

The overwhelming majority of NICS checks determine that a prospective purchaser may legally purchase a firearm, and these checks are typically completed in just a few minutes. But in some instances, a NICS search determines that a person may not legally purchase a firearm because the person is matched to a serious criminal conviction, a domestic violence restraining order, a dishonorable discharge from the armed services, a wanted person's list, or other disqualifying record.

Since its inception, NICS has denied sales to more than 1.5 million transactions, keeping firearms out of the hands of dangerous people who should not have them.

The sponsor of this legislation, Congressman MASSIE, has cited evidence suggesting that Black and Hispanic men may be more likely to experience false denials since, due to over-incarceration, they are disproportionately likely to share a name with other Black or Hispanic men who are incarcerated.

Mr. MASSIE has also expressed concern that erroneous NICS denials may disproportionately affect people based not just on race, ethnicity, and national origin, but also on sex, gender, age, disability, income, and English language proficiency.

This is why his legislation asks for the demographic data of individuals denied firearms through NICS for each of the categories I just listed. There is absolutely no harm in seeking this information. We need data and facts to understand our complex world, to craft responsive legislation, and to determine how to allocate government funding.

In fact, when I was in North Carolina representing people who had been wrongly stopped by law enforcement officials, we instituted a data collection system that looks into whether or not people have been detained based on their race or their gender, and it has been very effective.

NICS is an essential tool that keeps guns out of dangerous people's hands. We should seek to learn more about how NICS is working and make improvements, if any are necessary. We need a universal violent criminal background check to close loopholes in current laws, like the internet loophole and the gun show loophole.

I support this legislation, and I urge my Republican colleagues to stand with us in supporting public access to all information, including demographic data, so that we can be certain that our laws and our government are working for every American.

I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, I want to be clear about the purpose of the bill. It is not to collect more information on prospective gun buyers. It is to know the information we have, what has been collected, what can we infer from those things.

For instance, on the form, we already collect race and ethnicity. The purpose of this bill is not to tell us individual details about the people who purchase the guns. We want to know these numbers in the aggregate so that nobody's particular traits or names will be disclosed as gun owners. We just need to know what it looks like statistically.

□ 1650

There has been a question from some of my conservative colleagues as to why the bill asks for both gender and sex. The reason for that is, before 2016, the form 4473 used to ask what your gender was. After 2016, it asks what your sex is.

The language of the law doesn't suggest that those two things are different things. It just acknowledges that the data that has been collected over the years has been collected under two different terms, and we want to know all the data.

Mr. Speaker, banks also do background checks on prospective tellers and employees of the banks. Imagine if a bank had an error in their system that caused Black tellers or Hispanic tellers to fail the background check more than White tellers or other bank employees. The bank would be sued out of existence. Yet, we have a government system that we believe probably does this, so that is why we need to know the data.

My goal with this is that we improve the system and that we make it not sloppy. What will the improvement yield? It will take out the racial bias in the system that exists right now. It will also mean that all races, whether you are White, Black, Hispanic, or Asian, and whether you are male or female, there will be no bias because we will check for your actual name and your actual birthday and clean this system up.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Speaker, this bill would require the Attorney General to provide demographic information about NICS denials. I support collecting data to better understand and evaluate the effectiveness of NICS and determine whether it needs to be strengthened in any way.

Mr. Speaker, in memory of Sheila Jackson Lee, I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this legislation, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MASSIE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. JOHNSON), who is also a member of the Judiciary Committee and who, in fact, improved this bill before it came to the floor. We marked it up in the Committee on the Judiciary. He had a suggestion. In order not to delay the bill or the passage of it through committee, I assured the gentleman that I would work with him before it came to the floor.

A lot of times, that is a euphemism, and it never happens, but we did, in fact, insert the language from HANK JOHNSON's office directly into this bill. It was not because I wanted to cut a deal but because it actually made the bill better. We will find out not just the demographics of the denials but also the demographics of the people who overturned their denials. This is important, too, for improving the system.

Mr. Speaker, I urge passage of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. MASSIE) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2267, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

CRIMINAL HISTORY ACCESS ACT OF 2026

Mr. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 8352) to authorize peace officer standards and training agencies to access criminal history records, and for other purposes, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 8352

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Criminal History Access Act of 2026".

