

VERN BUCHANAN

REPRESENTING FLORIDA

Buchanan Calls on U.S. Senate to Pass Background Checks

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One of 8 Republicans to Support in House. Gaping Loopholes Allow Criminals and Mentally Deranged to Buy Guns

SARASOTA — Congressman Vern Buchanan today sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell urging him to swiftly pass a gun background check bill when the Senate reconvenes next month.

Buchanan was one of eight Republicans to vote for the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act* (H.R. 8) earlier this year requiring all gun purchasers to pass an FBI background check. Under current law, an estimated 22 percent of gun buyers evade the screening by buying guns over the Internet, at gun shows or through private sales.

“Our laws cannot be effective if there are gaping loopholes that allow criminals and deranged individuals to purchase firearms over the Internet or at gun shows without background checks,” **Buchanan said.**

In his letter to McConnell, the congressman said, “I applaud you for your recent comments on the need to consider legislation expanding gun background checks and red flag laws in the wake of the horrific shootings in El Paso and Dayton. I also urge you to work expeditiously to ensure that these important measures pass with strong bipartisan support.”

H.R. 8, which passed the House and was sent to the Senate, provides several exemptions, allowing the transfer of guns between close family members, law enforcement, in an area designated for target shooting and for hunting, trapping and fishing. Currently, federal law only requires licensed gun dealers to conduct background checks. Under this bill, non-gun dealers who sell firearms would be required to have a background check conducted by a licensed dealer before selling the gun.

Buchanan added that he, “would also like to see Congress consider red flag laws, also known as extreme-risk protection orders, like the one signed into law by then-Florida Gov. Rick Scott.”

Buchanan was one of the first members of Congress to call for banning bump stocks after the device, which effectively turns a semi-automatic firearm into an automatic weapon, was used in the deadly Las Vegas shooting in 2017. He also supported the *Stop School Violence Act* and the *Fix NICS Act* to improve the national database of people who are adjudicated mentally ill or otherwise disqualified from buying guns. Buchanan also supports the Pollack Plan – an eight-point school safety proposal advanced by Andrew Pollack, whose daughter was killed in the Parkland school shooting last year.

The [full text of the letter](#) is below:

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

I applaud you for your recent comments on the need to consider legislation expanding gun background checks and red flag laws in the wake of the horrific shootings in El Paso and Dayton. I also urge you to work expeditiously to ensure that these important measures pass with strong bipartisan support.

Like you, I am a strong supporter of the 2nd Amendment, but our laws cannot be effective if there are gaping loopholes that allow criminals and deranged individuals to purchase firearms over the Internet or at gun shows without background checks.

A staggering 22 percent of gun owners who purchased a firearm within the last two years did so without a background check. That’s why I voted in favor of the *Bipartisan Background Checks Act* (H.R. 8), legislation to expand background checks for gun purchases and close these dangerous loopholes. It provides several common-sense exemptions, allowing the transfer of guns between close family members, law enforcement and hunters.

More than 90 percent of gun owners - and the rest of America - support this approach.

I would also like to see Congress consider red flag laws, also known as extreme-risk protection orders, like the one signed into law by then-Florida Gov. Rick Scott. Disturbing revelations about the shooters in El Paso, Dayton and Parkland highlight the need to allow courts to issue temporary orders barring individuals from possessing guns based on some showing of imminent danger or threats, while providing important due process protections.

Last year, Congress proved it is capable of coming together on a bipartisan basis to find meaningful ways to address senseless violence by passing the *Stop School Violence Act* and the *Fix NICS Act*. These new laws will help train students, school personnel and law enforcement to more easily identify early warning signs of violence as well as improve the national database of people who are adjudicated mentally ill or otherwise disqualified from buying guns.

I appreciate your steadfast commitment to reducing gun violence, and I look forward to your prompt response on this important matter.

Sincerely,

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