



How the Gun Lobby Undermines Existing Gun Safety Laws

- **Hobbling ATF:** The NRA [has worked for years to undermine the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms](#). ATF is [authorized to inspect a dealer once a year](#) to determine compliance with gun laws and ensure that all firearms can be accounted for. But a [2013 Department of Justice Inspector General Report](#) found that over 58 percent of gun dealers had not been inspected within a five year cycle. Inspectors routinely find violations, including failure to verify a purchaser's eligibility or firearms that cannot be accounted for. This failure to keep up with necessary enforcement and inspections creates a pathway for firearms to end up in the wrong hands. The Brady Campaign has found that [nearly 90 percent of gun crimes were committed with guns purchased at just 5 percent of gun dealers](#).
- **Shortchanging the National Instant Criminal Background Check System:** After the tragic shooting at Virginia Tech, Congress took action and passed the NICS Improvement Amendments Act, but under the Republican majority it's been woefully underfunded. The law provides for grants for states to improve their record-keeping of criminal histories, and make sure that these records are accessible in an electronic database. Since 2009, Congress has provided less than 5 percent of the total funding authorized for NICS improvements.
- **Blocking updates to armor-piercing ammunition rules:** ATF hasn't been able to update standards for armor-piercing ammunition since 1986—when Congress first passed a law to keep “cop-killer” bullets off the streets. ATF attempted to make a sensible modification to this standard in 2015, but quickly backed away after an aggressive push from the gun lobby.
- **Allowing terrorist suspects to purchase weapons:** The Government Accountability Office found that [90 percent of terrorist suspects who have bought a gun have been approved by the current background check system](#). That's because individuals on the terrorist watch list aren't prohibited from purchasing firearms. NRA fear-mongering campaigns have stoked conspiracies that law-abiding gun owners will be harmed by proposals that would keep guns away from suspected terrorists.
- **Thwarting Gun Violence Research:** Even though more children die from gunshot wounds than cancer, the NRA and its allies in Congress each year block the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from studying gun violence as a public health epidemic. The original author of these appropriations riders, former Republican Rep. Jay Dickey, [regrets the wholesale ban on gun violence research](#).
- **Challenging State and Local Laws in Court:** Across the country, the gun lobby backs lawsuits to challenge responsible gun laws that states and cities have enacted. In Colorado, they challenged a ban on high-capacity magazines that were used in the tragic movie-theater massacre in Aurora. In San Francisco, they challenged a law that required gun owners to keep their firearms locked up at home. And in New York they challenged our NYSAFE Act, which requires universal background checks and implements other policies to prevent gun violence.