

2014 Resolution No: 3

Submitted by: Mayor Martin J. Walsh, Boston, Massachusetts

In Support Of Background Checks for All Gun Sales

WHEREAS, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) is an effective tool to keep guns out of the hands of criminals and other dangerous individuals, and since its inception the background check system has blocked over 2 million gun sales to people who were prohibited from possessing guns; and

WHEREAS, despite this success, the system is undermined by legal loopholes and missing records that enable too many dangerous individuals to obtain weapons they later use in crimes; and

WHEREAS, the illegal trafficking of crime guns is often connected with illegal drug patterns ravaging our communities; and

WHEREAS, in the United States an estimated 40 percent of all gun transfers take place with no background check of the buyer, including sales online and at gun shows; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that state and federal agencies have failed to report hundreds of thousands of records of persons with dangerous mental illness into the NICS database, and 12 states have each submitted fewer than 100 mental health records; and

WHEREAS, legislation is proposed that would give states and certain covered entities added flexibility to ensure accurate but limited information is reported to NICS; and

WHEREAS, every day, 86 Americans are killed with guns; and

WHEREAS, evidence shows that background checks save lives, as evidenced by the facts that in 16 states that already require background checks for unlicensed handgun sales, gun trafficking is 48 percent lower than in states that fail to require background checks for all gun sales; the rate of women murdered by an intimate partner with a gun was 38 percent lower than in other states; and the firearm suicide rate was 49 percent lower than in other states; and

WHEREAS, a CBS News poll in December of 2013, reported that 85 percent of adults nationwide, including 84 percent of gun owners, support "a federal law requiring background checks on all potential gun buyers;" and

WHEREAS, The United States Conference of Mayors 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, and this Conference has long called for actions to close deadly gaps in NICS,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that The United States Conference of Mayors urges passage of important public safety legislation in Congress which would require a background check for every gun sale and which would also increase the reporting of mental health and other relevant records into the NICS database.