



Federal policy on laws governing guns and firearms, 2017-2020

DONALD TRUMP ▾ CABINET ▾ EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS ▾ FEDERAL POLICIES ▾

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS ▾ PAST ISSUES ▾

Congress most recently addressed firearms-related legislation on February 27, 2019. The House passed a bill that proposed requiring federal criminal background checks on all firearms sales by a vote of 240-190, mostly along party lines.

The bill proposed requiring background checks for commercial and private firearms sales. Federal law does not require background checks for private sales. It would not require background checks for transfers between family members or for temporary use of a gun. The bill also included language backed by 26 Democrats and members of the Republican caucus that would require sellers to report the names of individuals residing in the country without legal permission to the U.S. Immigration and Enforcement Agency if they attempted to buy a gun.^[1]

The bill now heads to the Senate. President Donald Trump said that he would veto the bill if it was sent to him.

This page tracks the comments and actions of the Trump administration, the 115th Congress, and the 116th Congress on laws governing guns and firearms. Click on the timeline below to learn more about each headline.

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Trump Administration



President Donald Trump

Vice President Mike Pence

Cabinet • Transition team

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February 27, 2019: House passes firearms legislation

On February 27, 2019, the House passed a bill that proposed requiring federal criminal background checks on all firearms sales by a vote of 240-190. Eight Republicans voted with most Democrats in favor of the bill. Two Democrats—Reps. Jared Golden (Maine) and Collin Peterson (Minn.)—voted with Republicans against the bill.^[2]

The bill proposed requiring background checks for commercial and private firearms sales. Federal law does not require background checks for private sales. It would not require background checks for transfers between family members or for temporary use of a gun. The bill also included language backed by 26 Democrats and members of the Republican caucus that would require sellers to report the names of individuals residing in the country without legal permission to the U.S. Immigration and Enforcement Agency if they attempted to buy a gun.^[3]

The bill now heads to the Senate. President Donald Trump said that he would veto the bill if it was sent to him.^[4]

Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), who sponsored the bill said, "Background checks work. Every day, they stop 170 felons and 50 domestic abusers from getting a gun from a licensed dealer. But, in some states, those same people can go into a gun show or go online and buy a gun without a background check. This bill will help stop them from doing so. Some will argue that criminals won't follow the law. If that is the case, then why do we have laws against murder? People still commit murder. Why do we have laws against stealing? People still steal. This is flawed logic. Don't fall for it."^[4]

Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.), who opposed the bill, said, "There are plenty of Democrats who want to say they did something rather than doing [legislation] that would actually do something to reduce violence. Why not try something that will have an impact?" Hudson added that he was working on a bill to include more databases that can be searched as part of the National Instant Criminal Background Checks System.^[4]

August 27, 2018: Federal judge bars distribution of CAD files used to produce firearms via 3D printers

On August 27, 2018, Judge Robert Lasnik, of the United States District Court for the Western District of Washington, granted a preliminary injunction barring the release of computer files used to produce firearms via 3D printers. On July 27, 2018, the Directorate of Defense Trade Controls, a division of the United States Department of State, published a temporary regulatory amendment allowing for the dissemination of Computer Aided Design (CAD) files used for the production of firearms by 3D printers. This change was in accordance with a settlement agreement between the Department of State and Defense Distributed, a private company that possessed the CAD files and filed suit against the federal government, whose previous position had been to disallow the dissemination of such files by including them on the United States Munitions List (USML) and making them subject to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR). As part of the settlement, the federal government agreed to remove the CAD files from ITAR jurisdiction.^[5]

On July 30, 2018, the attorneys general of eight states and the District of Columbia filed suit in federal district court against the United States Department of State, alleging that the Trump administration, in allowing for the dissemination of the CAD files in question, had violated the Administrative Procedure Act and the Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The plaintiffs requested a "declaration that the 'temporary modification' of the USML Category I (which constitutes a final agency action) is invalid, and an injunction requiring the [federal government] to rescind the temporary modification and refrain from acting in a manner inconsistent with such rescission." This action precipitated Lasnik's preliminary injunction.^{[6][7]}

March 24, 2018: Democratic lawmakers attend anti-gun violence march

On March 24, 2018, many Democratic lawmakers attended the “March for Our Lives” in cities around the nation. Meant to protest gun violence after the February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, the country-wide rallies attracted hundreds of thousands of people. Politicians including Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Claire McCaskill (D-Mo.), Bill Nelson (D-Fla.), Representative John Lewis (D-Ga.), and former Vice President Joe Biden all attended rallies.^[8]

March 14, 2018: House passes STOP School Violence Act of 2018

On March 14, 2018, the House passed HR 4909—the STOP School Violence Act of 2018—by a vote of 407-10. The bill proposed providing funding for the following:^{[9][10]}

- Training for local law enforcement, school staff, and students to prevent school violence, including active shooter training;
- Anonymous reporting systems to notify law enforcement officials of potential threats of violence, metal detectors, locks, and other school safety equipment and technology;
- School threat assessment and crisis intervention teams; and
- Coordination with law enforcement.

It did not include any gun-related measures.

The vote came one month after a gunman killed 17 people at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, and on a day of nationwide student protests against gun violence.

Speaking about school shootings and the bill, Rep. Hal Rogers (R-Texas) said, “These appalling events are avoidable, but we must give schools the tools and resources they need. There may not be one single answer to preventing all future violence in schools, but this effort is very much a part of the solution.”^[11]

Although most Democrats supported the bill, they said that it did not do enough to prevent school shootings. They called for measures to prevent access to guns. Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.) said, “This is a good bill, [but] it will not solve our gun problem. It won’t ban bump stocks, or fix our background system, or get weapons of war off our streets.”^[11]

The following House members voted against the bill:^[12]

- | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ▪ Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.) | ▪ Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) | ▪ Rep. Rick Nolan (D-Minn.) |
| ▪ Rep. Tony Cardenas (D-Calif.) | ▪ Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) | ▪ Rep. Mark Sanford (R-S.C.) |
| ▪ Rep. Hank Johnson (D-Ga.) | ▪ Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.) | ▪ Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman (D-N.J.) |
| | ▪ Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) | |

The House Liberty Caucus, of which Amash is the chairman, opposed the bill because it “endangers the right to due process, encourages the continued blurring of school discipline and criminal justice through the use of school policing, and undermines federalism.”^[13]

Some Democrats also opposed the bill for a similar reason. They raised "concern that it does not have adequate due process and could disproportionately hurt minorities and students with disabilities," according to *The Hill*.^[11]