SEC. 2. FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION.

(a) **ATTORNEY GENERAL DUTIES.**—Section 534 of title 28, United States Code, is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(4), by amending to read as follows:

"(4) exchange such records and information with, and for the official use of, authorized officials of the Federal Government, including the United States Sentencing Commission, the States, including State sentencing commissions and peace officer standards and training agencies, Indian tribes, cities, and penal and other institutions; and"

(2) in subsection (e)—

(A) by striking "section, the term" and inserting the following: "section—

"(1) the term";

(B) by striking "(1) railroad" and inserting the following:

"(A) railroad";

(C) by striking "(2) police" and inserting the following:

"(B) police";

(D) by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(E) by adding at the end the following:

"(2) the term 'peace officer standards and training agency' means an agency of a State with the statutory authority under State law to set standards for the hiring, training, ethical conduct, and retention of the law enforcement officers of the State through certification, licensing, or other similar qualification process; and

"(3) the term 'State' means each of the several States of the United States, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the

United States Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of the United States."

(b) *REGULATIONS.—Not later than 180 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Attorney General shall amend part 20 of title 28, Code of Federal Regulations, as necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act.*

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. SCHMIDT) and the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kansas.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 8352.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kansas?

There was no objection.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, H.R. 8352 is a commonsense and bipartisan bill that fixes a critical flaw in the Federal statute.

State peace officer standards and training agencies, or POSTs, are responsible for certifying, licensing, and overseeing law enforcement officers in their respective jurisdictions. All 50 States have some form of a POST agency, although they go by different names.

More than 50,000 individuals apply each year for law enforcement positions across the United States, and local, county, State, and Tribal agencies submit these applicants to their respective State POST agencies for certification.

It is our expectation that each of those men and women would be a person of integrity and capable of upholding the position of public trust, but we shouldn't just take an applicant's word for it. As President Reagan might have said: "Trust, but verify."

Applicants voluntarily consent in writing to these background checks when applying for employment to perform the duties of a law enforcement officer, but current Federal law does not give POST agencies full access to criminal history records contained within the FBI's CJIS system. This can result in POST agencies having incomplete records when deciding whether to certify a candidate for employment as law enforcement.

This unnecessary barrier has resulted in candidates with disqualifying convictions slipping through the cracks.

My own State of Kansas is currently dealing with an issue of an officer with a disqualifying conviction who was hired by an agency without performing the mandatory background criminal history check. Since Kansas C-POST does not have the authority to run its own criminal histories, it has to rely on the hiring agency's verification that the applicant has met all the minimum requirements. That officer has been

working for more than 18 months with a disqualifying conviction.

Giving POST agencies this access is a commonsense step that strengthens accountability and helps keep communities safe by preventing individuals with disqualifying criminal history records from entering or remaining in the profession.

I thank Chairman JORDAN and my colleagues on the Judiciary Committee for unanimously supporting this bill during our committee markup last month. I thank my colleague, the gentlewoman from North Carolina (Ms. ROSS), for her leadership in making this a bipartisan partnership and effort, and I urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this bill.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 8352, the bipartisan Criminal History Access Act of 2026. I applaud my colleague, Mr. SCHMIDT, for introducing this important bill and for working together to get it through the Judiciary Committee.

Every State has its own standards for determining who may serve as a State or local law enforcement officer. Those standards are set and administered by a State board or agency. These peace officer standards and training agencies, or POST agencies, are often also empowered to certify individuals who may be hired as law enforcement officers, train the potential officers, or assist with vetting other local law enforcement personnel.

This bill would authorize State POST agencies to directly access Federal criminal history records when vetting and certifying law enforcement trainees and officers.

POST agencies are essentially the gatekeepers to the law enforcement profession. Their job is to keep bad actors out. Over 50,000 people apply for law enforcement positions across the country every year, and applicants already sign off on disclosure of their criminal history records as part of that process.

The problem is that current Federal law blocks most POST agencies from accessing those records, so they end up relying on whatever the hiring department shares with them. When disqualifying information gets left out, POST agencies never see it, and someone who shouldn't be certified may get certified.

