

Rep. Sargent: Close the background check loophole in Wisconsin- a pragmatic solution to a fixable problem

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MADISON –Representative Melissa Sargent (D-Madison) issued the following statement to announce the release of LRB-3949, regarding closing the background check loophole in Wisconsin.

“Everyone deserves to live in a safe community and without the fear of gun violence. Yet, here in Wisconsin, many firearm sales continue to be conducted without necessary background checks due allowing dangerous people unfettered access to guns. This is an egregious loophole in our laws. LRB-3949 ensures that all firearm sales (with reasonable exceptions) are vetted and properly checked, working to keep our kids, our communities, and our state safe.

Closing the background check loophole that exists in Wisconsin proves to be a pragmatic and popular solution to a fixable problem. In fact, over 80% of Wisconsin residents, including 78% of gun owning households, support the requirement of background checks for all gun purchases. In addition to strong public support, numerous police organizations, law enforcement leaders, a bipartisan group of lawmakers, and President Donald Trump, have shared their support for

strengthening background check laws and keeping firearms out of the hands of those who are attempting to access them illegally.

Currently, anyone who purchases a weapon from a federally-licensed firearms dealer has to undergo a background check. However, private-party transactions are not covered by the federal law, and as such no background checks are required in these cases. Unfortunately, a thriving business has now developed that allows people who are prohibited from owning guns to buy them 'legally' from non-licensed sellers—these include sales by private sellers at gun shows and flea markets, or by people who take out ads in the newspaper or on the internet.

To combat this public health crisis, LRB-3949 simply expands the requirement for a state background check to cover all firearm purchases in Wisconsin, in order to reduce illegal gun sales and transfers while simultaneously protecting the rights and liberties of responsible gun owners. Background checks have saved the lives of many innocent men, women, and children in other states, and it is time for Wisconsin to act.

We cannot wait any longer to take meaningful action in closing the background check loophole here in Wisconsin, and in keeping our families and communities safe. We cannot continue to stand idly by as senseless acts of gun violence plague our state and nation. We must listen to the voices of the people of Wisconsin, and take tangible steps to reduce gun violence. Continued inaction is complicity, and I implore my colleagues to join the over 80% of Wisconsinites who agree by supporting this essential bill.”