

The Gun-owner Registration Information Protection (GRIP) Act

Summary: This bill seeks to clarify existing law that bars the federal government from storing information acquired during the firearms background check process. The GRIP Act clarifies the prohibition on the use of any federal funding by states or local entities for the storage or “listing” of sensitive, personal information related to the legal ownership or possession of firearms. It also reinforces that all federal agencies must refrain from such activities. This bill does **not** include any limitations related to state recordkeeping for permitting, law enforcement-issued firearms, or lost or stolen firearms.

- This bill is endorsed by the National Rifle Association.

Why do we need the GRIP Act?

- In recent years, many states have passed a variety of gun laws. For example, the State of New York enacted a statute requiring gun owners to register their handguns with state police by January 2018. The GRIP Act seeks to reinforce the federal government’s stance on firearms registries, even in a changing, political landscape (<https://www.npr.org/2018/01/31/581879702/in-new-york-gun-owners-balk-at-new-handgun-database>).
- In 2012 and 2013, a local New York newspaper and a Manhattan-based website published databases showing where licensed gun owners and permit holders lived. The bill ensures federal funds should not contribute to state recordkeeping that could allow this kind of breach of privacy (http://www.cbsnews.com/8301-201_162-57560892/outrage-after-ny-paper-publishes-names-of-gun-permit-holders/; <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2013-01-09/gawker-posts-list-of-new-york-gun-owners>).
- Under current law ([18 USC section 926\(a\)](#)), the federal government may not store information acquired during the firearms background check process. This bill clarifies that prohibition and promotes consistency by extending the restriction to federal funding provided to states.
- Several state supreme courts have decreed that storing personally identifiable information related to firearm purchases and ownership is not in violation of state laws, creating a loophole for the states to keep registries of gun owners. This legislation would ensure the federal government does not inappropriately support, either intentionally or otherwise, misguided efforts to collect and store personally identifiable information related to legal firearm purchases and ownership- even in the case of such a legal loophole.
- States benefit from federal grant programs, such as the National Criminal Histories Improvement Program (NCHIP), the NICS Amendment Records Improvement Program (NARIP), and the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) program, to improve criminal recordkeeping and help fulfill reporting requirements. This bill would prevent states from using any of this funding to assist with the creation of a full or partial registry.