



Democrat Spending Bill Contains ‘Serious Expansion of Federal Gun Control’: Gun Rights Group

Description

Democrats’ \$1.5 trillion omnibus spending package, unveiled early Wednesday, includes provisions that constitute “a serious expansion of federal gun control” according to the National Association for Gun Rights.

Specifically, the omnibus bill includes the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Though there is bipartisan consensus that violence against women is bad—more limited forms of the bill have passed through bipartisan votes since the first draft was introduced in 1994—more recent forms of the legislation have been controversial with Republicans for provisions relating to gun ownership.

Due to continued efforts by Democrats to include gun control measures in the legislation, the bill was last passed into law in 2013, and has faced steep opposition from pro-Second Amendment Republicans since then.

Currently, almost all firearm sales require a background check through the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Purchasers who are tagged as having a criminal background barring them from possessing a firearm are tagged in the system and are not allowed to carry out the purchase.

However, VAWA takes this system much further.

Under its provisions, the attorney general is required “to issue a notice to State, local, or Tribal law enforcement and prosecutors if an individual has attempted to purchase a firearm and been denied pursuant to the national instant criminal background check system.”

In other words, an attempt to buy a firearm while legally barred from owning one can be met with criminal investigation.

In a statement, the National Association for Gun Rights (NAGR) warned that this system is dangerous.

“Over 95 percent of all NICS denials are false positives, which means all local and state police would be required to investigate law-abiding citizens when they’re wrongly and unconstitutionally denied the right to purchase a firearm,” NAGR said.

“Make no mistake—the NICS denial reporting embedded inside the Violence Against Women Act constitutes a serious expansion of federal gun control,” said Dudley Brown, president of the NAGR. “Not only does it rapidly expand federal gun control policy, it would actually endanger women, not keep them safe.”

Brown also argued that women would be hurt by the bill, which could deny them the right to get a firearm while allowing their abusers to slide past the system.

“Quite literally we will find ourselves in a situation where law-abiding women who need to arm themselves for self-defense get wrongfully denied a firearm purchase when the National Instant Check System wrongly flags them, and then find themselves being investigated by the cops for doing nothing wrong,” Brown said.

“Meanwhile their abusers will be able to come after them knowing they’re likely to be unarmed. This is truly sickening expansion of gun control and it should be opposed by every pro-gun Member of Congress.”

Gun Owners of America (GOA), another Second Amendment advocacy group, agreed.

“The inclusion of the VAWA gun control provisions is a blatant attempt to restrict the Second Amendment and override [Second Amendment] sanctuary state laws,” Aidan Johnston, GOA’s Director of Federal Affairs, told the Epoch Times. “Even worse, anti-gun Democrats have circumvented typical congressional procedures to sneak this gun control through in the middle of the night on a spending bill.”

The draft of VAWA included in the omnibus bill is less expansive than other forms of the same legislation has been.

Proponents of gun control have long pushed for federal law to close the so-called “boyfriend loophole.” Though domestic abusers are prohibited from possessing a firearm arm if they were married to the person they abused, many state and federal laws do not extend the same prohibition to unmarried couples.

To close this loophole, some Democrats and gun control groups have called for federal law to prohibit unmarried domestic abusers as well as those who are or were married to the person they abused.

The omnibus bill’s draft of VAWA would not do so, as the measure has faced criticism from gun rights advocacy groups in the past.

In a February statement on the latest draft of VAWA Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), a proponent of the bill, admitted that the bill “is not perfect,” but insisted that it would strengthen “existing programs to support survivors and to prevent and to respond to domestic violence, and that’s dating violence and sexual assault and stalking.”

After a draft of the bill closing the “boyfriend loophole” passed the House in 2021—later to fail in the

Senate—the Brady Campaign, a gun control advocacy group, applauded the bill, saying it contained “common-sense solutions” and showed “the clear need to stop violence against women.”

Though this draft of the bill is somewhat less expansive than previous drafts have been, it could endanger the omnibus package in the Senate, where a bill must achieve at least 60-votes to end debate before it can go to a simple majority floor vote. If at least 41 senators oppose the measure, the bill would fail in the Senate, potentially sending Democrats scrambling to beat the deadline for a government shutdown set to begin late on Friday.

By Joseph Lord

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