

McCarthy and Israel to introduce bill to keep guns out of terrorists' hands and to keep cops safe

Washington, DC—Today, May 13, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. Rep. Carolyn McCarthy (NY-04) and Steve Israel (NY-02) will host a press conference to announce the introduction of the No Fly, No Buy Act, which seeks to close the 'terror gap' by preventing people whose names appear on the Transportation Security Administration's terrorist "no fly list" from being eligible to buy guns. At the event, Reps. McCarthy and Israel will be flanked by law enforcement officials and will be joined by the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence to highlight the importance of keeping guns out of the hands of people that are known or suspected terrorists and their continued commitment to fighting to strengthen gun violence prevention laws that protect police and our communities.

Under current law, terrorist watch list checks are not part of the Brady background check process, because being a suspected or known terrorist was and is not a disqualifying factor for firearm transfer/possession eligibility. The No Fly No Buy Act seeks to correct this serious loophole in our nation's gun laws.

"For far too long, the 'terror gap' has left a wide open loophole in our nation's gun safety laws that could allow terrorist to acquire guns the same way any law abiding citizen can. The No Fly, No Buy Act uses existing TSA data to update the NICS system with the names of known or suspected terrorists to disqualify them from passing the Brady Background Check. This is a common sense gun bill that will prevent guns from falling into the wrong hands," said Rep. McCarthy.

"Gun safety measures like the 'No Fly, No Buy' Act should be a no brainer for every Member of Congress. It's common sense legislation. I'm proud to be introducing this bill with Congresswoman McCarthy. She's on a mission to end gun violence in this country, and for as long as I've been in Congress I've been proud to support her in those efforts," said Rep. Steve Israel.

Newly released FBI data documents 230 occasions in 2006 where persons on the violent gang and terrorist watch list were able to purchase guns. Furthermore, in January 2005, the GAO reported that in a five-month period—February 3, 2004 through June 30, 2004—NICS checks resulted in an estimated 650 terrorist-related record hits in their databases. Of these, 44 were found to be valid. However, 35 of these transactions were allowed to proceed because being identified as a known or suspected terrorist is not grounds to prohibit a person from being transferred a firearm under current law.

Since 9-11, Congress has passed many laws to improve homeland security. Yet, this loophole remains open. If someone is denied the chance to board an airplane because of suspected ties to terrorists, then they should also be denied the opportunity to purchase a gun. Individuals with ties to terrorists have bought guns in the past and used them to kill Americans. Some notable incidents:

In the summer of 2007, six terror suspects were arrested for plotting an attack on Fort Dix after trying to buy an assortment of M-16s, AK-47s, and handguns from a government informant. On December 22, 2008, five of the six suspects were convicted of conspiracy to kill U.S. military personnel - three of those convicted were sentenced yesterday to life in prison without possibility of parole. The sixth suspect pleaded guilty in October 2007 to providing firearms to illegal aliens, and was sentenced to 20 months in prison. In addition, four of the five suspects convicted of conspiracy were also convicted of illegal gun possession.

On February 23, 1997, Ali Abu Kamal opened fire on the observation deck of the Empire State Building with a handgun purchased in Florida in violation of federal law, killing one tourist and wounding six others before killing himself.

On March 1, 1994, Rashid Baz shot and killed 16-year old Ari Halberstam on an on-ramp to the Brooklyn Bridge. Baz was armed with a machine gun, a 9 MM pistol, and a "street sweeper" shotgun.

On November 5, 1990, El Sayed A. Nosair assassinated Rabbi Meir Kahane in a Manhattan hotel with a .357 revolver with a defaced serial number. Nosair was linked to the perpetrators of the 1993 World Trade Center bombing.

Reps. Carolyn McCarthy Steve Israel will introduce the No Fly, No Buy Act of 2009. The bill seeks to close the terror gap. The bill amends the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act to prohibit: (1) the sale or other disposition of a firearm or ammunition to any person knowing or having reasonable cause to believe that such person is an individual required to be prevented from boarding an aircraft; and (2) the shipment, transport, possession, or receipt of a firearm or ammunition by such individuals.