

(1) Approximately 916,000 individuals were prohibited from purchasing a firearm for failing a background check between November 30, 1998, (the date the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) began operating) and December 31, 2004.

(2) From November 30, 1998, through December 31, 2004, nearly 49,000,000 Brady background checks were processed through NICS.

(3) Although most Brady background checks are processed through NICS in seconds, many background checks are delayed if the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) does not have automated access to complete information from the States concerning persons prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm under Federal or State law.

(4) Nearly 21,000,000 criminal records are not accessible by NICS and millions of criminal records are missing critical data, such as arrest dispositions, due to data backlogs.

(5) The primary cause of delay in NICS background checks is the lack of—

(A) updates and available State criminal disposition records; and

(B) automated access to information concerning persons prohibited from possessing or receiving a firearm because of mental illness, restraining orders, or misdemeanor convictions for domestic violence.

(6) Automated access to this information can be improved by—

(A) computerizing information relating to criminal history, criminal dispositions, mental illness, restraining orders, and misdemeanor convictions for domestic violence; or

(B) making such information available to NICS in a usable format.

(7) Helping States to automate these records will reduce delays for law-abiding gun purchasers.

(8) On March 12, 2002, the senseless shooting, which took the lives of a priest and a parishioner at the Our Lady of Peace Church in Lynbrook, New York, brought attention to the need to improve information-sharing that would enable Federal and State law enforcement agencies to conduct a complete background check on a potential firearm purchaser. The man who committed this double murder had a prior disqualifying mental health commitment and a restraining order against him, but passed a Brady background check because NICS did not have the necessary information to determine that he was ineligible to purchase a firearm under Federal or State law.

(9) On April 16, 2007, a student with a history of mental illness at the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University shot to death 32 students and faculty members, wounded 17 more, and then took his own life. The shooting, the deadliest campus shooting in United States history, renewed the need to improve information-sharing that would enable Federal and State law enforcement agencies to conduct complete background checks on potential firearms purchasers. In spite of a proven history of mental illness, the shooter was

able to purchase the two firearms used in the shooting. Improved coordination between State and Federal authorities could have ensured that the shooter's disqualifying mental health information was available to NICS.

(Pub. L. 110-180, §2, Jan. 8, 2008, 121 Stat. 2559.)

Editorial Notes

CODIFICATION

Section was formerly classified in a note under section 922 of Title 18, Crimes and Criminal Procedure, prior to editorial reclassification and renumbering as this section.

§ 40903. Definitions

As used in this chapter, the following definitions shall apply:

(1) Court order

The term “court order” includes a court order (as described in section 922(g)(8) of title 18).

(2) Mental health terms

The terms “adjudicated as a mental defective” and “committed to a mental institution” have the same meanings as in section 922(g)(4) of title 18.

(3) Misdemeanor crime of domestic violence

The term “misdemeanor crime of domestic violence” has the meaning given the term in section 921(a)(33) of title 18.

(Pub. L. 110-180, §3, Jan. 8, 2008, 121 Stat. 2560.)

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SUBCHAPTER I—TRANSMITTAL OF RECORDS

§ 40911. Enhancement of requirement that Federal departments and agencies provide relevant information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System

(a) Omitted

(b) Provision and maintenance of NICS records

(1) Department of Homeland Security

The Secretary of Homeland Security shall make available to the Attorney General—

(A) records, updated not less than quarterly, which are relevant to a determination of whether a person is disqualified from possessing or receiving a firearm under subsection (g) or (n) of section 922 of title 18 for use in background checks performed by the National Instant Criminal Background Check System; and

(B) information regarding all the persons described in subparagraph (A) of this paragraph who have changed their status to a category not identified under section 922(g)(5) of title 18 for removal, when applicable, from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.