

Break the silence about background checks; regulations need to change

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Copy Editor

Congressman Jeff Duncan, Laurens' representative to the United States House of Representatives, is attempting to sway the government to support his bill for easier access to gun suppressors, more commonly known as silencers. Duncan strongly supports silencers and has introduced the Hearing Protection Act which would make suppressors more readily available and easier to purchase to protect hunters' hearing.

Suppressors are already a popular item on the market of gun accessories, but they have more stringent restrictions than firearms. Duncan proposes to rewrite the long and involved process of acquiring a silencer, and simplify it by using the shorter, less complex NICS (National Instant Criminal Background Check System) requirements

which make purchasing silencers much easier. However, with the background check system being so flawed, should restrictions be lessened for any accessory to guns or the guns themselves?

In the aftermaths of the Las Vegas shooting where 58 died and the Texas church shooting where 26 were killed, the silencer idea has not vanished. Suppressors are sold with stricter restrictions than guns, but Duncan wishes to make silencers easier to buy. Yet, the background checks to buy a gun are already very flawed, and for it to make purchasing silencers easier could potentially be very dangerous for all.

When purchasing a firearm, a person must pass a background check. These checks should, theoretically, protect citizens from people who should not obtain firearms, but there are millions of missing records containing the names of people who are prohibited from buying guns because of felonies,

misdemeanors, drug abuse, convictions of drug crimes or being involuntarily committed for being mentally ill.

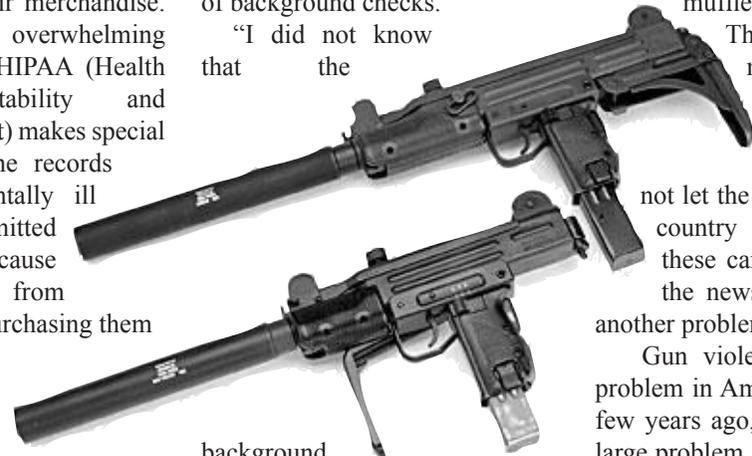
Private sellers are not even required to demand background checks to sell their merchandise. Because of the overwhelming safety concerns, HIPAA (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act) makes special allowances for the records of violently mentally ill patients to be submitted to the database because they are barred from owning guns or purchasing them anyway.

This failure to update the database consistently is a major problem for the safety of the general public, and this became apparent when Texas shooter Devin Patrick Kelley's profile was not updated by the US Air Force after several events. Kelley was court-martialed for domestic violence and banned from buying or owning guns, but Kelley still killed 26 people in a Texas church using a Ruger AR-556 model rifle because of the failure of the US Air Force to update his profile when he was discharged for domestic violence

crimes. The scariest thing about the gun process is that the public has no idea of how flawed the background checks are.

Junior Myranda Reppart is concerned about the inefficiency of background checks.

"I did not know that the



background system had so many holes within it. I feel like if it were fixed, then there could possibly be a decrease in the amount of gun violence," Reppart said.

The problems that arise with guns are caused by the people who own the guns and not by the firearms. Considering the problems already created with guns and the failures of the checking system, simplifying the process of obtaining silencers should be put on the backburner.

Background checks -- and the entire system -- need to be

revamped to better protect citizens from those who are mentally unstable or who have committed seriously violent crimes before even considering the possibility of adding something that could muffle gun noise.

There've already been many deaths and mass shootings in recent years, and America should not let the adolescents of this country grow up thinking these care normal and that the news is showing "just another problem."

Gun violence is a growing problem in America now, when a few years ago, it was not such a large problem. Adolescents, if the gun violence problem continues, will grow into adults thinking that it is normal for the news to show such devastating issues. Millennials cannot grow up afraid to go to concerts, to enter movie theaters, or to walk crowded streets.

Fixing security measures to purchase guns should be the first concern before lessened restrictions on silencers or any firearm accessory can be considered a positive idea. Safety of the people must always come first.

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