

Greater Denver Million Mom Chapter, P.O. Box 100432, Denver, CO 80250-0432
www.mmmdenver.org mmm_denver_chapter@yahoo.com 303-302-3300

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HAVE YOU READ ALL 7 GUN INDUSTRY WATCH REPORTS?

The Brady Center has issued another report, *Shady Dealings: Illegal Gun Trafficking From Licensed Gun Dealers*. Go to www.bradycenter.org/gunindustrywatch and read all the reports in the Gun Industry Watch series.

HIGH PROFILE SHOOTINGS SINCE 1997

81 people are killed by firearms every day. The Brady Campaign has mapped out over 50 shootings, which grabbed our attention but didn't move our elected officials to offer any solution—only condolences. www.bradycampaign.org/facts/highprofile/

81 DEATHS – WHO ARE THEY?

The New York Times has printed a dramatic graphic which gives us an accounting of daily guns deaths. Everyday 25 white men over 40 where suicides and 6 black men between 18-25 are murdered. www.nytimes.com/imagepages/2007/04/21/weekinreview/20070422_MARSH_GRAPHIC.html

April 16 - 32 Dead, 15 Wounded

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of the horrific shootings at Virginia Tech and with the families, students and community.

Our society does not address nor adequately assists people with mental health problems. Budgets have been cut both at the state and federal level. Medical health insurance provides very little counseling and depends mainly on medication. Medication is not enough.

With a mental health care crisis; the inability of the community, institutions and law enforcement to recognize warning signs; and easy access to firearms, we'll see the likes of Columbine, Bailey and Virginia Tech again and again. So what do we do?

Why don't we begin an open and honest dialogue on prevention because it's just too costly to continue to do nothing?

Question of the Day

Could reasonable gun laws have prevented this horrendous tragedy?

As a foreign national with permanent residency, the shooter was legally able to purchase a firearm because he passed a background check. But we later found out that he was likely a prohibited purchaser under existing federal law. In 2005, Cho was declared a danger himself and others and ordered to undergo treatment.

Federal background checks (NICS) will only look to **court-ordered** treatment for mental disorders to deny purchase. However, **not all states provide this information**, nor do they provide **timely** updated information regarding **restraining orders and domestic violence violations**.

Because of the delay in updating NICS databases, some states use both their system and NICS when performing background checks. Colorado uses both its own and the NICS system. Mental health adjudication information was only added to Colorado's background checks in 2002.

Recognizing the inconsistent and poor quality data within NICS, Rep. Carolyn McCarthy introduced a bill in 2002 to require states to provide the FBI with all relevant records necessary to conduct criminal background checks, including mental health records. This passed the House but not the Senate. It was introduced in both the 108th and the 109th Congress, going nowhere. It has been introduced this year as H.R. 297. [This bill should be passed and signed into law.](#)

Prior to 2004, NICS records were kept for 90 days to allow FBI review. Also, a sale had to be finalized within a 3-day period regardless of whether the background check was complete. Afterward, if the FBI received information from a state or local law enforcement agency, a court, or other source showing that the purchaser should have been prohibited from possessing a firearm, they would then initiate firearm retrieval actions.

In 2001, Atty. General Ashcroft proposed that those records be destroyed after 24 hours. A 2002 GAO report recommended keeping records for 90 days. It revealed that in the six-month period of the study, the FBI used retained records to initiate 235 firearm retrieval actions. 97 percent of those could not have been initiated under the proposed next day destruction policy. But Ashcroft implemented the policy change, which was later passed into law by Congress and went into affect on July 21, 2004. [The 90-day review should be reinstalled.](#)

Question of the Day, continued

The Assault Weapons Ban, which expired in 2004, contained a ban on the manufacture and importation of large-capacity clips. Prior to passage, the AWB was weakened to allow the sale of existing large-capacity clips. The gun industry over-manufactured and stockpiled large-capacity clips so they would be available for the 10+ years the AWB was enforced. A smaller clip would have meant the shooter would have to stop and reload more frequently giving law enforcement or others a chance to overcome him and giving students the time to get away. This ban should be reinstated.

