“It ain’t gun control we need; it’s sin control.”

Because we agree with Sergeant William Robertson, **we negate.**

**First, we observe that a universal background check would raise the price of guns across the board.**

David Sherfinski of the Washington Times explains that background checks increase the price of guns as the large expense of implementing these checks would incentive businesses to shift over some of these costs to consumers. This is important, as Wesley Juhl of the Las Vegas Review reports that background check laws do not define any limits for how much businesses can charge consumers for background checks, with sellers having previously charged 100 more dollars per consumer. Furthermore, Sherfinski finds that checks also “drive up the price of transferring guns” by as much as 125 dollars for the same reason.

**With that, our sole contention is entrenching violence.**

Although well intentioned, universal background checks serve as a one-sided policy that skews the domestic balance of power in two ways.

**First is through reloading the black market.**

Regardless of price, criminals always possess the incentive to purchase handguns through whatever means necessary. Robert Levy of the Cato Institute explains that because criminals operate in a “survive at any price” environment, they are willing to pay high prices for guns, rendering them “inelastic” goods. This means that increases in price would not reduce criminals’ demand of guns, as there would always be a need. In fact, if the legal market becomes restricted, criminals simply turn to the illegal market. Christopher Ingraham of Washington Post confirms that the majority of criminals already purchase firearms through illicit means – a problem that only intensifies with background checks. Daniel Pollard of Northeastern University corroborates, finding that, in response to a more regulated legal market, the flow of firearms to the black market expands due to illegal sales, theft, smuggling, and manufacturing.

**The impact of feeding the black market is escalating crime.**

The Conversation finds that the current black market is made up of sparse individual dealers looking to make a few bucks on the side. However, universal background checks flip the script and empower criminal syndicates to seize control. Curt Bolding, a 33-year police veteran with the Department of Illinois, confirms, explaining that increased profits in the black market incentivize large-scale smuggling operations to proliferate. Indeed, the facts back up the theory, as J.D. Tuccille of Reason Magazine writes that after Australia implemented gun restrictions, the black market became “wealthy and dangerous” resulting in an uptick in “organized crime,” putting Australians at a greater risk of gun crime than ever before.

**Second is through discouraging protection.**

While price increases fail to deter criminals from purchasing firearms, they do succeed in discouraging civilians. Pollard explains that law-abiding citizens tend to treat guns as “elastic” goods, meaning that harsh price spikes will strongly disincentive them from obtaining one. Since civilians don’t intend on actually using firearms, and instead value them as a defensive measure in the chance of an unlikely emergency, handguns are viewed as expendable. Empirically, Douglas Bice of University of Chicago concludes that a 1 percent increase in gun price decreases demand by 2 to 3 percent. This leads Pollard to conclude that universal background checks would “have the effect not of disarming criminals, but rather increasing the ratio of firearm-holding criminals to [firearm-holding] non-criminals.” This is problematic as Alissa Tabirian of CNS News finds that civilian firearms serve as a key deterrent against criminal attacks. Larry Pratt of the US News quantifies that 92 percent of potential criminals are successfully deterred due to the mere presence of firearms.

**The impact of undermining this deterrence is stripping away security.**

By compromising a citizen’s ability to protect him/herself, universal background checks empower criminals to perpetuate violence. In a 15-year cross-sectional study of US counties, David Mustard of the University of Chicago concludes that increased handgun ownership decreased murders by 8.5 percent, aggravated assaults by 7 percent, and rapes by 5 percent by deterring criminals from attacking in the first place. The Crime Prevention Research Center provides an ample precedent, finding that the growth rate of homicides in Missouri decreased by 15 percent after universal background checks were repealed. Shane Christensen of Deseret News emphasizes the importance of self-defense, quantifying that for every life lost to guns, there are sixty-five lives protected by dissuading violent crime.

**Don’t perpetuate the cycle of violence, negate.**