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders issued the following statement in support of the passage of the bill: "President Donald J. Trump applauds the House for passing H.R. 4909, the STOP School Violence Act of 2018, an important step towards keeping American students safe. This legislation helps protect our Nation's youth and educators by authorizing State-based grants that will support evidence-based violence prevention programs. It is critical that we strengthen our laws in order to aid our law enforcement, address the needs of individuals struggling with serious mental illness, and develop proactive strategies for identifying and preventing violence in schools. This Administration is pleased with the progress we have made toward securing our schools over the last few weeks alone, and looks forward to working with the Senate to protect America's students."^[14]

March 12, 2018: Trump administration releases four-pillar plan to improve safety in schools

On March 12, 2018, President Donald Trump released a four-pillar plan to improve safety in schools in response to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018, that left 17 dead. The four pillars appear below.^[15]

- **Improving school security:** The Trump administration said that it would assist states in training school personnel to use firearms on a voluntary basis and encourage military veterans and retired law enforcement officers to pursue careers in education. The administration also said that a campaign modeled on the "See Something, Say Something" program would be implemented on the state and local levels to encourage citizens to report suspicious behavior.^[15]
- **Strengthening background checks:** The Trump administration called on states to adopt Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs). According to a White House fact sheet, ERPOs "allow law enforcement, with approval from a court, to remove firearms from individuals who are a demonstrated threat to themselves or others and temporarily to prevent individuals from purchasing new firearms." The administration expressed support for improving the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) and encouraged Congress to pass the Cornyn-Murphy bill that proposed improving NICS. The administration also expressed support for the "STOP School Violence Act, which provides for State-based grants to implement evidence-based violence prevention programs" and asked Congress to provide funding for the program. Additionally, the administration said that it would "audit and make accountability improvements to the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) tip line, and will promote its use."^[15]
- **Improving mental healthcare:** The administration proposed "increased integration of mental health, primary care, and family services, as well as support for programs that utilize court-ordered treatment." The administration also proposed a "review of the

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), and other statutory and regulatory privacy protections.”^[15]

- **Establishing the Federal Commission on School Safety:** Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos was tasked with leading an investigation into school safety measures and school violence. The commission will recommend policy and funding proposals to prevent school violence. According to a White House fact sheet, the commission will study “age restrictions for certain firearm purchases”; “existing entertainment rating systems and youth consumption of violent entertainment”; “strategies to advance the science and practice of character development in youth and a culture of connectedness”; “effects of press coverage of mass shootings”; “repeal of the Obama Administration’s ‘Rethink School Discipline’ policies”; “best practices for school buildings and campus security from Federal Government components”; “a plan for integration and coordination of Federal resources focused on prevention and mitigation of active shooter incidents at schools”; “opportunities to improve access to mental health treatment”; “best practices for school-based threat assessment and violence prevention strategies”; and “the effectiveness and appropriateness of psychotropic medication for treatment of troubled youth.”^[15]

DeVos called the proposal a “pragmatic plan to dramatically increase school safety.” Speaking about school shootings, she said, “We’ve had to talk about this topic way too much over the years. There’s been a lot of talk in the past, but very little action.”^[16]

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) criticized the proposal, saying, “The White House has taken tiny baby steps designed not to upset the NRA, when the gun violence epidemic in this country demands that giant steps be taken. Democrats in the Senate will push to go further including passing universal background checks, actual federal legislation on protection orders, and a debate on banning assault weapons.”^[16]

March 12, 2018: Trump announces support for raising age limits on gun purchases

On March 12, 2018, President Donald Trump wrote on Twitter that he supported raising the minimum age required to buy a gun from 18 to 21. He also said that there was little political support for the issue.^[17]

March 11, 2018: Trump Administration releases proposals to address gun violence in schools

On March 11, 2018, the Trump Administration announced a series of school safety proposals in response to the February shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. The proposals did not include any legislation, but established a commission on gun

violence in schools, pushed lawmakers to work on background check legislation, and offered support to states to craft gun legislation and gun training programs in schools.^[18]

February 16, 2018: FBI launches review of tip line operations after Florida shooting

On February 16, 2018, the FBI announced a review of their centralized tip line after operators failed to adequately address a tip about Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School shooter, Nikolas Cruz. The FBI centralized their tip line system in 2012, and critics of the change argued that the centralization would increase the possibility of credible tips falling through the cracks. FBI Director Christopher Wray said in a statement, “I am committed to getting to the bottom of what happened in this particular matter.”^[19]

Congress' response to the February 14, 2018, school shooting in Parkland, Florida

In response to the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018, that left 17 dead, members of Congress have been discussing a variety of gun-related, mental health, and school safety measures to prevent future school shootings. Most Democrats have focused on gun-related measures, while most Republicans have focused on improving how law enforcement handles information it is given about potentially violent individuals. In the Senate, some lawmakers from both sides of the aisle are working together to pass legislation to increase the age to buy a rifle to 21.

Democrats call for gun-related measures to prevent gun violence

Some congressional Democrats have called for bans on certain types of rifles that they describe as military-style weapons or assault weapons.

Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.), who introduced legislation that proposed banning certain rifles, said, “Americans don’t own tanks or missiles, so why should our streets be flooded with weapons of war made for the sole purpose of killing people?”^[20]

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who signed on as an original co-sponsor to Deutch’s bill, has called for lawmakers to create “a special committee to examine gun violence,” expand “background checks before almost all gun sales,” and authorize “federal researchers to study gun violence as a public health issue,” according to *The Hill*.^[20]

GOP calls for review of FBI and local law enforcement’s response to tips about the shooter

Republicans have focused on improving the procedures of law enforcement officials and school safety measures rather than gun-related measures in response to the school shooting.

