



Firearms Policy Position Statement

The International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) has long held positions intended to reduce and prevent firearms violence. As law enforcement professionals, it is our duty to protect and serve our communities and display the leadership needed to ensure public safety. As such, the IACP supports legislation and policies that seek to improve the safety of our communities, which in turn enhances the safety of law enforcement officers.

The level of firearm-related injuries and deaths in the United States, which includes homicides, suicides, and accidental shootings, is unacceptable and demands immediate attention. Since 2000, over 500,000 Americans have lost their lives to firearms violence which averages to over 31,000 firearm deaths per year¹. While acts of terrorism and mass shootings receive the most media coverage, gun violence claims lives every day in cities and towns throughout the United States. Acknowledging that any death by a firearm is equally tragic, regardless of the cause, the call to action remains the same – to safeguard the public and those who put their lives on the line each day to ensure the safety and wellbeing of communities.

Outlined in this position paper are common sense policies that would assist in reducing gun violence, while upholding the second amendment.

Firearms Policy Positions

Body Armor

The IACP supports legislation to prohibit the mail order sale of bulletproof vests and body armor to all individuals except sworn or certified law enforcement officers. In recent years, the safety of law enforcement officers has often been compromised due to the possession of body armor and bulletproof vests by the criminals they were attempting to apprehend. The IACP believes that the sale, transfer, or acquisition of these items should be conducted in person in order to make it more difficult for criminals to acquire and use these items while committing crimes of violence.

Conceal Carry Reciprocity

The IACP opposes any federal legislative proposals that would either pre-empt and/or mandate the liberalization of individual states' concealed-carry weapons (CCW) laws pertaining to the carrying of concealed weapons in other states without meeting that state's requirements.

¹ Centers for Disease Control. National Vital Statistics Reports. "Table I-1. Number of deaths, death rates, and age-adjusted death rates for injury by firearms, by race and sex: United States, 1999–2014." Vol. 65 No. 4, June 30, 2016 .



The IACP holds that the responsibility of carrying a concealed weapon should include a minimum of familiarization and training with the weapon carried, basic instruction on the fundamentals of carrying a concealed weapon, and understanding of when the use of a concealed weapon is legal and/or advisable.

Therefore, the IACP continues to oppose legislation that provide concealed carry permit holders with immunity from arrest or detention for violation of any law or any rule or regulation of a state or any political subdivision thereof related to the possession, transportation, or carrying of firearms

Concealed Carry Weapons (CCW) on College and University Campuses

In response to the facts and statistics surrounding gun violence and related risks at U.S college and universities, the IACP supports the prohibition of concealed carry weapons upon U.S. college and university campuses.

Criminal Use of Semi-Automatic Assault Weapons

First passed in 1994, the assault weapons ban required domestic gun manufacturers to stop production of semi-automatic assault weapons and ammunition magazines holding more than ten rounds except for military or police use. While the ban was in place, it was remarkably effective in reducing the number of crimes involving assault weapons. In the period of the ban, (1994-2004) the proportion of assault weapons traced to crimes fell by a dramatic 66 percent.

Semi-Automatic assault weapons are routinely the weapons of choice for gang members and drug dealers. They are regularly encountered in drug busts and are all too often used against police officers.

The IACP has been a strong supporter of the assault weapons ban since 1992, and our membership has approved several reauthorizations of support in the years since. The membership took this action because we, as law enforcement executives, understand that the criminal use of semiautomatic assault weapons pose a grave risk to our officers and the communities they are sworn to protect.

Firearms Enforcement

The IACP urges Congress to increase resources to better allow state, local and tribal law enforcement agencies and the Department of Justice to enable greater prosecution of individuals for Brady Act violations. In addition, the IACP supports firearms enforcement programs that involve local, state and federal agencies, such as Project Safe Neighborhoods and Project Exile, which have shown significant reductions in firearms-related violent crime.

Firearms Offender Registry

The reduction of firearms-related violent crime has been and continues to be a major goal of the IACP. Studies have shown that firearm offenders have a higher recidivist rate for committing other firearms-



related violent crime with firearms than the rate for sexual offenders. Therefore, the IACP supports creating a federal registry, similar to the sexual offender registry, for offenders who have been previously convicted of a felony firearm violation or a misdemeanor that involved violent or threatening acts with firearms. At little cost, this registry would have great benefit toward preventing and investigating a myriad of violent crimes, as well as establishing a computerized list of dangerous offenders that could be utilized as a notification system to alert officers of potential danger.

