



# HB 514, Creating a Waiting Period Between Purchase and Delivery of a Firearm Senate Outreach & Talking Points

## What Does the Bill Do?

Waiting periods require a certain number of days to pass between when a gun is first purchased and when the buyer may actually take possession of it. The two main functions of waiting periods are to give law enforcement officials sufficient time to properly perform a background check on prospective purchaser, and provide a “cooling off” period to help guard against impulsive acts of violence—especially suicide. This bill creates a 7-day waiting period. Waiting periods improve public safety and protect community members from harm.

## Elected Official Contacts

Use the General Court website to find contact information for your State Senator:  
<http://gencourt.state.nh.us/house/members/default.aspx>

Governor Chris Sununu: (603) 271-2121

## Talking Points

*If you get voicemail, please leave a detailed message and ask them to support HB 514.*

- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I live in (town / city). *(Give a little background about yourself).*
- I urge you to support House Bill 514, which would create a 7-day waiting period between the purchase and delivery of a firearm.
- The two main functions of waiting periods are to give law enforcement officials sufficient time to properly perform a background check on prospective purchaser, and provide a “cooling off” period to help guard against impulsive acts of violence—especially suicide.
- Waiting periods close what is known as the “Charleston Loophole.” Under federal law, a licensed dealer may proceed with the sale of a firearm after 3 business even if the mandated background check has not yet been completed and there’s been no confirmation that the purchaser is legally permitted to have guns. The perpetrator of the Charleston church shooting—who was legally prohibited from having guns—was able to use this loophole to purchase the gun he used in that tragedy before the background check was completed.
- Waiting periods also help reduce the occurrence of suicides and other impulsive acts of violence. Suicide is a serious problem in New Hampshire and firearms are uniquely lethal compared to other methods. This fact is incredibly important because almost all people who survive a suicide attempt go on to live out their lives and do not subsequently die by suicide. That’s why this bill is supported by mental health and suicide prevention advocates (like NAMI).
- Can we count on you to support HB 514? *(Record answer and report back)*

## Report Back

Please report all responses back to [zandra@granitestateprogress.org](mailto:zandra@granitestateprogress.org). Thank you!

# HB 514, Waiting Periods Fact Sheet

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**Waiting periods require a certain number of days to pass between when a gun is first purchased and when the buyer may actually take possession of it.** The two main functions of waiting periods are to:

- Give law enforcement officials sufficient time to properly perform a background check on prospective purchasers.
- Provide a “cooling off” period to help guard against impulsive acts of violence—especially suicide.

**Our bill would create a 7-day waiting period. Waiting periods close what is known as the “Charleston Loophole.”**

- Under federal law, a licensed dealer may proceed with the sale of a firearm after 3 business days even if the mandated background check has not yet been completed and there’s been no confirmation that the purchaser is legally permitted to have guns.
- The perpetrator of the Charleston church shooting—who was legally prohibited from having guns—was able to use this loophole to purchase the gun he used in that tragedy before the background check was completed.
- This bill would help address the “Charleston Loophole” by allowing additional time for the completion of a background check and help ensure that prohibited people cannot purchase access firearms in New Hampshire.

**Waiting periods also help reduce the occurrence of suicides and other impulsive acts of violence.**

- Suicides constitute two-thirds of all gun deaths in the U.S., with more than 21,000 suicides by firearm per year. Guns are an extremely common means of suicide; half of all suicides in the U.S. are carried out with a firearm.<sup>5</sup>
- When compared to other means of attempting suicide, guns are uniquely lethal. **More than 90% of suicide attempts with a firearm result in death.**<sup>6</sup> Suicide attempts by jumping, in comparison, carry a 34% fatality rate, and attempts by drug poisoning only a 2% fatality rate.<sup>7</sup> In other words, a person who attempts suicide by a method other than firearm is more likely to live than a person who uses a gun.
- This fact is incredibly important because almost all people who survive a suicide attempt go on to live out their lives and do not subsequently die by suicide.<sup>8</sup> Contrary to common belief, the vast majority of suicide survivors recover and do not remain suicidal.
- In addition, suicide is a highly impulsive act. A variety of studies confirm that most suicide survivors contemplated their actions for only a brief period of time—often less than 24 hours—before making a suicide attempt.<sup>9</sup> Because of the impulsive nature of suicide, immediate access to firearms is a major mortality risk factor and one that waiting periods can help address.

**In fact, states with waiting period laws for gun purchases have lower rates of suicide.**

- Research published in the American Journal of Public Health showed that states with waiting period laws had 51% fewer firearm suicides and a 27% lower overall suicide rate than states without such laws.<sup>12</sup> When South Dakota repealed its 48-hour waiting period for handgun purchases in 2009, overall suicides the following year increased by 7.6%.<sup>13</sup>

**Preventing immediate access to the most lethal means of suicide is a lifesaving policy that is supported by gun owners and the general public alike. Americans strongly support waiting periods for firearm purchases.**

- A December 2011 poll found that 74% of people without a firearm in the home support a five-day waiting period for the purchase of firearms, while 66% of non-NRA gun-owners and 50% of NRA members support this measure.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, a survey conducted for the New England Journal of Medicine in January 2013 found that 76% of Americans, including 67% of gun owners, support giving law enforcement up to 5 business days, if needed, to complete a background check for gun buyers.<sup>18</sup> Implementing waiting periods nationwide for gun purchases would reduce the more than 21,000 firearm suicides that occur each year in this country.

**Waiting period laws have also been shown to reduce gun homicides.**

- One study found that waiting period laws reduce gun homicides by 17%.<sup>14</sup> These results suggest that, combined, states with waiting periods avoid roughly 750 gun homicides per year as a result of this policy.<sup>15</sup> If all states implemented waiting periods, an additional 910 gun homicides could be prevented each year.<sup>16</sup>

Thank you to Giffords Coalition and Everytown for incredible research and resources for waiting periods language.