This bill fixes this by amending 28 U.S.C. 534 to add POST agencies to the list of entities authorized to receive Federal criminal history records, the same access that law enforcement agencies already have. This is a simple, no-cost fix to close this gap.

Again, I thank Congressman SCHMIDT for working with me in a bipartisan manner to bring this issue to the committee's attention and to propose a commonsense solution.

I thank the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement

Standards and Training for their technical expertise and assistance with this legislation, which is also supported by the Major County Sheriffs of America, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1700

Mr. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROSS. Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I am prepared to close.

Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

This bill would provide a limited and logical extension of the authority to share criminal history records so that those who help screen law enforcement officers have the information they need to maintain hiring standards.

As we observe National Police Week, I am pleased to support this legislation that strengthens our law enforcement agencies and improves public safety by ensuring that applicants are appropriately screened.

I encourage my colleagues to join me in supporting this bipartisan legislation, and I congratulate Congressman SCHMIDT on a fine bill.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. SCHMIDT. Madam Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Madam Speaker, this week across America we honor the brave men and women in law enforcement who work every day to protect and serve the American public. In particular, we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice, whom we recognized in a resolution on this floor just a few minutes ago.

A few weeks ago, I was honored to speak to the 355th Basic Training Class of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center which provides basic training and continuation education for most of the law enforcement officers in our State.

The auditorium at the training center where the graduation ceremony is held is appropriately named Integrity Auditorium. Each graduate is presented with a challenge coin that bears the phrase: "Integrity is the basis for community trust."

This bill is about ensuring that all law enforcement officers across our country are held to that standard of integrity and that disqualifying prior criminal convictions are properly disclosed to the appropriate State licensing agencies.

I want to thank the International Association of Directors of Law Enforcement Standards and Training for bringing this issue to our attention. I want to thank my colleague and friend Ms. ROSS of North Carolina for joining me in introducing this important bipartisan bill.

Madam Speaker, I urge all of my colleagues to support this legislation, and, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. MILLER of Illinois). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. SCHMIDT) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 8352, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE PRESIDENT SHOULD PRIORITIZE SECURING THE RELEASE OF PASTOR JIN MINGRI, PASTOR GAO QUANFU AND HIS WIFE PANG YU, DR. GULSHAN ABBAS, AND JIMMY LAI DETAINED BY THE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA DURING FUTURE ENGAGEMENTS WITH CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 1259) expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that the President should prioritize securing the release of Pastor Jin Mingri, Pastor Gao Quanfu and his wife Pang Yu, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, and Jimmy Lai detained by the People's Republic of China during future engagements with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The Clerk read the title of the resolution.

The text of the resolution is as follows:

H. RES. 1259

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has arrested Chinese, American, and British citizens for the peaceful expression of speech or religion, or such acts by family members;

Whereas such arrests have been widely condemned by the international community and human rights organizations, with repeated calls for the release of the detainees;

Whereas, on May 17, 2025, Pastor Gao Quanfu of the Light of Zion Church in Xi'an Province was detained and is being held on charges of "using superstitious activities to undermine the implementation of law" and "fraud";

Whereas Pastor Gao's wife, Pang Yu, who was subsequently detained on June 7, 2025, remains held despite holding no official position in the church, and has been denied access to critical prescription medication;

Whereas, on or about October 10, 2025, authorities of the People's Republic of China detained Pastor Jin Mingri, founder of Zion Church, along with other church leaders, on equally dubious charges of "illegal use of information networks";

Whereas Pastor Jin continues to be detained without access to critical medications to treat diabetes or contact with family members in the People's Republic of China and the United States;

Whereas, on November 7, 2025, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Resolution 463, calling for the "immediate and unconditional release of all detained members of

Zion Church, including Pastor Jin" and for the Government of the People's Republic of China to end "harassment and intimidation of the relatives of Zion church members and their relatives";

Whereas Gulshan Abbas, a retired medical doctor and grandmother, was forcibly disappeared on September 11, 2018, shortly after her sister, a United States citizen, publicly criticized the treatment of Uyghurs by the Government of the People's Republic of China;

