

Comprehensive background check policies effective in Oregon but not in Washington

December 13 2019, by Carole Gan

Stronger comprehensive background check (CBC) policies enacted 2014 in Washington and 2015 in Oregon require private gun sellers to conduct background checks before selling firearms.

But have these newly enacted laws resulted in more background checks for private-party sales—the major source of guns for persons who commit crimes and are prohibited from owning them?

A study by the UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program (VPRP) published Nov. 27 in *Injury Epidemiology* assessed changes in rates of background checks in Washington and Oregon from January 1999 through December 2018. They tracked monthly counts from the Federal Bureau of Investigation's National Instant Criminal Background Check System and compared them with synthetic controls created from 28 states that did not implement CBC policies during the study period.

The researchers found CBC policies were associated with an 18% increase in pre-firearm-sale checks in Oregon and a 4% increase in Washington state. They attribute the different rates between the two states to variation in the proportion of private party firearm sales, compliance with the new law among private gun sellers and the lack of mechanisms to measure enforcement of the laws.

"Washington's increase in private-party checks after its CBS [policy](#) took effect suggests a gradual adaptation to the new law by private gun sellers," said Alvaro Castillo-Carniglia, first author of the study who

conducted the research as a VPRP scholar. "But firearm transactions coded as 'private' accounted for less than 5% of total background checks in the state, which is a very small proportion compared to national estimates."

In states without CBC policies, approximately 57% of private party transfers occur without [background checks](#). In states with CBC policies, these private party transfers without checks decrease to 26%.

To fully determine the effects of CBC policies, the authors say they need more data and to assess changes in rates over a longer period of time.

More information: Alvaro Castillo-Carniglia et al, Effect on background checks of newly-enacted comprehensive background check policies in Oregon and Washington: a synthetic control approach, *Injury Epidemiology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1186/s40621-019-0225-8](https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-019-0225-8)

Provided by UC Davis

Citation: Comprehensive background check policies effective in Oregon but not in Washington (2019, December 13) retrieved 6 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-12-comprehensive-background-policies-effective-oregon.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.