But what about the illegal market?

Most people believe that guns used in crime are stolen from homes and enter the illegal market. This is incorrect. Criminals like a gun without history.

During the Clinton administration, the ATF released gun-trace data. Analysis of this data proved that most crime guns come from licensed gun dealers. In fact, only 1.2 percent of dealers account for nearly 60 percent of all crime guns in 2000. "Virtually Every crime gun in the United States starts off as a legal firearm," the ATF's director wrote that year. "Unlike narcotics or other contraband, the criminals' supply of guns does not begin in clandestine factories or with illegal smuggling." These illegal guns end up in the hands of criminals and youth who use them to injure, maim and kill Americans at an alarming rate.

The ATF's oversight of the gun industry and enforcement power has been cut by Congress. The ATF doesn't have the manpower to monitor gun-dealer compliance. This results in less than 5 percent of dealers being inspected every year and little has been done to prosecute dealer dealers who engage in illegal gun trafficking. It takes years and is virtually impossible for the ATF to shutdown a corrupt dealer. ATF's funding and oversight should be restored.

In the majority of states, background checks are only performed on purchases by licensed gun dealers. If we're serious about keeping guns away from criminals, etc., background checks should be performed on **all purchases** including private and gun show sales.

We can't stop every tragedy, but a rational society should have thrown up roadblocks to someone like Cho from obtaining deadly weapons.

Where's Your Head At?

During this national tragedy, we wonder what was going through John Derbyshire's mind when he wrote "Spirit of Self-Defense" on his National Review blog. He wrote, "... let me be the one to ask: Where was the spirit of self-defense here? ... why didn't anyone rush the guy? It's not like this was Rambo, hosing the place down with automatic weapons. He had two handguns for goodness' sake—one of them reportedly a .22.

At the very least, count the shots and jump him reloading or changing hands. Better yet, just jump him. ... And even if hit, a .22 needs to find something important to do real damage—your chances aren't bad".

Mr. Derbyshire probably wishes he hadn't rushed to judgment. A doctor interviewed on TV said most students were shot a minimum of three—yes, **three times**. One of the guns was a Glock 19 with an exceptionally sensitive trigger pull. It takes a second or less to fire a shot. Using both guns, law enforcement said the killer fired 225 shots.

It's easy to have bravado sitting behind the computer and blame the victims who didn't have time to think, let alone react, for their deaths. Some of those who faced the gunman at Virginia Tech did selflessly risk their lives to save others. One of those was Engineering Professor Liviu Librescu, an Israeli Holocaust survivor, who blocked the killer from entering the room, urging students to escape. Many did. He was murdered on the spot.

Did You Know?

Katie Couric interviewed Paul Helmke, a Republican who is the former mayor of Fort Wayne, Indiana, former president of the U.S. Conference of Mayors, and President of The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, asking: Should government impose restrictions on what kind of guns can be sold, and to whom? Would those restrictions make us any safer? To read his response: www.cbsnews.com/blogs/2007/04/20/couricandco/entry2709838.shtml

The Christian Science Monitor reports support for common sense gun laws increasing. "Gun ownership is at the lowest level in three decades, and support for the regulation of firearms, which is always been high, has reached a new peak, according to one new poll. Some of the biggest supporters of gun-control are teenagers and college students." www.csmonitor.com/2007/0420/p03s02-ussc.html?page=1

More proof the citizens of this country want stronger gun laws. To the question, "In general, do you think gun control laws should be made stricter, less strict, or kept as they are now?" People responded: 51% - stricter, 10% - less strict, 35% - same. (Note: The percentage indicating laws should remain the same may be misleading. People often think background checks are performed on all gun sales and that permits are needed to own a firearm.) To read more polling results: pollingreport.com/guns2.htm