Speaking about proposed gun restrictions, Rep. Jim Jordan (R-Ohio) said, “Here’s what makes me mad: all these proposals don’t address the problem. There was like 36 times this kid interacted with government. It looks the sheriff’s office didn’t do their job. And now the answer is more government?”^[21] Jordan was referring to reports that the FBI and local police received more than 20 calls about the shooter’s desire to harm others but did not take action as a result of the calls. Additionally, Broward County Sheriff’s Deputy Scot Peterson, the armed school resource officer, and three other sheriff’s deputies did not enter the school to engage the shooter while he was killing students, teachers, and coaches.^[22]

Speaker Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) commented on the reports, saying that there was breakdown in the protocol used to investigate the shooter. He said, “We need to get to the bottom of how these breakdowns occurred. We are going to be looking at the system failures.”^[23]

Majority Whip Steve Scalise (R-La.) also criticized the FBI and local police for not pursuing tips about the shooter. He said, “The FBI had this guy’s name on a silver platter. There were a lot of students in that school that said ‘we think he is going to be a school shooter.’”^[24]

Rep. Bill Flores (R-Texas) said that Congress should “conduct some pretty vigorous oversight to see why the FBI failed, because their point of failure was pretty disturbing. And we’ve got to investigate what happened with the local authorities that failed multiple times. Before you begin crafting any legislation, you need to make sure you know exactly what happened.”^[25]

Bipartisan legislation

Sens. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) are drafting legislation that would increase the minimum age to buy a rifle from 18 to 21. Flake wrote in a tweet that he was “working with [Feinstein] on a bipartisan bill that will raise the minimum purchase age for non-military buyers from 18 to 21 — the same age you currently have to be to purchase a handgun.”^[26]

March 10, 2018: DOJ issues proposed rule to ban bump stocks

On March 10, 2018, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) published a proposed rule in the *Federal Register* that would classify bump stocks as machineguns under the National Firearms Act of 1934 and the Gun Control Act of 1968. Bump stock type devices convert semiautomatic firearms into machineguns by allowing for a continuous firing cycle through a single pull of the trigger.^{[27][28]}

Attorney General Jeff Sessions said, “President Trump is absolutely committed to ensuring the safety and security of every American and he has directed us to propose a regulation addressing bump stocks. To that end, the Department of Justice has submitted to the Office of Management and Budget a notice of a proposed regulation to clarify that the National Firearms and Gun Control Act defines ‘machinegun’ to include bump stock type devices.”^[27]

Opponents of the proposed rule said that only Congress has the authority to change the statutory definition of a machine gun. The rule's supporters said that the statutory language was intended to be a broad, general definition and that the DOJ has the authority to clarify which devices qualify as machine guns within the scope of the law.^[28]

February 22, 2018: Trump holds listening session with state and local officials on gun violence and school safety

On February 22, 2018, President Donald Trump, Attorney General Jeff Sessions, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar, and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos held a listening session at the White House with state and local officials on gun violence and school safety. Comments from the session appear below.^[29]

- **Trump on potential legislation to prevent gun violence:** "I called many senators last night, many congressmen, and Jeff and Pam and everybody in this room. I can tell you, Curtis, they're into doing background checks that they wouldn't be thinking about maybe two weeks ago. We're going to do strong background checks. We're going to work on getting the age up to 21 instead of 18. We're getting rid of the bump stocks. And we're going to be focusing very strongly on mental health, because here's a case of mental health."^[29]
- **Trump on mental health and gun violence:** "Part of the problem is we used to have mental institutions. And I said this yesterday — where you had a mental institution where you take a sicko, like this guy — he was a sick guy, so many sides — and you bring him to a mental health institution. Those institutions are largely closed because communities didn't want them. Communities didn't want to spend the money for them. So you don't have any intermediate ground. You can't put them in jail because he hadn't done anything yet, but you know he's going to do something. So we're going to be talking seriously about opening mental health institutions again. In some cases, reopening. I can tell you, in New York, the governors in New York did a very, very bad thing when they closed our mental institutions, so many of them. You have these people living on the streets. And I can say that, in many cases throughout the country, they're very dangerous. They shouldn't be there."^[29]
- **Trump on gun-free zones:** "We have to harden our schools, not soften them up. A gun-free zone to a killer, or somebody that wants to be a killer, that's like going in for the ice cream. That's like, 'Here I am, take me.' We have to get smart on gun-free zones. When they see it says, 'This is a gun-free zone,' that means that nobody has a gun except them; nobody is going to be shooting bullets in the other direction. And they see that as such a beautiful target. They live for gun-free zones. ... We need to let people know: You come into our schools, you're going to be dead, and it's going to be fast. And unless you do that, you're going to always have this problem. You can talk about your gun-free zones. ... I want my schools protected just like my banks are protected, just like

everything else. And I get a kick — I was watching a politician, weak, ineffective politician last night — I'd tell you a name, but I don't want to embarrass anybody — and he was talking about no guns, no this, no that. And yet, he's surrounded by three guys carrying guns. I said, 'Well, when are they going to give up their guns?' They're not going to give up their guns. But he wants everybody else to have no guns. And you have plenty of them."^[29]

- **Trump on allowing trained teachers to carry firearms in schools:** "And, I mean, frankly, you have teachers that are Marines for 20 years, and they retire, they become a teacher. ... They know guns, they understand guns. ... And I think when you allow a person who has been in the Marines for 20 years, who's done nothing but handle guns and handle them safely and well — because you can't just give a teacher a gun. One of the fake news networks, CNN, last night was saying I want teachers to have guns. I don't want teachers to have guns. I want certain highly adept people, people that understand weaponry, guns — if they really have that aptitude. Because not everybody has an aptitude for a gun. But if they have the aptitude, I think a concealed permit for — having teachers and letting people know that there are people in the building with a gun — you won't have — in my opinion, you won't have these shootings. Because these people are cowards. They're not going to walk into a school if 20 percent of the teachers have guns. It may be 10 percent or it may be 40 percent."^[29]
- **Trump on giving trained teachers a bonus for carrying firearms in schools:** "And what I would recommend doing is the people that do carry, we give them a bonus. We give them a little bit of a bonus. Frankly, they'd feel more comfortable having a gun anyway. But you give them a little bit of a bonus. So practically for free, you have now made the school into a hardened target."^[29]
- **Trump on the Second Amendment and the NRA:** "I'm the biggest believer of the Second Amendment that there is. Okay? I am the biggest. But I'll tell you what, I spoke with the NRA — the top people. ... and they're ready to do things. They want to do things. You know, they're good people. They're patriots. They love this country. But the NRA is ready to do things. And you know, people like to blame them, and they do have power and all of that. But they want to do — they want to — they actually came up with certain of the rules and regulations that we have now. But we're going to have to toughen — I told them, I said, we're going to have to toughen them up. Because it doesn't make anybody look good, and most importantly, I saw the devastation of these families. We can't allow that to happen."^[29]
- **Trump on raising the age to buy a gun:** "We're talking about changing an age, from 18 to 21. I mean, so they buy a revolver — a handgun — they buy at the age of 21. And yet, these other weapons that we talk about — that some people don't like — they're allowed to buy them at 18. So how does that make sense? How does that make sense? So I say that it should all be at 21. But we're not only talking about money. We're talking about common sense, and it's a great thing. And the NRA will back it. I really feel very confident the NRA will back it, and so will Congress, and so will the Senate."^[29]

