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UNITED STATES SENATOR *for* CONNECTICUT

Bill Summary: Ammunition Background Check Act of 2013

This month, Senator Blumenthal will introduce legislation to require instant background checks on sales of ammunition.

Under current law, it is illegal to sell both firearms and ammunition to certain groups, including,

- felons
- fugitives
- drug addicts
- people deemed "mentally defective" by a court, or committed to a mental institution
- persons under a protective order for, or convicted of, domestic abuse

But under current law, firearms and ammunition are not treated the same way. If a felon walks into a store licensed to sell firearms and tries to buy a gun, the store will run an instant background check of an FBI database (National Instant Background Check System, or NICS), and the purchase will be denied. By contrast, if a felon walks into the same store to buy ammunition, he can load up an entire shopping cart with ammunition, pay up, and walk out, no questions asked. The store is not required to run an instant background check for ammo purchases. *In fact, the store couldn't run a background check even if it wanted to – because the FBI database is only available for firearms purchases, not for ammo.*

Background checks have worked in many cases to keep firearms from falling into the wrong hands.

- According to the FBI, over the last decade, more than 100 million background checks have been run on firearms purchases.
- The vast majority of checks took about 30 seconds. And approximately 700,000 people under the law were prohibited from purchasing guns – including felons, domestic abusers, and the mentally ill.

The Ammunition Background Check Act of 2013 would require that every buyer of ammunition would undergo an instant background check under the FBI's National Instant Background Check System (NICS).

- Federally licensed gun dealers could simply use their existing system to run checks on purchasers of ammunition (either electronically or by telephone).
- Sellers of ammunition who are not federal licensees can continue to sell simply by conducting a background check through an existing licensee or by getting a federal license.

In addition to requiring background checks, the legislation would reestablish recordkeeping and reporting requirements on ammunition sales. Prior to the 1986 Firearm Owners Protection Act, sellers of ammunition had to track their inventory and keep records of their customers.

- The Ammunition Background Checks Act restores these requirements so that law enforcement can ensure that sellers are complying with the law and can use seller records to solve gun crimes.
- The Act also requires sellers of ammunition to report to law enforcement when a purchaser buys more than 1,000 rounds of ammunition or when a large quantity of ammunition is stolen.

Finally, the bill bans Teflon-coated bullets and incendiary ammunition. The current federal ban on armor-piercing ammunition exempts certain kinds of Teflon-coated bullets, as well as incendiary ammunition designed to ignite or explode on contact. *Both of these kinds of ammunition can defeat body armor, and pose a grave danger to law enforcement. They should be banned.*

For more information, contact our office at (202) 224-2823
http://blumenthal.senate.gov/ammunition-background-check-act-of-2013