

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES June 13, 2007

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to H.R. 2640, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) Improvement Amendments Act, and I urge caution.

In my opinion, H.R. 2640 is a flagrantly unconstitutional expansion of restriction on the exercise of the right to bear arms protected under the Second Amendment.

H.R. 2640 also seriously undermines the privacy rights of all Americans--gun owners and non-gun owners alike--by creating and expanding massive federal government databases, including medical and other private records of every American.

H.R. 2640 illustrates how placing restrictions on the exercise of one right--in this case, the right to bear arms--inevitably leads to expanded restriction on other rights as well. In an effort to make the Brady background check on gun purchases more efficient, H.R. 2640 pressures states and mandates federal agencies to dump massive amounts of information about the private lives of all Americans into a central federal government database.

Among the information that must be submitted to the database are medical, psychological, and drug treatment records that have traditionally been considered protected from disclosure under the physician-patient relationship, as well as records related to misdemeanor domestic violence. While supporters of H.R. 2640 say that there are restrictions on the use of this personal information, such restrictions did not stop the well-publicized IRS and FBI files privacy abuses by both Democratic and Republican administrations. Neither have such restrictions prevented children from being barred from flights because their names appeared on the massive terrorist watch list. We should not trick ourselves into believing that we can pick and choose which part of the Bill of Rights we support.

I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill.

Mr. Speaker, in addition, the NICS Improvement Amendments Act illustrates how laws creating new infringements on liberty often also impose large financial burdens on taxpayers. In just its first three years of operation, the bill authorizes new yearly spending of \$375 million plus additional spending "as may be necessary." This new spending is not offset by any decrease in other government spending.