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1st Anniversary of Brady Bill, Kentucky, Feb. 29, 1995

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F. Brady Bill
Anniversary

E X E C U T I V E O F F I C E O F T H E P R E S I D E N T

25-Feb-1997 09:09pm

TO: Bruce N. Reed
TO: Elena Kagan
TO: Leanne A. Shimabukuro
TO: Christa T. Robinson
TO: Michelle Crisci

FROM: Dennis Burke
 Domestic Policy Council

SUBJECT: BACKGROUND CHECKS ESTIMATED TO HAVE STOPPED 186,000 ...

Date: 02/25/97 Time: 16:00

GBackground checks estimated to have stopped 186,000 illegal gun

WASHINGTON (AP) Police background checks since 1994 have blocked more than 186,000 illegal over-the-counter gun sales 72 percent by would-be buyers who were convicted or indicted for a felony, the Justice Department estimated Tuesday.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics estimated that 6,600 applications to buy handguns or long guns are rejected each month not only in the 32 states covered by the federal Brady Act but also in those states that have their own similar laws authorizing background checks of gun-buyers.

The figures cover the 28 months from Feb. 28, 1994, when the Brady Act took effect, through last June.

By far the largest reason for blocking gun sales was the discovery that the buyer had been convicted or indicted for a felony, which occurred in 72 percent of the cases.

Fugitives accounted for 6 percent of the rejections; those barred by some state law provision, 4 percent; those under court restraining orders, 2 percent; mental patients, 1 percent. Some 15 percent were rejected for other reasons, including that they were drug addicts, juveniles, illegal aliens or violators of local ordinances.

The overall rate of applicants rejected was 2.6 percent in a sampling of handgun applications during the first six months of 1996. Out of 1.3 million handgun applications during that period, 34,000 were rejected.

``Today's Justice Department study provides dramatic new evidence of the importance of the Brady law's background checks in stopping criminals from obtaining a firearm,'' said Sarah Brady, chair of Handgun Control Inc. The law was named after her husband, James Brady, the former White House press secretary who was seriously wounded by a gunman who also shot President Ronald Reagan.

``The numbers released today probably understate the real impact and importance of background checks,'' she said. ``It's not just the criminals who walk into a gun store and are stopped from purchasing a gun; it's all those criminals who are deterred from even walking into a gun store in the first place.''

The Brady Act requires that gun dealers wait five days before selling a handgun and ask local police to do a background check on the buyer during that time. Another federal law prohibits the sale of any firearm to anyone convicted or indicted for a felony, fugitives, illegal drug users, illegal aliens, mental patients, dishonorably discharged soldiers, and those convicted of domestic violence or under court restraining order for stalking or harassing an intimate partner.

The report noted that not all states check for mental disability, restraining orders or drug abuse. As of last June, 14 states reported presale investigations included checking outstanding restraining orders; 11 states looked into mental health records.

The bureau surveyed 600 law enforcement agencies, of which 176 in 44 states responded. The national estimates were derived by using standard statistical techniques to account for the non-responding states.

The Brady law provides that the waiting period will be eliminated when a national computerized instant criminal background check system administered by the FBI is established by November 1998.

President Clinton has proposed expanding the Brady law to ban handgun sales to adults who had been convicted of felonies as juveniles.

APNP-02-25-97 1609EST

F-Brady Ann Wersing

HANDGUN CONTROL**ONE MILLION STRONG . . . working to
keep handguns out of the wrong hands.**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 28, 1997

CONTACT: HOLLY RICHARDSON
202-898-0792**newsrelease****newsrelease****SARAH and JIM BRADY JOIN LAW ENFORCEMENT TO
COMMEMORATE THIRD ANNIVERSARY OF BRADY LAW**

(Washington, DC) "Today is a very special day for Jim and me as we commemorate the third anniversary of when the Brady Law went into effect," said Sarah Brady, Chair of Handgun Control, Inc. "We are proud to stand with our friends in law enforcement who worked so hard to get this law passed. Law enforcement fought for the opportunity to do the background checks mandated in the law because they knew how important it was to keep handguns out of the hands of criminals."

Marking the third anniversary of the Brady Law, Mr. and Mrs. Brady noted that the Brady Law is working the way it was intended to work-- keeping handguns out of the hands of felons and other prohibited purchasers. This week, the Department of Justice released a study showing that, since the Brady Law went into effect, background checks nationwide have kept 186,000 criminals and other prohibited purchasers -- including 157 felons every day -- from buying handguns.

"We don't know how many lives have been saved or how many crimes were prevented because these felons couldn't get a handgun," said Mrs. Brady. A recent analysis of FBI Crime Reports, however, indicates that gun crimes have fallen more than violent crime overall since the Brady Law went into effect. The number of Federal Firearms Licensees has also dropped by more than half since 1993.

"Earlier this week, we saw what a gun in the wrong hands can do when a gunman opened fire on the observation deck of the Empire State Building. The gunman in that shooting had no prior criminal record, but everyday criminals do attempt to buy guns and it's the Brady Law that stops them," noted Mrs. Brady.

In front of the U.S. Supreme Court, Jim Brady, board member of CPHV, noted that the justices have yet to issue a ruling on the constitutionality of the background checks.

"Let me say this -- the Brady Law background checks are working," said Mr. Brady. "Law enforcement fought to be able to do them, they will continue to do them. We must make sure that we don't go back to the days of 'lie and buy' when a criminal could walk into a gun store, lie on the form, and walk out with a handgun.

"Here's a big thumbs-up to the Brady Law -- and our friends in law enforcement who helped pass it," said Mr. Brady.

ing Pat and Peter Brady at the news conference were: Chief Daniel Sanders, President, International Association of Chiefs of Police; Hubert Williams, Chairman, Law Enforcement Steering Committee and President of the Police Foundation; Sheriff Pat Sullivan, Jr., Chairman of Congressional Affairs Committee, National Sheriffs' Association; Chief John Farrell of the Major Cities Chiefs; Ira Harris, Executive Director, National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives; and Alan Whitney, Assistant to the President, International Brotherhood of Police Officers.

Handgun Control, Inc., chaired by Sarah Brady, is the nation's largest citizens' gun control lobbying organization. Based in Washington, DC, HCI works to enact stronger federal, state and local gun control laws, but does not seek to ban handguns. Founded in 1974, HCI has more than 400,000 members nationwide and works with local groups around the country to enact and protect reasonable gun control laws.

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Handgun Control Inc., 1225 Eye Street, N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005 • (202) 898-0792