

BRADY CAMPAIGN TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

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BRADY CAMPAIGN STATE SCORECARD: ILLINOIS NEEDS TO IMPROVE LAWS ON BACKGROUND CHECKS

Washington, D.C. – While Illinois has some common sense gun laws, the state lacks many gun laws that would stop the flow of illegal guns and protect children, according to the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. In the organization’s 2009 state scorecards released today for all 50 states, Illinois earned just 28 points out of a total of 100.

“Illinois needs to do more in the 2010 legislature to improve its standing when it comes to common sense gun laws. Public officials in Illinois continue to make it too easy for dangerous people to get dangerous weapons,” says Jennifer Bishop Jenkins of the Illinois Million Mom March.

Advocates this year will look to strengthen Illinois gun laws by passing legislation to require Brady criminal background checks on all handgun purchases. “Every year, thousands of gun sales occur by unlicensed sellers without background checks on the purchasers. This “private sale loophole” results in guns getting into the hands of criminals who would otherwise not be able to buy firearms,” said Thom Mannard, Executive Director of the Illinois Citizens to Prevent Handgun Violence. “Requiring background checks for all unlicensed sales will reduce illegal trafficking and treat all transfers equally.”

“Residents of Illinois should urge their elected officials to strengthen the state laws that keep dangerous people from getting dangerous weapons,” said Paul Helmke, President of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence.

The state’s complete scorecard results can be accessed at www.bradycampaign.org. The categories covered by the Illinois 2009 scorecard are as follows:

- States can earn up to 35 points by taking steps needed to “Curb Firearm Trafficking.” States can fully regulate the gun dealers within their borders, limit bulk purchases of handguns, provide police certain technology to identify crime

guns, and require lost or stolen guns to be reported to the police. **Illinois scored four points in this category.**

- States can earn up to 27 points by “Strengthening Brady Background Checks.” This involves requiring background checks on all gun sales, requiring a permit in order to purchase firearms and laws regulating ammunition. Short of universal background checks, states can also close the gun show loophole, at least requiring background checks for all gun show sales. **Illinois scored ten points in this category.**
- States can earn up to 20 points by “Protecting Child Safety” when it comes to guns. States can require that only childproof handguns be sold within their borders, require child safety locks to be sold with each handgun, hold adults accountable for keeping guns away from kids and teens, and require handgun purchasers to be at least 21 years of age. **Illinois scored six points in this category.**
- States can earn up to 10 points by “Banning Military-style Assault Weapons,” as well as banning high-capacity ammunition magazines. **Illinois scored zero points in this category.**
- States can earn up to eight points by restricting most “Guns In Public Places” to trained law enforcement and security and by allowing localities to “Preserve Local Control” over municipal gun laws. This includes keeping guns out of workplaces and college campuses, not forcing law enforcement to issue concealed handgun permits on demand and not preventing municipalities from passing their own gun laws. **Illinois scored eight points in this category.**

Brady Campaign officials acknowledge the research of Legal Community Against Violence on state gun laws. Their publication, “Regulating Guns in America,” and website served as a basis for our analysis. For more information about Legal Community Against Violence, see www.lcav.org.

As the nation's largest, non-partisan, grassroots organization leading the fight to prevent gun violence, the Brady Campaign, with its dedicated network of Million Mom March Chapters, works to enact and enforce sensible gun laws, regulations and public policies. The Brady Campaign is devoted to creating an America free from gun violence, where all Americans are safe at home, at school, at work, and in our communities.

For continuing insight and comment on the gun issue, read Paul Helmke's blog at www.bradycampaign.org/blog/. Visit the Brady Campaign website at www.bradycampaign.org.

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