



Timeline of Major Events, 1981 - 2011

- 1981**
- After a career in public service, Jim Brady achieves his lifelong career goal when President Ronald Reagan appoints him Assistant to the President and White House Press Secretary in January.
 - March 30: Jim Brady, Assistant to the President and White House press secretary to President Ronald Reagan, is shot and seriously wounded during an assassination attempt on the President.
- 1985**
- Sarah Brady, Jim Brady's wife, joins the fight for sensible gun control laws.
- 1986**
- HCI successfully lobbies Congress to ban armor-piercing, "cop-killer" bullets that can puncture bulletproof vests worn by police officers.
- 1988**
- With HCI's support, Congress passes a bill to ban handguns that cannot be detected by airport x-ray machines ("plastic" handguns).
- 1989**
- The Center to Prevent Gun Violence establishes the Legal Action Project to take the fight against gun violence into the courts.
 - After a schoolyard massacre in Stockton, California passes the first assault weapons ban in the nation, the Roberti-Roos Assault Weapon Act.
 - Florida adopts the nation's first "Child Access Prevention" law, which requires adults to store guns so that they are inaccessible to children or use a device to lock the gun.
 - Sarah Brady becomes Chair of Handgun Control, Inc.

- 1991**
 - Sarah Brady becomes Chair of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence.

- 1993**
 - Virginia passes legislation limiting purchases of guns to "one per person per month," in response to increasing evidence that Virginia is a source state of crime guns trafficked up and down the East Coast.
 - President Clinton signs the Brady Bill into law after a seven-year battle. The law requires background checks on handgun purchases at federally licensed dealers. After 5 years, the law will apply to long gun purchases as well.

- 1994**
 - The Brady Law goes into effect in the 32 states that have no background check system.
 - President Clinton signs into law the Violent Crime and Control Act of 1994, which includes the first-ever federal Assault Weapons Ban, banning the future manufacture and importation of military-style assault weapons. The law includes a ban on large capacity ammunition magazines. It goes into effect the same year.

- 1995**
 - In the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, the National Rifle Association (NRA) faces intense public scrutiny and widespread criticism for its extremist views against law enforcement. NRA membership drops and President Bush resigns his life membership after it is revealed that the NRA called Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agents "jack-booted thugs" in a fundraising letter.

- 1996**
 - Congress passes legislation to prohibit anyone convicted of a misdemeanor domestic violence offense from buying or owning a gun, adding to the list of prohibited persons blocked by Brady background checks.
 - President Clinton bestowed upon Jim the Presidential Medal of Freedom, among the highest civilian awards in the United States.

- 1997**
 - Although the Supreme Court strikes down the background check requirement of the Brady Law, the waiting period and other provisions of Brady survive an NRA-financed challenge. Law enforcement continues to conduct background checks voluntarily until the Brady National Instant Criminal Background Check (NICS) System goes into effect in 1998.

- 1998**
- April: President Clinton expands the federal Assault Weapons Ban to include "copycat" imports.
 - With the assistance of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence's Legal Action Project, New Orleans becomes the first public entity to sue the gun industry.
 - The Brady waiting period expires and the National Criminal Background Instant Check System goes into effect. Background checks are extended to long guns such as rifles and shotguns.
- 1999**
- In the first-ever statewide referendum on the subject, the voters of Missouri reject an NRA-sponsored proposal that would allow people to carry hidden handguns.
 - In the wake of the Columbine High School massacre in Colorado, the U.S. Senate passes legislation to close the gun show loophole. Unfortunately, similar legislation in the House is defeated and the Senate bill stalls in conference committee.
 - In *Merrill v. Navegar*, CPHV's Legal Action Project achieves the first appeals court ruling that a gun manufacturer can be held liable for negligence leading to the criminal use of a gun.
 - The U.S. Supreme Court rejects a gun industry challenge to the federal Assault Weapons Ban.
 - California passes the strongest package of gun control bills ever enacted by a state in one year. Measures include consumer product safety standards for all handguns manufactured or sold in the state, requiring state-approved child-safety locks with all guns sold, strengthening the state's ban on assault weapons and limiting handgun purchases to one per person per month.

