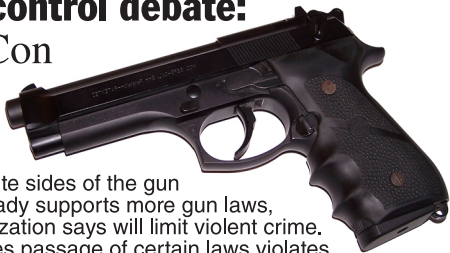


The gun control debate: Pro and Con

The Brady Campaign and the National Rifle Association

represent opposite sides of the gun control issue. Brady supports more gun laws, which the organization says will limit violent crime. The NRA believes passage of certain laws violates one's constitutional right to gun ownership.



The Brady Campaign uses a scorecard to rank state gun laws each year. Different issues get varying scores. Below are West Virginia's key issues along with arguments from both groups.

Universal background checks

Brady favors background checks for all gun sales, including gun shows, swap meets and private transactions. Brady takes particular issue with gun shows, where it believes all people selling guns should conduct background checks, including unlicensed individuals who occasionally sell guns.

NRA cites a federal study that states fewer than 1 percent of crime guns came from gun shows. NRA also believes there is no such thing as an unlicensed dealer. They believe current law mandates that anyone engaged in selling firearms must be licensed. Furthermore, NRA believes such proposals overreach and burden the law-abiding citizen.

Permit to purchase

Brady favors such a law to require gun buyers to obtain a license or undergo safety training prior to purchase. Such proposals also could require fingerprinting.

NRA argues any type of registration could aid confiscation of guns, which has occurred in other countries. It also argues criminals will never legally register their guns, and requiring legal gun owners to do so would create a huge bureaucracy.

Bulk purchase limits

Brady believes limiting the number of guns purchased at one time would slow traffickers, who it believes buy large quantities of guns for resale on the streets.

NRA believes such limits do nothing to reduce crime and burdens law-abiding citizens. The proposal also is based upon the premise that criminals obey the law.