Whereas Dr. Abbas was later sentenced to 20 years following secret proceedings on charges that independent observers and human rights organizations have characterized as politically motivated;

Whereas the prolonged detention of Dr. Abbas raises grave concerns regarding her health, wellbeing, and access to due process, as she suffers from severe high blood pressure and osteoporosis, among other conditions;

Whereas, in 1995, Jimmy Lai founded the Apple Daily newspaper in Hong Kong and subsequently faced repeated harassment and arrest, including a 69 month sentence in 2022, on dubious fraud charges and a subsequent 20 year sentence in February 2026, on equally dubious national security charges;

Whereas, in December 2025, President Donald Trump said he had asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to consider releasing Jimmy Lai;

Whereas, on December 4, 2025, House Resolution 930 was introduced commemorating Jimmy Lai and calling on authorities of the People's Republic of China to "immediately and unconditionally release Jimmy Lai and all other Hong Kong pro-democracy advocates unjustly imprisoned";

Whereas, on September 11, 2025, the House introduced the "FREEDOM for Gao Zhisheng and All Political Prisoners Act", which would strengthen United States diplomatic efforts to advocate for the release of unjustly detained political prisoners in the People's Republic of China and in Hong Kong by requiring a coordinated strategy for political-prisoner advocacy and encouraging the use of available accountability tools against officials responsible for arbitrary detention and other human rights abuses; and

Whereas addressing individual cases of wrongful detention has historically been an important component of United States diplomacy, reflects longstanding bipartisan commitments to political and religious freedoms, and is an important factor in United States bilateral relations: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) calls upon the President to prioritize securing the humanitarian release of Pastor Jin Mingri, Pastor Gao Quanfu and his wife Pang Yu, Dr. Gulshan Abbas, Jimmy Lai, and other unjustly detained individuals on the agenda for engagements with President Xi Jinping, including the anticipated May 2026 summit;

(2) urges the President to seek verifiable proof of life and access to independent legal counsel, family communication, and medical care for such detainees; and

(3) reaffirms the commitment of the United States to defend political and religious freedom and advocate for the release of those unjustly detained for exercising such fundamental freedoms.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH) and the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. OLSZEWSKI) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New Jersey.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on this measure.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from New Jersey?

There was no objection.

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I, like many in the House and the Senate, want to thank President Trump for requesting on numerous occasions that Xi Jinping release Jimmy Lai and other women and men who are gravely sick and unjustly incarcerated.

It is not largely known, but hundreds of innocent Americans languish in Chinese prisons today, including Nelson Wells of New Orleans and Dawn Michelle Hunt from Chicago. At a hearing that I chaired in September of 2024, Bringing Home Americans Detained in China, we heard heartbreaking stories from their families and their loved ones.

According to the Foley Foundation, more United States nationals are wrongfully detained in China than in any other country. I have introduced legislation to create a comprehensive strategy to try to obtain their release.

H. Res. 1259 speaks to this issue of unjustly detained individuals. It is about Pastor Ezra Jin, founder of the Zion Church, detained and denied needed medical care. It is about Pastor Gao Quanfu and his wife, Pang Yu, detained for peaceful religious leadership. It is about Gulshan Abbas, serving a 20-year sentence because her sister, Rushan Abbas, dared to tell Congress the truth about the CCP's genocide against the Uyghurs. I alone, and she has testified before other committees, have had Rushan Abbas testify three different times. She is eloquent. She is non-violent and just wants her sister returned home to be safe.

The CCP has imprisoned one sister in this case in order to silence another, and that is hostage taking plain and simple.

Of course, this resolution is about Jimmy Lai, the courageous founder of Apple Daily imprisoned because he defended freedom of the press, democracy, and the rule of law in Hong Kong.

His son, Sebastien Lai, testified in 2023 at a hearing that I chaired of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China. When he was done I said: You know, you are a chip off the old block. You are so persuasive and so full of goodness just like your father.

He did tell us that his father was refusing to be silenced and still speaking truth to power and that he may die in prison. That testimony, Madam Speaker, should haunt us and move us to action.

I would remind my colleagues that some years ago, working with Speaker