

Essay on the policy called (the universal back ground check) it's on the federal ...

[Technology](#), [Innovation](#)



\n[[toc title="Table of Contents"](#)]\n

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1. [“ Institutional Affiliation”](#) \n \t
2. [Policy Description](#) \n \t
3. [Purpose of the policy](#) \n \t
4. [Perceived need for the policy](#) \n \t
5. [Benefits of the policy](#) \n \t
6. [Policy implementation](#) \n \t
7. [An analysis of the policy outcome](#) \n \t
8. [Reference sites](#) \n

\n[/toc]\n \n

“ Institutional Affiliation”

Ever since the Sandy Hook massacre, the gun control vs. gun rights debate has again gained steam and renewed outcries, for stricter norms for arms distribution, have started occupying the FrontPage of every tabloids. The government is in a position where it has to take some measure or the other, to calm the public and ensure guns do not fall in the wrong hands. So it has introduced a new policy called “ The universal back ground check”. The law is yet in its formative stage and still awaits the senate nod. So what is this universal background check?

Policy Description

If you are a gun holder, you would know that the U. S. law requires background check, to grant you permission for purchasing a gun from a

licensed dealer. But this law exempts the gun purchases made through private deals. A Universal background check is a policy, which makes it mandatory to conduct a background check on all persons who want to buy firearms irrespective of the nature of the transaction.

Purpose of the policy

Today each state in the U. S. has different norms governing private gun purchases. Private gun purchases are those, done from say your neighbor, friend or through family inheritance. If you purchase a gun from a federally registered dealer, then you would have undergone a background check and the government would be able to find out, whether you are mentally ill or have a background of violence. But such private transactions have no check whatsoever and hence this policy of Universal Background Check has been introduced, primarily to close the federal loophole that exists in the prevalent system.

Perceived need for the policy

Today the gun purchases made from a registered dealer is accompanied by a background check, whereby the dealer runs your name or ID in the federal database and check for details such as

- whether you have been convicted for violent crimes
- whether you are potentially violent in nature
- whether you have any drug offences in your history
- whether you have a history of domestic violence and
- Other such details

But the problem is almost forty percent of gun purchases that happen in this

country, are not from a registered dealer and hence there are no background checks involved. Therefore, it becomes necessary to devise a policy which would encompass all the gun trades that happen in the country and ensure guns do not fall into wrong hands.

Benefits of the policy

Background checks can to an extent keep away guns from wrong hands. Between the period of 1994 (when the Brady Act was introduced) and 1998, almost 1.8 million applications for gun purchases were rejected out of the total 97 million applications received. So these checks are effective in screening people. If a person knows he is not eligible to buy a gun he will keep away from approaching a dealer, because he knows he will be subjected to a background check.

Policy implementation

Presently a task force headed by the Vice President Joe Biden, is looking into adapting this policy into a possible legislation and it has support of the Mayors from some of the larger cities. The implementation would not be easy though. You need to have a universal gun registry and the load on the NICS registry will be immense, with daily hundreds and thousands of requests being submitted to it.

An analysis of the policy outcome

Yes, this policy will bring a lot of private gun sales under the net of background check, which will result in all gun transfers being scrutinized by the Federal agency. But there are also certain shortfalls like, not all states

reveal information about mentally ill people and accuracy of the data on potentially violent mentally ill persons is always going to be a point of contention. Take the case of the Virginia shooter, who massacred 33 people in 2007, he had successfully cleared not just one but two different background checks. Many states also do not have the data or political will to disclose such information to the NICS.

So, for this policy to be effective, the Government has to take measures to tackle such hurdles and also devise and communicate an easy and effective plan of implementation.

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