- **Trump on active shooter drills in schools:** “But active shooter drills is a very negative thing, I’ll be honest with you. I mean, if I’m a child and I’m 10 years old, and they say, we’re going to have an active shooter drill, I say, “What’s that?” “Well, people may come in and shoot you.” I think that’s a very negative thing to be talking about, to be honest with you. I don’t like it. I’d much rather have a hardened school. I don’t like it. I wouldn’t want to tell my son that you’re going to participate in an active shooter drill. And I know some of them actually call it that. I think it’s crazy. I think it’s very bad for children.”^[29]
- **Florida Attorney General Pam Bondi on the Gun Violence Restraining Order:** “We are going to bring in something called the Gun Violence Restraining Order. So if someone is civilly committed — and typically, you can hold them for up to 72 hours, but people are getting out within 24 hours, the majority of them. So what we want to do is let law enforcement come in and take the guns. ... They are a danger to themselves or others. ... But we also have to give the mentally ill the due process in which they deserve, President. So what we’re doing is they’re going to be able to take the guns when they’re taken into custody — or into the hospital. And then, when they’re released, within 24 hours or 72 hours later — typically, it’s 24 hours — but law enforcement will have 72 hours to determine whether they should give those guns back, or they can go to a judge and say, ‘Your Honor, please keep these guns. We feel this person is still a danger to himself or others,’ whether they’re in or out of custody. ... We’re going to make changes.
- **Bondi on creating a system for students to report suspicious behavior:** “Kids now are on social media. And there were so many warning signs on Snapchat, on Twitter, on Instagram. ... So what kids can do now — they can automatically send something that says, ‘I’m going to buy a gun,’ just like Cruz was doing. ... And one of the girls who I met with — one of the students — told me he had been doing this since middle school, he had bullied her. And she reported it. So it will all — they can instantly — and they can do it with anonymity. Put it in this app. It will go in the app, and it will go through one clearinghouse with state law enforcement in Florida.”^[29]
- **Commissioner of the Kentucky State Police Rick Sanders on creating a database to house information on students who pose a threat:** “I think the gun violence restraining order is critically important. And I also think that we, in law enforcement, we need to create a database in our fusion centers where can take information that we have on students that may be a threat, and put that into a database so that the FBI can share with local law enforcement and state police, and we all have that information that we can act upon.”^[29]
- **Paula Stone, a mental health professional with the Department of Human Services of Arkansas, on catching early warning signs of potentially violent behavior:** “And so I think what you said about early warning signs is very important to note, and access to appropriate services, and training educators. There’s a program called Mental Health First Aid, where educators can be trained in how to identify those early warning signs and making sure that those services are easily accessible, because access is a problem. If somebody has to leave the school grounds and go to a clinic, wait for an appointment, then you’ve lost all that time. If we can have mental health professionals

that are located in schools, co-located with physicians in places where people go into the community so those people are identified with those needs and get those services very quickly before it gets to the point of having some significant needs. Mental health professionals also, for people that have more significant needs, can wrap around the whole families. Because a lot of times, the families are asking for help but they haven't gotten that support. There may be stigma, there may be access issues. You want to make sure that all of those services are there, readily available, that there's no stigma to those services and that they can have those."^[29]

- **Colorado House Minority Leader Patrick Neville, a former Columbine High School student who was present on the day of the shooting, on Colorado's Safe to Tell program and making schools hard targets:** "We have to find a way to let good people defend our students. We can't let criminals think that this is going to be an easy target for them to enter their schools and injure our students. We have to find a way to harden those targets so that our students aren't sitting ducks. Furthermore, I think that we do have some good programs to model off of. The Safe to Tell program in Colorado has been wildly successful. We have similar to what Pam Bondi was talking about. It can be used not just for school violence actions, but it can also be used for suicidal ideations and other things of that nature. But that said, I think we have to do it immediately, but I think we also need to realize, too, it's not just about the guns. My experience is pretty unique in Columbine that there was also two propane tanks that were supposed to be a bomb that going to go off. By the grace of God, that didn't happen. But there are other ways that people can commit these atrocious acts."^[29]
- **Fred Kittle from the Bartow County schools in Bartow County, Georgia, on school protections:** "We have the single point of entry at all of our schools. You have to be buzzed to get in. We do have resource officers. And like you said, it would take quite a bit — we have, I believe, it's seven with our school. And we have 13,332 students and 892 teachers there. But we also work really closely with our law enforcement. For example, one of our middle schools and elementary — police station is right around the corner. And we do pay the sheriff's department and local police to help do, when people are coming and going, to do the traffic. But it's also, they're there and they're present. So that's also a deterrent. ... Now, here's something the state of Georgia did after the last shootings in 2014, in giving the school systems the authority. We're allowed to — if the school board so votes on it, we actually can have armed employees. They do have to go through their safety firearm training and that, and then our resource officers also go through a third party — another party for training each year."^[29]

February 21, 2018: Trump holds listening session on gun violence and school safety with students and teachers

On February 21, 2018, President Donald Trump, Vice President Mike Pence, and Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos held a listening session at the White House with students, parents, teachers, and school administrators on gun violence and school safety.

At the beginning of the session, Trump said, “We’re going to be very strong on background checks. We’re going to be doing very strong background checks. Very strong emphasis on the mental health of somebody. And we are going to do plenty of other things. Again, next week, the governors are coming in from most of the states, and we’re going to have a very serious talk about what’s going on with school safety. ... There are many ideas that I have. There are many ideas that other people have. And we’re going to pick out the strongest ideas, the most important ideas, the ideas that are going to work. And we’re going to get them done. It’s not going to be talk like it has been in the past. It’s been going on too long; too many instances. And we’re going to get it done.”^[30]

During the session, those in attendance offered a variety of solutions to prevent future school shootings like the one that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School on February 14, 2018. Their solutions included the following:^[30]

- Requiring students and teachers to go through active shooter drills;
- Raising the age to purchase a gun;
- Checking bookbags at the door;
- Counseling for our students who are struggling with fear and bullying;
- Banning certain types of rifles;
- Strengthening the FBI’s procedures for investigating threats;
- Instituting protocols to prevent attacks like airports did after the 9/11 terror attacks;
- Implementing and strengthening red flag laws;
- Improving access to mental health care;
- Increasing security at schools;
- Ending the censoring of ideas to prevent gun violence;
- Instituting training programs to identify warning signs in troubled children;
- Creating a culture of connectedness;
- Allowing teachers, administrators, and school support staff who are properly trained in handling a firearm to keep one locked in a classroom or office;
- Opening communication lines between schools, the police, and the FBI;
- Having more police officers at schools; and
- Fixing the background check system.



