



Representative Thomas West
49th House District

Sponsor Testimony: House Bill 320

Chair Wiggam, Vice Chair Stephens, Ranking Member Kelly and members of the House State & Local Government Committee – thank you for the opportunity to testify today on House Bill 320. HB 320 would require a federally licensed firearms dealer to wait for a background check to be completed or for 30 days to pass before completing a sale.

Under current federal law, gun dealers are required to conduct background checks for all purchases. However, they only have to wait three business days before completing the sale, whether the background check has been completed or not. This loophole, commonly referred to as the Charleston Loophole, has allowed [tens of thousands](#) of guns to end up in the wrong hands every year according to a 2015 FBI report, including those of an individual who murdered nine people during a bible study at a Charleston church five years ago.

The majority of background checks take a few minutes to complete, but some do take longer when the buyer has a prior record. With that in mind, there is no harm in taking the extra time to get it right and ensure that the buyer is not legally barred from purchasing the weapon; on the other hand, we know that the potential harm of a gun falling into the wrong hands is immense. The nine victims in Charleston and countless others would still be with us today had the sellers received the results of the background check before the sale was completed.

Similar to HB 319, I see this bill as a commonsense, uncontroversial bill that makes our communities safer and does not infringe upon the right to responsible gun ownership. I sincerely hope you will agree.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify, and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.