2000

- The District of Columbia becomes the 30th jurisdiction to sue the gun industry.
- The White House Press Briefing Room is named in Jim Brady's honor.
- Smith and Wesson becomes the first gun manufacturer to settle with cities and counties suing the gun industry, agreeing to make sweeping changes to its manufacturing and distribution practices.
- After two years of court battles, the Attorney General of Massachusetts becomes the first in the nation to use consumer protection powers to regulate guns.
- The Million Mom March takes place on Mother's Day. Hundreds of thousands of moms and other supporters gather in Washington, D.C. and in cities around the nation to call on lawmakers to enact stricter gun laws.
- New York City becomes the 32nd city or county to sue the gun industry. CPHV's Legal Action Project now represents 26 of the 32 jurisdictions.
- Two traditionally pro-gun Western states, Colorado and Oregon, overwhelmingly pass statewide referenda to close the gun show loophole. Handgun Control and the Handgun Control Voter Education Fund spend a record \$5 million to help defeat 9 of the 12 "Dangerous Dozen" candidates who oppose reasonable gun laws.

2001

- The U.S. Supreme Court rejects a gun industry challenge to California's assault weapons ban.
- CPHV launches a new nationwide initiative to encourage attorneys general and other state officials to follow Massachusetts' example and use their consumer protection authority to regulate gun design.
- In honor of Jim and Sarah Brady and their commitment to make America safer from gun violence, Handgun Control is renamed the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence is renamed the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence.
- The Brady Campaign and the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence merge with the Million Mom March. The alliance is a "win-win" opportunity for two strong groups that share the common goals of educating the public about gun violence and mobilizing support for sensible gun laws.
- On the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Brady Law, the Brady Campaign announces that since the law went into effect, gun deaths in the United States have dropped a remarkable 27 percent, from 39,595 in 1993 to 28,874 in 1999. A significant reason is the Brady Law, which has saved thousands of lives by requiring background checks that have prevented violent criminals from buying guns.

- 2002**
- H&R Block, the nation's largest tax preparation firm, severed a controversial marketing agreement it had entered into with the National Rifle Association (NRA). H&R Block's withdrawal from the program came as a result of widespread protests spearheaded by the Alliance for Justice's Gun Industry Watch, and was supported by the Million Mom March, the Brady Campaign and the Mid-Atlantic Coalition to Prevent Gun Violence.
 - The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence hails the passage of the "Campaign Finance Reform Bill." The bill restricts campaign contributions known as "soft money" given to national political parties, and prohibits special interest groups from attacking candidates in so-called "issue ads" within 60 days of a general election.
 - Sarah Brady's autobiography, *A Good Fight*, is published.
- 2003**
- The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence announces that its Legal Action Project has filed a civil lawsuit on behalf of the families of several victims of the D.C.-area sniper against the gun dealer and manufacturer who made it possible for the snipers to terrorize the Washington, D.C. region in the fall of 2002.
 - Robert A. Ricker, former Executive Director and Director of Government Affairs of the American Shooting Sports Council ("ASSC"), a major gun industry trade association, and former Assistant General Counsel for the National Rifle Association ("NRA"), issues a declaration that provides a unique insider's perspective on the irresponsible actions inside the industry that lead to the illegal trade in firearms.
 - The California Assembly approves far-reaching gun control legislation, sponsored by the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and the Million Mom March, that would require handgun manufacturers to redesign new handguns to prevent accidental shootings, effectively establishing a new national safety standard for handgun production.
 - The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence takes out full-page advertisements the *New York Times* criticizing a National Rifle Association-backed bill that would strip gun violence victims of their right to sue reckless gun dealers and manufacturers.