President Donald Trump Holds a listening session with high school students and teachers, February 21, 2018

Brandon Thompson, the dean of students at Friendship Tech Prep in Washington, D.C., discussed measures his school instituted to protect students and make them feel safe. He said,

“ We actually have checkpoints. When a student walks in the door, we actually have metal detectors. And I oftentimes see that in urban education. And we actually have an x-ray machine that students put their bags through. And right after this incident happened, a parent who didn’t so much agree with it at first sent me an email saying, ‘Thank you. Because now I see exactly what’s happening.’ And so we oftentimes use that TSA model. When a student comes in, we have somebody at the door to greet them to do a check in just to see how they feel. And we have certain point people, where I know this person is not feeling so well, so they won’t get past point one. They go through the metal detector, their bag goes through the machine. And so, at the end of the day, just talking to my students riding over today, they all say, ‘Well, I feel safe.’ And you come outside and you said talk about mental hospitals — our school is right across the street from a shutdown mental hospital. We have — you know, if you were to come over to the streets, you would be like, ‘Oh my God.’ But once you get inside the building, we have that family feel. We have those check-in points. We have it where every visitor that comes through our building has to go through these checkpoints to ensure that our students get home safe, to ensure that our staff members get home safe. And these are just minor solutions. Like, I will say, I’m against having a teacher with a gun in the building. Teachers are emotional. People are emotional. So I think that is a huge factor, however. But having students — and you may have to go to staff members — going through these checkpoints to ensure that, one, their mental is on point; and two, that we’re talking about they don’t have any physical metal on them and/or — even our building, our students don’t even carry cell phones because we consider that’s a threat. It’s taking away from them learning. So they actually turn in their cell phones. And so those things of ensuring our kids are there at the moment, to live the moment, to enjoy school — they get that joy factor. They get that family feel. And they’re able, now, to connect with one another and able to communicate, and not have to worry about looking over their shoulder when they walk out and into the building. Because they know every person that comes through the building has been through a metal check — their bags have been checked.^[31] ”

Trump offered his comments on a variety of the proposals. They appear below.

- **Trump on background checks:** “And I will say, again, background checks are going to be very strong. We need that.”^[30]
- **Trump on mental health and gun violence:** “When we see there’s trouble, we have to nab them. You know, years ago, we had mental hospitals — mental institutions. We had a lot of them, and a lot of them have closed. They’ve closed. Some people thought it was a stigma. Some people thought, frankly, it was a — the legislators thought it was too expensive. Today, if you catch somebody, they don’t know what to do with them. He hasn’t committed the crime, but he may, very well. And there’s no mental institution, there’s no place to bring them. And we have that a lot. Even if they caught this person — I’m being nice when I use the word ‘person’ — they probably wouldn’t have known what to do. They’re not going to put them in jail. And yet — so there’s none of that middle ground of having that institution, where you had trained people that could handle it and

do something about it and find out how sick he really is. Because he is a sick guy. And he should have been nabbed a number of times, frankly.”^[30]

- **Trump on allowing teachers, administrators, and school support staff to carry firearms:** “Your concept and your idea about — it’s called concealed carry — and it only works where you have people very adept at using firearms, of which you have many, and it would be teachers and coaches. If the coach had a firearm in his locker when he ran at this guy — that coach was very brave. Saved a lot of lives, I suspect. But if he had a firearm, he wouldn’t have had to run; he would have shot and that would have been the end of it. And this would only be, obviously, for people that are very adept at handling a gun. And it would be — it’s called concealed carry, where a teacher would have a concealed gun on them. They’d go for special training. And they would be there, and you would no longer have a gun-free zone. A gun-free zone to a maniac — because they’re all cowards — a gun-free zone is, let’s go in and let’s attack, because bullets aren’t coming back at us. ... So let’s say you had 20 percent of your teaching force, because that’s pretty much the number — and you said it — an attack has lasted, on average, about three minutes. It takes five to eight minutes for responders, for the police, to come in. So the attack is over. If you had a teacher with — who was adept at firearms, they could very well end the attack very quickly.”^[30]
- **Trump on increasing school security:** “I really believe that if these cowards knew that the school was well-guarded, from the standpoint of having, pretty much, professionals with great training, I think they wouldn’t go into the school to start off with.”^[30]

February 20, 2018: Trump issues memorandum on bump stocks

On February 20, 2018, President Donald Trump issued a memorandum requiring the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to consider whether the definition of machinegun under federal law includes bump stocks, devices that allow semi-automatic firearms to fire faster.^[27]

The memorandum stated, “Today, I am directing the Department of Justice to dedicate all available resources to complete the review of the comments received, and, as expeditiously as possible, to propose for notice and comment a rule banning all devices that turn legal weapons into machineguns.”^[27]

During the announcement, Trump said, “That process began in December and just a few moments ago I signed a memorandum directing the Attorney General to propose regulations to ban all devices that turn legal weapons into machine guns. I expect that these critical regulations will be finalized, Jeff [Sessions], very soon.” The DOJ began the review in October 2017, after a shooter who used a bump stock device killed 58 people at a country music concert in Las Vegas, Nevada.^[28]

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders commented on the memorandum, saying, “He ordered the Department of Justice and the ATF to review the regulation of bump stocks. My understanding is that review has been completed and movement will take place on that shortly. ... The president doesn't support the use of those accessories.”^[28]

Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) commented on the memorandum, saying, “Sign after sign this week that we've hit a fulcrum point in this debate where politicians are, for the first time, scared on the political consequences of inaction on guns. Small, but vital step in the history of our movement.”^[28]

February 19, 2018: Trump supports improving federal background check system

On February 19, 2018, White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said that President Donald Trump “is supportive of efforts to improve the federal background check system.”^[32]

Sanders said that Trump spoke with Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) about a bill he and Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) introduced that would “require states and federal agencies to produce plans to report offenses that would bar people from passing a check needed to purchase a firearm. It also reiterates that federal agencies must report all violations to the National Instant Criminal Background Check system and creates new financial incentives for states to report information,” according to *The Hill*. Sanders said that discussions about the bill were “ongoing and revisions are being considered.” The National Rifle Association (NRA) said that it supports the legislation.^[32]

The debate over gun-related legislation was reignited after a gunman killed 17 at a high school in Parkland, Florida.

