

## **Governor Signs Gun Safety Executive Order**

By Donna Martinez

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Governor Roy Cooper signed a gun safety Executive Directive and updated the public on recent action taken to strengthen firearm purchase background checks.

In March of 2018, Cooper directed the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) to undertake a comprehensive inventory of the quality of information North Carolina shares with the federal background check system known as National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Today, Cooper announced that as a result of that work, 284,289 individual instances of criminal convictions that had previously been unreported in the NICS database have now been added.

“I am pleased to report that in North Carolina over the last 14 months, more than 284,000 convictions have been added to the federal background check system,” said Governor Cooper. “This improves the quality of every background check and helps keep guns out of the wrong hands.”

Governor Cooper also shared information about the gun safety Executive Directive he signed today. The directive requires state agencies to take increased action on closing crime reporting gaps between state and federal agencies, and expands firearm safety education.

“Recognizing that the odds are long for our current legislature to make real changes, today I signed an Executive Directive to my cabinet agencies to build on the work we’ve done to this point,” added Governor Cooper. “Wishing, praying, and sending condolences alone just aren’t enough to prevent these tragedies. We have to take action.”

The Governor’s Executive Directive includes the following:

### **Strengthening Background Check System and Protections from Domestic Terrorism (SBI Directives)**

- \* The SBI is directed to continue the work begun by the National Instant Criminal

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Background Check System (NICS) Working Group to close information gaps where the state should be sharing information with NICS. Convened by Governor Cooper in 2018, the working group identified 284,289 individual instances of criminal convictions that went unreported in the NICS database. Identifying and rectifying these gaps strengthens the safety net provided by firearm background checks.

- \* The SBI will also provide Behavioral Threat Assessment training to local law enforcement agencies to help local law enforcement connect these individuals identified as a potential risk to harming others with supportive community services.

- \* The SBI will increase the North Carolina Information Sharing and Analysis Center's outreach to businesses and community groups in order to build community awareness of domestic terrorism indicators.

### **Improving Public Health and Incident Response (DHHS Directives)**

- \* The directive orders the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to promote safe storage of personal firearms.

- \* DHHS and the Division of Emergency Management will develop guidance for local governments to help share information and reunite loved ones in the wake of a mass shooting or other major incident.

- \* DHHS will also convene a coalition of suicide prevention stakeholders to update the state's Suicide Prevention Plan.