



For Immediate Release – January 24, 2019

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Universal Background Checks Should Become Federal Law

DENVER – January 23, 2019 A bill introduced January 8th in Congress would require universal background checks in all 50 states. The bill, H.R. 8, would help keep guns out of the hands of criminals and people with a violent past. Although it already has 225 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives including Colorado Representatives Jason Crow, Diana DeGette, Joe Neguse, and Ed Perlmutter, it is expected to meet steep resistance in the U.S. Senate. Senator Michael Bennet is cosponsor of companion senate bill S. 42.

“Who would ever think it is a good idea to make it easy for murderers, rapists, domestic abusers and others with a violent past to have access to lethal weapons?” asked Eileen McCarron, President of Colorado Ceasefire Legislative Action.

“The nation needs a Universal Background Check law. Even here in Colorado, where we have a strong universal background check law, we would benefit. Precious lives are at stake. Congress should move quickly to enact it.”

Colorado’s law requiring universal background checks was enacted in 2013, following the mass shootings at the Aurora Theater here in Colorado and the Sandy Hook School in Connecticut.

Since then, nearly 40,000 purchases and transfers of firearms to prohibited persons in Colorado have been blocked. Of those, 152 were attempted purchases by people with a homicide conviction. And 2054 were for a restraining order violation. Additionally, 1308 fugitives from justice were arrested following attempted illegal firearms transactions.

As these numbers show, universal background checks keep guns out of the hands of violent criminals. But, while Colorado’s law has prevented crimes, law enforcement remains hindered by the fact that the seven states that surround Colorado lack similar laws. Prohibited Colorado buyers can drive just a few hours to another state to acquire weapons denied them in Colorado.

In Nebraska, Wyoming, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Kansas, sales through gun shows, on-line, newspaper ads and acquaintance sales can be completed with no background check whatsoever.

“Universal background checks on the federal level are foundational to reducing gun violence,” McCarron pointed out. “Just about any common sense gun law we pass can be undermined by weaker laws in surrounding states. That’s why we need federal action.” Colorado voters should urge their Congressional Representatives and Senators to follow Colorado’s lead on requiring a background check before each and every firearm transfer or sale.

Colorado Ceasefire, an all-volunteer statewide organization, has been working for freedom from gun violence since 2000. Ceasefire initiated and was instrumental in the enactment of the 2013 Colorado firearms laws, which included universal background checks, a high capacity magazine ban, and domestic violence firearms relinquishment. Ceasefire began advocating for an Extreme Risk (red flag) law in 2016. Learn more at www.coloradoceasefire.org