February 16, 2018: Sessions orders review of FBI's and DOJ's procedures for handling tips related to public safety

On February 16, 2018, Attorney General Jeff Sessions said that he would order a review of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) and U.S. Department of Justice's procedures for handling tips it receives from the public. The investigation came after the FBI acknowledged that a tip about the shooter in the Parkland, Florida, school shooting that resulted in the deaths of 17 individuals was not handled properly. According to *The Hill*, the person who called in the tip warned the FBI about the shooter's “gun ownership, mental stability and desire to kill, and expressed concern that he could potentially carry out a school shooting.” The FBI said that the tip “should have been assessed as a potential threat to life.”^[33]

Speaking about the failure, Sessions said, “It is now clear that the warning signs were there and tips to the FBI were missed. We see the tragic consequences of those failures. The FBI in conjunction with our state and local partners must act flawlessly to prevent all attacks. This is imperative, and we must do better.”^[33]

Florida Gov. Rick Scott (R) called for FBI Director Christopher Wray to resign because of the FBI's failure to properly investigate the tip.^[33]

November 22, 2017: Sessions orders review of background check system

On November 22, 2017, after a gunman killed 26 people at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, Attorney General Jeff Sessions issued a memorandum ordering the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to review the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS).^[34]

Sessions wrote, "NICS was designed to help keep firearms out of the hands of convicted felons, domestic violence offenders, and others who are prohibited from possessing firearms, including those prohibited due to reasons related to mental health. NICS is critically important to protecting the American public from firearms-related violence. It is, however, only as reliable and robust as the information that federal, state, local, and tribal government entities make available to it. The recent tragedy in Sutherland Springs, Texas has revealed that the U.S. Air Force and other military branches may not be fully reporting relevant information to NICS. This is an alarming revelation that must be addressed."^[34]

The memorandum directed the FBI and ATF to "work with the Department of Defense to identify and resolve any issues with the military's reporting of convictions and other information relevant to determining prohibited person status" and make sure that other entities were accurately reporting information to NICS.^[34]

According to *The Hill*, the Air Force failed to report the Texas gunman's domestic violence conviction into NICS. Doing so would have prevented him from purchasing a firearm.^[35]

Trump administration officials on laws governing guns and firearms

President Donald Trump on laws governing guns and firearms



- On April 28, 2018, during a speech at the National Rifle Association Leadership Forum, Trump promised to protect the rights of law-abiding gun owners. He said, "The eight-year assault on your Second Amendment freedoms has come to a crashing end. You have a true friend and champion in the White House. No

longer will federal agencies be coming after law-abiding gun owners. No longer will the government be trying to undermine your rights and your freedoms as Americans. Instead, we will work with you, by your side. We will work with the NRA to

The First 100 Days

In the first 100 days of the Trump administration, no significant changes were made to laws governing guns and firearms. Trump was, however, the first sitting president to address the National Rifle Association Leadership Forum since President Ronald Reagan in 1983.

promote responsible gun ownership, to protect our wonderful hunters and their access to the very beautiful outdoors. ... And we want to ensure you of the sacred right of self-defense for all of our citizens.”^[36]

- Trump also spoke about gun bans, saying, “Our police and sheriffs also know that when you ban guns, only the criminals will be armed. (Applause.) For too long, Washington has gone after law-abiding gun owners while making life easier for criminals, drug dealers, traffickers and gang members. MS-13—you know about MS-13? It’s not pleasant for them anymore, folks.”^[36]
- On March 28, 2018, Trump tweeted, “THE SECOND AMENDMENT WILL NEVER BE REPEALED! As much as Democrats would like to see this happen, and despite the words yesterday of former Supreme Court Justice Stevens, NO WAY. We need more Republicans in 2018 and must ALWAYS hold the Supreme Court!” Trump was referring to an op-ed written by former Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens. Stevens wrote that students and anti-gun violence advocates “should demand a repeal of the Second Amendment.”^[37]
- On February 22, 2018, Trump spoke about the National Rifle Association (NRA) and possible gun-related legislation. He said, “I don’t think I’ll be going up against them [the NRA]. ... I think we’re making a lot of progress and I can tell you there’s a tremendous feeling that we want to get something done. And we’re leading that feeling, I hope, but it is a great feeling, including at the NRA, including with Republican senators and hopefully Democrat senators and congressmen.” He said that the NRA would back the proposal to raise the age to purchase a rifle to 21, a proposal Trump said he supports.^[38]
- The NRA said that it opposed proposals to raise the age to purchase a rifle. NRA spokeswoman Jennifer Baker said, “Legislative proposals that prevent law-abiding adults aged 18–20 years old from acquiring rifles and shotguns effectively prohibits them for purchasing any firearm, thus depriving them of their constitutional right to self-protection. We need serious proposals to prevent violent criminals and the dangerously mentally ill from acquiring firearms. Passing a law that makes it illegal for a 20-year-old to purchase a shotgun for hunting or an adult single mother from purchasing the most effective self-defense rifle on the market punishes law-abiding citizens for the evil acts of criminals.”^[38]
- On February 22, 2018, Trump wrote in a tweet, “I will be strongly pushing Comprehensive Background Checks with an emphasis on Mental Health. Raise age to 21 and end sale of Bump Stocks! Congress is in a mood to finally do something on this issue - I hope!”^[39]
- On February 22, 2018, Trump said that he did not support arming teachers. He wrote in a series of tweets, I never said 'give teachers guns' like was stated on Fake News @CNN & @NBC. What I said was to look at the possibility of giving concealed guns to gun adept teachers with military or special training experience - only the best. 20% of

teachers, a lot, would now be able to immediately fire back if a savage sicko came to a school with bad intentions. Highly trained teachers would also serve as a deterrent to the cowards that do this. Far more assets at much less cost than guards. A 'gun free' school is a magnet for bad people. **ATTACKS WOULD END!** History shows that a school shooting lasts, on average, 3 minutes. It takes police & first responders approximately 5 to 8 minutes to get to site of crime. Highly trained, gun adept, teachers/coaches would solve the problem instantly, before police arrive. **GREAT DETERRENT!** If a potential 'sicko shooter' knows that a school has a large number of very weapons talented teachers (and others) who will be instantly shooting, the sicko will **NEVER** attack that school. Cowards won't go there...problem solved. Must be offensive, defense alone won't work!"^[40]

