

This amendment is to make sure that we continue the good work of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System. The NICS is a national database system that keeps track of individuals who are disqualified under current law from purchasing and possessing firearms.

Need I remind my colleagues of the many reminders we have had of the need for this.

The amendment before us here seeks to ensure that the Department of Justice continues funding the NICS Improvement Amendments Act of 2007 at the current level of \$20 million. It was signed into law in January 2008 and requires all States to provide the NICS with relevant records that are needed to conduct effective background checks. Additionally, the NICS Improvement Act provides grants to States and territories to update their records and transmit the records to the NICS database.

NICS is a critical tool in the fight to keep firearms from those legally disqualified from purchasing and possessing them. The only way to enforce the law is to ensure that NICS has up-to-date records from State and Federal sources.

We understand the constraints on the Federal budget. However, by continuing to fund this program at the current FY10 level, we continue the vital effort to keep guns out of the hands of people who should not have them.

I encourage Members to support this amendment.

Had I had the floor before, I would have offered an amendment to restore the \$310 million that was cut from the lifesaving Community Oriented Policing, or COPS Program, but I was denied that opportunity. So I ask for support for the amendment from Mrs. McCarthy and me to fund the NICS Improvement Amendments Act.