

David Keene, NRA Head, Slams Colorado's New Proposed Gun Bills, Gun Background Checks

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David Keene, president of the National Rifle Association, spoke during an exclusive interview with AP reporters in Denver on Thursday, Feb. 7, 2013. He said he's confident that Congress won't approve an assault weapons ban or an ammunition limit in the wake of mass shootings in Colorado and Connecticut. David Keene called such gun control proposals "feel-good" measures that he says "won't do any good." (AP Photo/Ed Andrieski)

In an [interview with The Denver Post](#), head of the NRA David Keene criticized Colorado's overburdened background check system for gun purchases as well as the latest package of gun bills Colorado Democrats proposed this week.

When asked about the proposed measure that Colorado Democrats introduced Tuesday which would make [owners, manufacturers and distributors of firearms civilly liable for damages](#) caused by their weapons, Keene said he thought the plan was "foolish" policy.

"You can't sue them (manufacturers and sellers) because someone bought a legal product and then did something wrong with it," [Keene told The Denver Post](#).

The proposed state measure appears to be in conflict with [a Federal law that was passed in 2005](#) after relentless lobbying by the NRA which grants gun companies

rare legal protection from liability lawsuits that many manufacturers of other kinds of products do not have.

The legal constraints that the NRA helped establish for gun companies has frustrated victims of mass shootings in Newtown, Conn. and Aurora, Colo. who want the courts to hold gun makers more accountable and perhaps force them to adopt stricter gun safety standards, [The Washington Post reported](#).

Keene was also [critical of the increased wait times for background checks on gun purchases in Colorado](#) stemming from a surge in sales in 2012 that ultimately maxed the system out last December.

"If I were a Colorado resident," Keene said to The Denver Post, "and told I had to wait an undetermined period of time to buy a gun, I would go to court."

The Colorado Bureau of Investigation, the agency which processes the background checks in the state, has had severely increased wait times on a background checks due to surging gun sales. A background check generally takes minutes in Colorado, but since end of December and into January, [the CBI's queue had been hovering around 10,000 checks](#), causing a wait time of more than nine days. That more than doubles the wait time just from earlier in December when gun buyers saw background checks taking 100 hours or more.

Since the tragic Sandy Hook shooting in Newtown, gun sales have been surging in Colorado and [across the nation](#). Fox31 reports that the AR-15, a military-style assault weapon that was used in the Sandy Hook shooting as well as the Aurora shooting, [is virtually sold out in Colorado gun shops](#).

The most recent spike in background check requests came in the immediate 48-hour aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting when Colorado set yet another record for background check submittals to buy guns this year.

Although the spike in firearm sales has grown dramatically in Colorado, when compared to the rest of the nation, [people were less enthusiastic about buying new guns at the end of the year in the Centennial State](#), as well as in Connecticut -- the homes of two of the nation's bloodiest mass shootings in 2012.

There have been several unusual surges in gun sales in Colorado in 2012 alone. A large spike in gun sales took place immediately following the tragic Aurora movie theater shooting that left 12 dead and nearly 60 wounded. Just days after the shooting, background checks for people wanting to purchase firearms in the state [jumped more than 41 percent](#). And another sales spike occurred following the Jessica Ridgeway tragedy, according to the Colorado Bureau of Investigations.

Then, on Black Friday, CBI set a new record in the state processing over 4,000 background checks on people purchasing firearms -- that's nearly [1,000 more checks than were run in 2011](#) when CBI set a single-day record of checking 3,031 gun buyers, according to 9News. So busy was the CBI that the flood of new applications [crashed the system twice on Black Friday](#).

While the number of firearm applications does not correlate with the number of guns in the state -- since a buyer who has passed the background check can get multiple guns and the state does not track the number of firearm purchases -- as of November of this year, 279,149 firearm applications had been approved out of 285,424. That's over 33,000 more approvals since last year, not counting this month when background check submittals set the latest record.

The same kind of surge in background checks holds true nationally as well. The Associated Press reports that [there were nearly twice as many more background checks](#) performed for gun purchases between November and December 2012 than during the same two months in 2011.

Keene also remarked to The Denver Post that [the NRA has always considered Hickenlooper to be reasonable on guns](#) but stressed that they believed the national Democratic party was putting pressure on the governor to develop stricter gun control measures in the state.

"I think Gov. Hickenlooper had it right after the Aurora shooting," Keene said to The Associated Press in an interview Thursday before he met with the governor. "He said it's not the laws, it's these kinds of people."