- On February 17, 2018, Trump wrote in a tweet, "Just like they don't want to solve the DACA problem, why didn't the Democrats pass gun control legislation when they had both the House & Senate during the Obama Administration. Because they didn't want to, and now they just talk!"^[41]
- On November 7, 2017, after a gunman killed 26 people at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, Texas, Trump was asked if he would consider "extreme vetting for people trying to buy a gun," as he proposed for people trying to enter the country. Trump said, "Well, you're bringing up a situation that probably shouldn't be discussed too much right now. We could let a little time go by, but it's okay. If you feel that that's an appropriate question, even though we're in the heart of South Korea, I will certainly answer your question. If you did what you're suggesting, there would have been no difference three days ago, and you might not have had that very brave person who happened to have a gun or a rifle in his truck go out and shoot him, and hit him and neutralize him. And I can only say this: If he didn't have a [gun], instead of having 26 dead, you would have had hundreds more dead. So that's the way I feel about it. Not going to help." The reporter then asked if Trump was considering any kind of gun control policy. Trump said, "I mean, you look at the city with the strongest gun laws in our nation, is Chicago, and Chicago is a disaster. It's a total disaster. Just remember, if this man didn't have a gun or rifle, you'd be talking about a much worse situation in the great state of Texas."^[42]
- According to his presidential transition website, Trump said that he was committed to protecting an individual citizen's right to keep and bear arms, as guaranteed by the United States Constitution. Trump's website stated: "He will defend Americans' fundamental rights to free speech, religious liberty, keeping and bearing arms, and all other rights guaranteed to them in the Bill of Rights and other constitutional provisions."^[43]
- On June 15, 2016, Donald Trump tweeted that he planned to meet with the National Rifle Association (NRA) to discuss "not allowing people on the terrorist watch list, or the no fly list, to buy guns." The NRA's Institute for Legislative Action responded in a statement that it would be "happy to meet with Donald Trump" and that it "believes that terrorists should not be allowed to purchase or possess firearms, period."^[44]^[45]

- The National Rifle Association (NRA) endorsed Trump's bid for president on May 20, 2016. Chris Cox, executive director of the NRA, said in a statement, "If Hillary Clinton gets the opportunity to replace Antonin Scalia with an anti-gun Supreme Court justice, we will lose the individual right to keep a gun in the home for self-defense. ... So the choice for gun owners in this election is clear. And that choice is Donald Trump."^[46]
- During the sixth Republican presidential primary debate, on January 14, 2016, Donald Trump discussed his position on the Second Amendment. He said, "I am a Second amendment person. If we had guns in California on the other side where the bullets went in the different direction, you wouldn't have 14 or 15 people dead right now. If even in Paris, if they had guns on the other side, going in the opposite direction, you wouldn't have 130 people plus dead. So the answer is no and what Jeb said is absolutely correct. We have a huge mental health problem in this country. We're closing hospitals, we're closing wards, we're closing so many because the states want to save money. We have to get back into looking at what's causing it. The guns don't pull the trigger. It's the people that pull the trigger and we have to find out what is going on. We have to protect our 2nd amendment and you cannot do this and certainly what Barack Obama was doing with the executive order. He doesn't want to get people together, the old-fashioned way, where you get Congress. You get the Congress, you get the Senate, you get together, you do legislation. He just writes out an executive order. Not supposed to happen that way."^[47]

During the 2016 presidential campaign, Trump expressed his support for upholding the Second Amendment. He said that he opposed gun-free zones, and he said that he supported individual citizens carrying concealed guns. **[Click here to read more of Trump's public comments on laws governing guns and firearms before and during the 2016 presidential election.](#)**

Vice President Mike Pence on laws governing guns and firearms



- In 2014, Mike Pence signed into law a bill allowing individuals with concealed carry permits to keep a gun in their car in school parking lots. During an interview with *Real Clear Politics*, Chris Wallace asked Pence, "[D]o we really need guns closer to schools?" Pence replied, "I have strongly supported the right to keep and bear arms. I truly believe that firearms in the hands of law abiding citizen's makes our families and our communities more safe, not less safe. And the bill that we just signed here in Indiana really was a common sense reform. We actually have parents that had a permit to conceal and carry a weapon that we're finding themselves guilty of a felony just by dropping their kids off to school. So we just—we made a modest change, a common sense change in Indiana law. And I strongly supported it."^[48]

[Click here to read more of Pence's public comments on laws governing guns and firearms.](#)

Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar on laws governing guns and firearms

- On February 15, 2018, during a hearing before the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Democrats on the panel asked Azar if he would allow the Department of Health and Human Services to research the causes of gun violence. Azar said, "We believe we've got a very important mission with our work with serious mental illness as well as our ability to do research on the causes of violence and the causes behind tragedies like this so that is a priority for us especially at the Centers for Disease Control." The tragedy Azar was referring to was the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, on February 14, 2018, that left 17 dead.^[49]

115th Congress on laws governing guns and firearms

Legislation

YEA HR 4909—the STOP School Violence Act of 2018

On March 14, 2018, the House passed HR 4909—the STOP School Violence Act of 2018—by a vote of 407-10. The bill proposed providing funding for the following:^{[50][51]}

- Training for local law enforcement, school staff, and students to prevent school violence, including active shooter training;
- Anonymous reporting systems to notify law enforcement officials of potential threats of violence, metal detectors, locks, and other school safety equipment and technology;
- School threat assessment and crisis intervention teams; and
- Coordination with law enforcement.

It did not include any gun-related measures.

YEA HR 38—the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017 and Fix NICS Act

On December 6, 2017, the House passed HR 38—the Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act of 2017—by a vote of 231-198. The bill proposed allowing gun owners who legally carry concealed firearms in one state to carry them in other states that allow individuals to carry concealed firearms, even if states have different rules and requirements. The bill was combined with the Fix NICS Act, which proposed penalizing agencies that fail to report criminal history records to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). The NICS database allows gun sellers to determine whether a prospective buyer is eligible to buy firearms.^{[52][53]}

Democrats supported the background check measure but opposed the concealed carry reciprocity proposal. Rep. Elizabeth Esty (D-Conn.) called the bill a “reckless giveaway” to the gun lobby. She added, “This bill would override and lower most states’ concealed-carry laws.”^[54]

Rep. Richard Hudson (R-N.C.), who introduced the bill, said, it was “a common-sense measure that upholds our constitutional right.”^[54]

Senate Majority Whip John Cornyn (R-Texas) said it would be difficult for the bill to earn 60 votes for passage in the Senate. Cornyn said, “I support both of those bills, but I recognize that if you combine them, it makes it much harder to pass the consensus bill, which is the Fix NICS bill. It’s important enough that we ought to handle those sequentially, would be my advice, as opposed to combining them.”^[54]

YEA HJ Res 40—Nullifying a rule pertaining to the NICS database

Congress passed HJ Res 40, which nullified a rule that required the Social Security Administration to submit the names of individuals who received disability benefits and had a mental illness to the FBI to be entered into the National Instant Criminal History Background Check System (NICS). The NICS database is used to make sure an individual can purchase a firearm. The rule was finalized by the Social Security Administration on December 19, 2016, shortly before President Barack Obama (D) left office.^[55]

