

To: Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee
From: Elizabeth Christensen, Northfield
Re: In Support of HF 14
Date: 2/2/2023

Dear Chairs and Distinguished Members of the Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee,

I am writing in enthusiastic support of HF 14, requiring criminal background checks for firearm transfers, and grounds modified for disqualification of transferee permit. Background checks keep guns out of the hands of people already prohibited from possessing firearms by preventing sales to felons, domestic abusers, and the dangerously mentally ill. Neither federal nor current state law requires background checks for sales by private unlicensed sellers. These loopholes in Minnesota law allow sales of firearms without running a background check at gun shows, online sales, and through person-to-person sales by private owners. Closing these loopholes and requiring universal background checks will keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals and save lives.

Since the background check system was instituted in 1998, it has blocked 35,316 gun sales at licensed firearm dealers in Minnesota, including 22,360 to felons, 547 to people with dangerous mental illnesses, and 4,490 to domestic abusers.¹ Unfortunately, with the law as currently written, these individuals would be able to easily obtain a firearm from a private sale.

Background checks work. In Connecticut, laws requiring background checks and permits for all handgun sales was associated with a 40 percent reduction in gun homicides during the 10 years (1995-2005) that the law was in place. Conversely, Missouri repealed a background check and permit law in 2007 and saw a 25% increase in homicide rate and a 16% increase in firearm suicide rate.² Background checks are also popular, with 90% of Minnesotans supporting them on all gun sales.³

As a mother of three young children, the current state of gun violence is always at the forefront of my mind. HF 14 is a common sense, incredibly popular, and research-backed law that will save lives and make our state a safer place for my family and yours. I urge you to support it and make it law.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Christensen
Northfield, Minnesota

¹ Everytown Research Everystat.org

² Connecticut Handgun Licensing Law Associated With 40 Percent Drop in Gun Homicides, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Jun. 11, 2015. <https://publichealth.jhu.edu>. And "Effects of the Repeal of Missouri's Handgun Purchaser Licensing Law on Homicides," NIH, Mar. 7, 2014. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3978146/>

³ Star Tribune Poll, Apr. 21, 2018