Background checks are the only systematic way to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. But under current federal law, background checks are only required for gun sales at licensed dealers. An estimated 40 percent of gun transfers take place between “private” parties — often at gun shows or through anonymous online transactions — and are not subject to a federal background check. Last year, an estimated 6.6 million guns were transferred this way — no checks, no records, no questions asked.

Sixteen states and Washington, DC, go beyond federal law by requiring a background check for private handgun sales: CA, CT, IA, HI, IL, MD, MA, MI, NE, NJ, NY, NC, PA, RI, and as of 2013, CO and DE. Evidence from these states shows that requiring a background check for private gun sales reduces crime and saves lives.

**WOMEN MURDERED BY INTIMATE PARTNERS**

In states that require a background check for private handgun sales, 38 percent fewer women are shot to death by their intimate partners.

**SUICIDE**

In states that require a background check for private handgun sales, there are 49 percent fewer firearm suicides, while the rates of suicide by other methods are nearly identical.
AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS WITH FIREARMS

In states that require background checks for all handgun sales, there are 17% fewer firearm aggravated assaults.

POLICE KILLED WITH Handguns

In states that require background checks for private handgun sales, 39 percent fewer law enforcement are shot to death with handguns.

CRIME GUNS TRAFFICKED TO OTHER STATES

States that require a background check for private handgun sales 'exported' 64 percent fewer crime guns — guns originally sold in-state that were later recovered at crime scenes in other states.