions of constitutionality and the effectiveness of proposed legislation. This includes questions of what a "transfer" would include under proposed universal background checks and the problems that might be faced with overgeneralized federal legislation.

**Kopel, David. 2015. How everytown's background check law impedes firearms safety training and self-defense. *Washington Post – Blogs* (Nov 03), Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This article examines the gun control system that Bloomberg's Everytown for Gun Safety lobby has proposed and the problems it poses in states where laws based on this system have been implemented.

**Krouse, William J. 2013. GUN CONTROL PROPOSALS IN THE 113TH CONGRESS: UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS, GUN TRAFFICKING, AND MILITARY STYLE FIREARMS\*. *Current Politics and Economics of the United States, Canada and Mexico* 15, (2): 215-265. Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This article examines proposals made during the 113th session of Congress including ones similar to the Public Forum resolution regarding universal background checks for all sales and transfers. It also breaks down more of the recent legislative history including how federally-legislated background checks work.

**Lewiecki, E. M., and Sara A. Miller PhD. 2013. Suicide, guns, and public policy. *American Journal of Public Health* 103, (1) (01): 27-31. Accessed October 14, 2017.**

This article examines the relationship between firearms and suicide. It makes policy recommendations regarding gun control in order to reduce gun-related suicide.

**McCarthy, Michael. 2015. US medical societies call for action on gun violence. *BMJ : British Medical Journal (Online)* 350, (Feb 24), Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This article examines a statement put out by eight American health organizations in conjunction with the American Bar Association in 2015 which called on the federal government to take a variety of measures to stop gun violence including universal background checks for gun purchases.

**Mimms, Sarah. "In Wake of San Bernardino Shooting, Manchin-Toomey Gun-Control Bill Fails Again." *The Atlantic*, December 23, 2015. Accessed October 12, 2017. <https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2015/12/in-wake-of-san-bernardino-shooting-manchin-toomey-gun-control-bill-fails-again/450852/>.**

This article summarizes the Manchin-Toomey legislation after it's second attempt in Congress including the original vote as well as changes made and the new vote in 2015.

**Review of ATF's Project Gunrunner. Report no. I-2011-001. Department of Justice, 2010. Accessed October 13, 2017. <https://oig.justice.gov/reports/ATF/e1101.pdf>.**

This is a government report done by the Department of Justice that examines the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives' implementation of Project Gunrunner. Project Gunrunner is a program aimed to cut down on the illicit trafficking of firearms from the United States to Mexico. Within the report there is a discussion of the loophole where non-licensed sellers of firearms do not have to run a background check of the buyer and mentions one of the implications is that these secondhand markets like gun shows are a primary source of firearms for Mexican drug cartels.

**S. 649 - safe communities, safe schools act of 2013. 2013. *Targeted News Service*, Apr 11, 2013. Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This is a White House press release summarizing and supporting the 2013 Safe Communities, Safe Schools Act.

**Sargent, Greg. "Why expanding background checks would, in fact, reduce gun crime." *The Washington Post*, April 3, 2013. Accessed October 16, 2017.**

**[https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/04/03/why-expanding-background-checks-would-in-fact-reduce-gun-crime/?utm\\_term=.13fb8371b328](https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/plum-line/wp/2013/04/03/why-expanding-background-checks-would-in-fact-reduce-gun-crime/?utm_term=.13fb8371b328).**

This interview with Daniel Webster includes a number of responses that a Con team might make in a debate. There are a number of links including to Webster's own findings. This is a great source for a Pro team wanting to think about cohesive responses to a Con line of questioning.

**Savage, David G. 2017. Justice dept. balks at ex-cons' gun rights. *Chicago Tribune*, May 28, 2017. Accessed October 13, 2017.**

This article is a follow-up on a challenge to the ban on former felons owning firearms.

**Sumner, Steven A., Peter M. Layde, and Clare E. Guse. "Firearm Death Rates and Association with Level of Firearm Purchase Background Check." *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 35, no. 1 (May 16, 2008): 1-6. Accessed October 14, 2017. doi:10.1016/j.amepre.2008.03.023.**

This study examines the effects of using local, state, and federal agencies to conduct background checks and the impact on rates of firearm suicide and homicide. Findings included that using local-level records reduced rates of gun-related suicide and homicide which suggests federal databases should work with local agencies in conducting background checks in order to reduce gun violence.