Firearm Purchase Waiting Period

The IACP supports a waiting period for the purchase of a handgun. In the past, waiting periods have not only served as time for a thorough background investigation, but also as an informal cooling off period for handgun purchasers. However, the time needed to perform most background checks has become obsolete due to transition to the National Instant Check Background System (NICS). Nevertheless, the IACP believes there must still be a cooling off period in place before an individual can purchase a handgun. Therefore, the IACP supports legislation to create a mandatory five-day waiting period prior to the completion of a handgun purchase.

Gun Show Loophole

The federal Gun Control Act of 1968 stipulates that individuals “engaged in the business” of selling firearms must possess a Federal Firearms License (FFL). Holders of FFLs are required to conduct background checks and maintain a record of all their firearm sales. Certain gun sales and transfers between private individuals, however, are exempt from this requirement.

Those who would fail a background check can access firearms through these sources. Unlike with an FFL, the seller is not required to conduct a background check to determine whether the purchaser is prohibited from purchasing and possessing a gun. Federal, state, local and tribal laws should be enacted to close these loopholes. If all gun sales proceed through an FFL, a single, consistent system for conducting gun sales, including background checks, will be established.

The laws we have in place to ensure gun purchasers go through FFLs are undermined by oversights in the law that allow individuals prohibited from owning firearms to obtain weapons at events such as gun shows without undergoing a background check. The IACP calls on Congress to act swiftly to close these loopholes and preserve the effectiveness of the laws in place.

Illegal Firearms Trafficking/Firearms Tracing

The IACP opposes any legislation that would limit or reduce the ability of our nation’s law enforcement agencies to combat the sale of illegal guns. The IACP believes that the ability to trace illegal firearms effectively plays a critical role in law enforcement’s ability to protect communities from the scourge of firearms violence.



The IACP is opposed to legislation that restricts the ATF's ability to share vital gun trace information with its state and local counterparts, which severely limits the ability of those agencies to conduct critical investigations designed to identify and apprehend corrupt firearms dealers and the traffickers they supply.

Any provision that limits the ATF's ability to share gun trace information with state and local agencies would inhibit their ability to conduct critical investigations in order to identify and apprehend corrupt firearms dealers and traffickers, putting our citizens and our officers at risk. Therefore, the IACP strongly supports efforts to repeal any piece of legislation containing provisions that would weaken law enforcement's ability to trace illegal firearms.

Juvenile Crime Firearms Disability

The IACP believes that juveniles must be held accountable for their acts of violence. Therefore, the IACP supports the passage of legislation, sometimes referred to as Juvenile Brady, which would permanently prohibit gun ownership by an individual, if that individual, while a juvenile, commits a crime that would have triggered a gun disability if their crime had been committed as an adult.

Possession of and Transfer of Certain Firearm Accessories

The IACP supports legislation that prohibits the possession, import, manufacture, transfer and sale of trigger cranks, bump-fire devices, and similar attachments/accessories designed to increase or modify semi-automatic firearms to automatic weapons.

In addition, the IACP supports requiring individuals currently in possession of a trigger cranks, bump-fire device, or and similar attachments/accessories designed to increase or modify semi-automatic firearms to automatic weapons to surrender or register such devices with the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) under the National Firearms Act (NFA) of 1934.

Furthermore, the IACP supports providing the ATF with the resources needed to enforce a mandatory surrender or registration with respect to bump fire devices and other NFA weapons, including resources necessary to modernize and upgrade its equipment.

Sale of Armor-Piercing and Tracer Ammunition

The IACP opposes any legislative effort that would reduce the ability of government agencies to prohibit the sale of armor-piercing ammunition and weaken the standards for ammunition to be considered armor-piercing.

The IACP supports legislation and policies that will prohibit the sale or transfer of armor piercing ammunition. Furthermore, the IACP believes that current U.S. federal law should be modified to



establish that the process utilized to determine whether a round of ammunition is armor piercing should include performance based testing conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms.

Silencers (Suppressors)

The IACP opposes any efforts to remove silencers (suppressors) from the purview of the National Firearms Act, in which these devices have been registered under since 1934. If silencers (suppressors) are no longer regulated, it would undermine the safety of the public and law enforcement by preventing law enforcement from quickly and effectively responding to active shooters, as silencers (suppressors) make it harder to recognize the sound of gunfire and mask muzzle flash, making it more difficult to locate and engage armed offenders. Additionally, silencers undermine the ability of gunshot detection technology, which is widely used in American cities, to alert law enforcement and first responders to shootings in the community.