

Testimony of
Joseph Keffer
President
PA Association of Firearms Retailers

Hearing Before
PA House Judiciary Committee
Regarding
PA Instant Check System

July 17, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. My name is Joe Keffer and I am the President of the PA Association of Firearms Retailers (PAFR).

I am a business owner and licensed firearms dealer as well as a representative of the interests of my fellow firearms dealers on the issue before us today.

Beginning in 2008 and continuing today, the firearms industry has experienced unprecedented growth. The last six (6) months, in particular have been unbelievable for most dealers across the country in the volume of business being done. The limits have been tested at all levels. Manufacturers, Distributors, Retailers, NICS and PICS have all struggled to meet this surge of growth. The amount of time required to process background checks during some of the peak periods in December, January and February ran as long as 55 minutes. Many retailers, myself included, had to expand the number of people doing checks by a factor of three or four in order to try to keep the process moving. There were times when our checks were on hold for 30 to 40 minutes just waiting to get an operator and I got these kind of complaints from all across the state.

Please do not think that we expected PICS to flow as normal during this surge of business.. No one was prepared to absorb this level of increased business. Captain Price and his people worked diligently and continue to do so in an attempt to process these checks on a timely basis and we thank them for their efforts. However, in discussions with dealers in states that utilized NICS, they did not experience anything like the delays that we had through PICS. It would seem that for whatever reason NICS was better positioned to absorb the increased volume.

From our perspective, it seems that the duplication of effort, expense and manpower does not translate into the most efficient method of accomplishing the task that we all strongly support, that being keeping prohibited individuals from obtaining firearms.

In closing, we respectfully request that the need to duplicate this process and the associated expenses, at the state level, be examined closely and then act upon these findings.

I thank you for allowing me to speak with you today.

Respectfully
Joe Keffer