

If this didn't work for California, why would you do it in Vermont? You are only punishing the law abiding citizens of our state. Vote No on S.169

Study finds California's background checks had no impact on gun violence

[Michael Bielawski / 15 hours ago](#)

A joint study by Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the University of California at Davis Violence Prevention Research Program has determined that California's strict gun control laws had no measurable impact on gun violence or deaths in the state.

The study examines the decade after the state's 1991 implementation of comprehensive background checks (CBC) and its prohibition of gun ownership for those convicted of nonviolent misdemeanors (MVP).



DOES GUN CONTROL WORK?: A new study out of California challenges the notion that popular gun control measures such as universal background checks have a tangible impact on gun deaths and suicides.

The findings are contrary to the popular notion among gun control advocates that universal background checks are a life-saving tool.

The CBC means that all gun sales including those between private individuals must go through a Federal Firearms License dealer. Another provision was that shotgun and rifle purchases must adhere to a 15-day wait-period while the CBC is processed.

Researchers compared annual gun suicide and homicide rates for the subsequent decade with data from another 32 states which didn't have such gun legislation. The conclusion from the study found "no change in the rates of either cause of death [homicide or suicide] from firearms through 2000."

[The summary continues](#): "The simultaneous implementation of CBC and MVP policies was not associated with a net change in the firearm homicide rate over the ensuing 10 years in California," it states. "The decrease in firearm suicides in California was similar to the decrease in non-firearm suicides in that state. Results were robust across multiple model specifications and methods."

Organizations like Gun Sense Vermont, which promote laws like expanded background checks, continue to promote them on their website.

"Background checks are the only systematic way to stop felons, domestic abusers, people with severe mental illnesses, and other dangerous people from buying guns," their webpage states. "Since its creation in 1998, the National Instant Background Check System has worked well where it has been required, resolving over 90 percent of checks instantaneously and blocking more than two million gun purchases by convicted criminals and other dangerous people."

Chris Bradley, president of the Vermont Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, commented on the study.

"I'm not surprised at all, this is in fact what the Federation and other pro-gun groups have been saying right along is this doesn't impact straw purchases, this doesn't impact someone's ability to get lethal means," he said. "So we're not surprised at all and in fact, we would like to see a focus at least concerning suicides."

Vermont is currently [considering a bill](#) which would create a waiting period in Vermont for gun purchases. The thinking is gun suicides might be reduced if there is a gap between the decision to buy a gun and the time to take it home. Critics argue that gun suicides in Vermont extremely rare and furthermore such a wait period undermines the safety of those who need a gun quick during an emergency.

Bradley reminded that while the intended consequences of these bills may not be happening, there are unintended consequences which will happen. He talked about the example of a woman who seeks a gun after obtaining a relief-from-abuse order from a hostile former partner.

“These are people who can prove to a judge that their life may be in jeopardy,” he said. “Yet they’ve got to wait?”

He said he’s done some research into deaths that had occurred in which the victim was waiting for a gun during one of these waiting periods.

“I have a list of people that felt they were in danger and went through the motion of trying to buy a firearm to defend themselves, were stopped because of a waiting period, and then during that period they were killed by their estranged partner,” he said.

Bradley said these gun laws ultimately may help put gun control advocates at ease, but that’s all they will accomplish.

“This is a feel-good, ‘we’ve done something at the end of the day,’” he said. “We’re gonna pass this law because it looks so good on paper. It doesn’t matter what those gun people say, we can go to bed at night knowing that we’ve done something.”

Bill Moore of the Vermont Traditions Coalition said he generally agrees with the sentiments expressed by Bradley. He added one thought on the notion that gun control bills might make a difference.

“When there’s a simple idea for a complex problem, usually it’s neither a solution nor is it simple,” he said.

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Image courtesy of U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery and today is a gift.