It passed the House on February 2, 2017, by a vote of 235-180. It passed the Senate on February 15, 2017, by a vote of 57-43. President Donald Trump signed it into law on February 22, 2017.^{[56][57]}

Members of Congress on laws governing guns and firearms

- **March 28, 2018:** Senator Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) said during a taping of her podcast in Los Angeles that many people who are in favor of heightened gun control do not have an adequate understanding of the importance of the Second Amendment. In regards to gun violence in schools, Heitkamp argued that the guns are not the main issue, saying, “I think if we only focus on guns, I think we will miss the opportunity to really fix this problem.”^[58]
- **March 14, 2018:** Speaking about the STOP School Violence Act, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan said, “We believe that the best focus can be on stopping people who should not get guns from getting any kind of gun, period. We sent legislation to the Senate in December. Hopefully, the Senate can act on that legislation. In the meantime, we believe that we can make great progress on the STOP School Violence Act, which we’re passing today.”^[59]
- **March 14, 2018:** While speaking at a student rally against gun violence, Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) said, “We are very proud of what you are doing. All across the country people are sick and tired of gun violence, and the time is now for all of us together to stand up to the NRA and to pass commonsense gun legislation.”^[59]
- **February 22, 2018:** After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, congressional Democrats were split over how they should approach firearm issues in the 2018 midterm elections. While some, including Rep. Mike Thompson (D-Calif.), argued that pushing for legislation to address the issue would help

their campaigns to take both the Senate and the House of Representatives out of Republican control, others argued that the issue does not favor Democrats in many areas. *The Hill* called the approach of Democrats representing more conservative areas, like Senators Joe Manchin (D-W.Va.) and Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), as "understated," because they were more vulnerable in 2018. A spokeswoman for the campaign arm of the House Democrats, Meredith Kelly, cited the "geographical and culturally diverse House battlefield," to explain why the Democratic Party did not have a nation-wide message for gun laws.^[60]

- **February 21, 2018:** During a CNN town hall, Senator Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) said that he supported raising the minimum age to purchase a rifle. He also said that he was open to expanding background checks, banning large-capacity magazines, and that he was against the sale of bump stocks.^[61]
- **February 18, 2018:** Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-Fla.) discussed gun safety laws after a school shooting in Parkland, Florida, left 17 dead. He said, "What we need is congressional leaders, specifically in my party, to allow some of these bills to come to the floor for debate. There are a lot of Republicans who are prepared to support reasonable, common-sense gun safety laws, new laws, stronger laws that protect rights for responsible citizens, people who are responsible gun owners, but will prevent those who want to do harm to innocent people from obtaining these weapons. ... We've kind of inherited this world of binary choices where we either have to repeal the Second Amendment or have no gun safety regulations whatsoever, and younger generations of Americans don't see the world that way."^[62]
- **February 18, 2018:** After a school shooting at a high school in Parkland, Florida, some students called on Congress to take action to prevent gun violence. During an interview, Rep. Ted Deutch (D-Fla.) addressed their call, saying, "The difference this time is that these kids — you've spoken to them — the world has heard them, they're just not going to sit back after what they experienced, after what they saw, the worst things imaginable, they're not going to just sit back and take it. They're going to stand up for their lives, that's what this is about, and all of the excuses that are normally given about not getting things done and the difficulty of fighting outside groups and the gun lobby, none of that is as powerful as these students."^[63]
- **February 18, 2018:** During an interview, Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.) was asked if it should be harder to buy an AR-15, the rifle that was legally purchased and used in a high school shooting in Parkland, Florida. Lankford said, "I actually don't think it should be. I think what should be is difficult for any person with any kind of criminal background history, domestic violence, mental instability, all those things, regardless. I don't care whether they're buying a .22 pistol or an AR-15. The problem is not owning an AR-15, it's the person that owns it."^[64]
- **February 15, 2018:** Rep. Bob Goodlatte (R-Va.) said that Congress should consider allowing the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to study gun violence as a public health issue. He said, "If it relates to mental health, that certainly should be done. I don't think it's inappropriate — particularly if the original author of that says it

should be examined — to take a look at it to see if there is a way to do that, to promote the cause, the core pursuit of the Centers for Disease Control, which is to prevent disease, not to address issues related to things that happen because someone has a disease like mental illness.”^[65]

- **February 15, 2018:** House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) blamed Republicans and the gun lobby for the actions of a gunman who killed 17 people at a Florida high school. She said, “It’s an assault on our whole country, and they are paying the price for our inaction. Whose political survival, in this body, is more important than the survival of our children? ... Whose political survival is more important than that? Nobody’s. Nobody’s.” Pelosi called on Congress to consider legislation to expand background checks, to use federal dollars to examine gun violence, and to create a special committee to address gun violence.^[66]
- On the same day, Speaker of the House Paul Ryan (R-Wis.) said that he would not create a special committee to address gun violence. Instead, he said Congress should address the connection between mental illness and gun violence. He said, “We want to make sure that if someone is in the mental health system, they don’t get a gun if they are not supposed to get a gun.” He also discussed legislation that was passed in 2016 regarding mental health programs. He said, “That legislation is now just taking place. The question is: are those laws where they need to be, are they being implemented properly, are they being enforced correctly?”^[66]
- **October 2, 2017:** After a gunman killed 58 people and injured 400 at a country music festival in Las Vegas on Sunday, October 1, 2017, Sen. Chris Murphy (D-Conn.) said in a statement, “This must stop. It is positively infuriating that my colleagues in Congress are so afraid of the gun industry that they pretend there aren’t public policy responses to this epidemic. The thoughts and prayers of politicians are cruelly hollow if they are paired with continued legislative indifference. It’s time for Congress to get off its ass and do something.”^[67]

The 2016 Republican Party Platform on the Second Amendment

The 2016 Republican Party Platform on the Second Amendment

[show]

See also

- Donald Trump

- Donald Trump presidential campaign, 2016/Gun control
- Multistate lawsuits against the federal government, 2017-2020

External links

- Search Google News for this topic
- Policy paper: "Donald J. Trump on the Right to Keep and Bear Arms"

Footnotes

1. *Congress.gov*, "H.R.8 - Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019," accessed February 27, 2019
2. *Clerk.House.gov*, "Final Vote Results for Roll Call 99," accessed February 27, 2019
3. *Congress.gov*, "H.R.8 - Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2019," accessed February 27, 2019
4. *Politico*, "House passes most sweeping gun control legislation in decades," February 27, 2019

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