

# **STATE BLUEPRINTS** **RESTORING GUN** **INDUSTRY ACCOUNTABILITY**

**The federal government is rolling back gun safety regulations.  
States can fight back.**

By implementing **comprehensive state licensing for gun dealers** and **gun industry accountability laws**, states can help fill in the dangerous void left by federal inaction and build a safer future for their residents.

## **BACKGROUND**

- Federal law requires businesses making or selling guns to obtain a federal firearms license (FFL).
- Licensees are subject to basic regulations: conducting background checks, maintaining detailed records, reporting lost and stolen firearms, and permitting compliance inspections.

**But federal oversight suffers from significant limitations and gaps:**

- ✗ No background checks on sales between private parties.
- ✗ No background checks or safety training for gun dealer employees.
- ✗ No specific requirements for security measures at gun stores.
- ✗ Inspections occur once every decade, on average.

**Since taking office, Trump has done everything in his power to weaken the ATF.** This includes ending the ATF's "zero tolerance" policy, which revoked the licenses of dealers who willfully broke the law, and planning to cut both the agency's budget and the number of inspectors who monitor FFLs.

We are working in a system with built-in gaps and an underresourced enforcement agency. States cannot wait for federal enforcement to improve. They must act to protect their residents now.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATES**

### **Implement Gun Dealer Licensing**

States can establish standards that exceed the federal minimums and provide a crucial layer of oversight.

**Pass dealer licensing laws that:**

- Mandate comprehensive protocols for safe gun storage and require background checks and gun safety training for all employees.
- Improve record-keeping and reporting.
- Require regular state-level inspections.
- Grant supervisory authority to a designated state agency.



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Implementing these requirements provides a check on firearm dealer operations within the state. It also ensures firearm dealers operate responsibly, creating a more robust regulatory environment.

## Enact Gun Industry Accountability Laws

The federal Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) grants gun manufacturers and sellers unprecedented immunity from many civil lawsuits, including negligence claims.

But state gun industry accountability laws allow those harmed by gun violence to seek justice in court. They also create a significant financial incentive for the gun industry to adopt safer business practices, deterring conduct that contributes to illegal gun trafficking and violence. These state statutes work by defining specific obligations and prohibitions related to the manufacture, sale, distribution, and marketing of firearms within the state.

### A model gun industry accountability law:

- Establishes a standard of conduct for companies.
- Identifies who is authorized to sue companies.
- Requires the industry to follow responsible best practices.
- Prevents firearm industry members from distributing “abnormally dangerous products.”

Despite the volatile federal landscape, hope resides in the proven power of state action. States have the responsibility—and opportunity—to mitigate the deadly consequences of federal rollbacks by restoring gun industry oversight.

Since the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012, GIFFORDS has helped pass over 700 significant gun safety laws across the country. Every year, the data proves that states with stronger gun laws experience fewer gun deaths. **Solving our gun violence crisis is a matter of willpower, and GIFFORDS Law Center is ready and able to help.**

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This factsheet is part of a series exploring policies states should pursue as federal leadership falters. **Our recommendations provide a blueprint for states to follow, including a list of concrete steps and model laws state lawmakers should use.**