



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rep. Spreitzer Supports Background Check Legislation

MADISON – As Wisconsin Democrats unveiled their latest background check proposal following the mass shootings in Texas and Ohio, State Representative Mark Spreitzer made the following statement:

“It is past time to put politics aside and do something to prevent the tragedies happening around our country. Improving our background check system has overwhelming public support and is an important first step in strengthening our gun safety laws in Wisconsin. It is long past time that everyone buying a gun has to pass a background check in the state of Wisconsin.

“Gun owners, like myself, around the state understand the importance of safe gun ownership and sensible laws that prevent the misuse of firearms. According to a 2018 Marquette Law Poll, 81% of all Wisconsinites and 78% of gun-owning households in Wisconsin support background checks. Just yesterday, a Fox News poll found that 90% of Americans support universal background checks. Strengthening our system of background checks in Wisconsin will ensure that serious criminals and would-be criminals do not obtain guns. This proposal will not stop law-abiding citizens from purchasing guns. It’s just common sense.

“We also know that background checks work. In states that require background checks for private sales, 48% fewer law enforcement officers were shot to death in the line of duty with handguns. Since 1998, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has blocked more than 2.5 million attempted purchases by dangerous people who are prohibited from buying guns. However, experts estimate that 1 of 5 gun sales occur at gun shows or in transactions over the internet that are not covered under NICS. Closing this loophole will save lives.

“This legislation also includes some common-sense exemptions to protect the rights and liberties of responsible gun owners. These include sales or transfers to a firearms dealer, law enforcement, and members of the armed services. This exemption also includes sales or transfers of firearms classified as an antique or gifts, bequests, or inheritance to a family member.

“It is our duty as legislators to uphold public safety and protect our dedicated Wisconsin law enforcement personnel, children in schools, and the general public. I will continue to support legislation that ensures the safety of our residents. This has been a bipartisan issue in other states and even President Donald Trump has expressed his support for strengthening background checks. Last session, Republicans in the Assembly chose to gut a bill that would have solved this problem and voted against a clean version of the proposal. As tragedies continue to unfold across the country, Republican legislators must stop playing games with their constituents’ lives and listen to the overwhelming will of the people.”

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