

Resolution in Support of Background Checks for All Gun Sales

WHEREAS, federal law only requires a background check when a gun seller is a licensed gun dealer, leaving all other sales -- like unlicensed gun sales negotiated over the internet -- unregulated and unchecked.

WHEREAS, a 2015 survey found that nearly a quarter of Americans (22 percent) who acquired a firearm within the past two years did so without a background check; and

WHEREAS, our federal background check law was written 25 years ago, well before the establishment of online gun marketplaces.

WHEREAS, a recent investigation found that on a single website there were nearly 1.2 million ads for firearm sales that did not require a background check; and

WHEREAS, a recent investigation found that 1 in 9 of the people looking online to buy a gun from an unlicensed seller would fail a background check; and

WHEREAS, a recent investigation of online unlicensed gun sellers found that state background check laws have a profound public safety impact, with only 6% of sellers contacted by investigators indicating they would require a background check, while 84% of sellers from states with background check laws expressly stated they would follow the background checks law.

WHEREAS, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System is an effective tool to keep guns away from prohibited purchasers, including felons, domestic abusers and people involuntarily committed to a mental institution, and over 3.5 million sales have been blocked to violent criminals and other prohibited people since the system began in 1994; and

WHEREAS, despite this success, the system is undermined by legal loopholes that enable guns to be purchased by people who shouldn't have them without a background check; and

WHEREAS, repeated polls show overwhelming support for requiring background checks on all gun sales—including among majorities of both gun owners and Republicans; and

WHEREAS, the African American Mayors Association has been a strong advocate for common-sense policies that keep guns out of dangerous hands while respecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners, NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the African American Mayors Association urges Congress to pass, and the President to sign, H.R. 8, an important, bipartisan public safety bill that would require a background check for every gun sale.