- 2004**
- The Brady Campaign helps defeat the NRA's top legislative priority, as the Senate votes 90 to 8 against a bill that would have provided immunity from lawsuits for the gun industry.
 - President Bush and Congress allow the federal assault weapons ban to expire on September 13, despite a majority of Americans' support for the ban.
 - The Brady Campaign exposes the fact that after allowing the assault weapons ban to lapse, Bush collects his payment: the National Rifle Association's endorses his candidacy exactly a month after he broke his 2000 campaign promise to renew the ban.
 - The Brady Center achieves historic victories in three lawsuits brought by victims of gun violence. The settlements yield a record \$4.4 million in payments by three gun dealers and gunmaker Bushmaster Firearms.
- 2005**
- In response to the Brady Center's successes in winning a series of highly significant legal victories for gun violence victims, the NRA-beholden Congress passes the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (CAA), which we had blocked in 2004. The CAA is the gun lobby's attempt to stop our winning litigation efforts and give gun makers and sellers a free ride in our court system.
 - Brady Center launches [Gun Industry Watch](#) to systematically expose the movement of guns from gun dealers into the hands of criminals and the complicity of the gun industry in supplying the illegal gun market.
 - Brady Campaign and Illinois allies pass background checks at gun shows to help prevent illegal gun trafficking.
 - [God Not Guns](#) coalition is launched with a generous grant to the Brady Center to bring together the passionate and powerful voices of the faith community to reduce gun violence.

2006

- On the 25th anniversary of the assassination attempt on President Reagan and the shooting of Presidential Press Secretary Jim Brady, the Brady Campaign launches the Campaign Against Illegal Guns, a landmark multi-year effort to stop the trafficking of guns from licensed gun dealers into the hands of criminals.
- The Board of Trustees of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence and the Brady Center name Paul Helmke, the former three-term Mayor of Fort Wayne, Indiana, to lead the organization as President. Former Maryland Congressman Michael D. Barnes is named President Emeritus.
- The Brady Center's Gun Industry Watch produces eight hard-hitting reports showing the gun industry's complicity in the illegal flow of guns to criminals.
- In four US Senate races and five Governors' races, the Brady Campaign took on NRA-backed candidates and our candidates won in all nine races. Overall, 96% of Brady Campaign-endorsed candidates won.
- In memory of their beloved son, Charles and Mary Leigh Blek establish the Matthew Blek Memorial Endowment at the Brady Campaign to support scholarships for grassroots activists to be trained in gun violence prevention advocacy.

2007

- April 16: Thirty-two people are killed, and several more injured at Virginia Tech, in the deadliest school shooting in the history of the United States.
- The National Criminal Instant Check System (NICS) Improvement Amendments Act is passed to help prevent tragedies like Virginia Tech. The Act will give states incentives to provide records to the Brady background check system of dangerous people who are already prohibited from buying guns.
- California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signs the Crime Gun Identification Act of 2007 (AB 1471) into law. This new, first-of-its-kind law enforcement investigative tool allows police to solve more gun crimes and apprehend more armed criminals and gang members.
- The U.S. Supreme announces it will consider D.C. v. Heller this term. By agreeing to hear the appeal by the District of Columbia in the Parker/Heller case, the U.S. Supreme Court has the chance to reverse a clearly erroneous decision and make it clear that the Constitution does not prevent communities from having the gun laws they believe are needed to protect public safety.

2008

- The historic 2008 elections saw the Brady-endorsed Obama-Biden ticket defeat the NRA-endorsed McCain-Palin ticket, even in NRA stronghold states like Virginia, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Indiana.
- Ninety percent of Brady-endorsed candidates won their races at all levels, including former Million Mom Chapter President Jeanne Kirkton.
- U.S. Supreme Court releases Heller decision. In the decision, Justice Antonin Scalia writes that the Second Amendment gives an individual the right to a gun in the home for self-defense, but it is a right that is “not unlimited” and that many gun restrictions are “presumptively lawful.”
- The Legal Action Project launches intensive campaign to defend gun laws from gun lobby attacks under the *Heller* decision.
- The state of West Virginia passes new legislation to require reporting of disqualifying mental illness records to strengthen the Brady background check system. Six additional states – Arkansas, Illinois, Maine, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania – also pass legislation in 2008.
- The Brady Campaign helps organize remembrance events and rallies honoring the victims of Virginia Tech and all gun violence victims. Actions were held in more than 100 cities and on 50 college campuses calling on Congress to close the gun show loophole.
- The NRA's push to allow guns in schools and on campuses is rejected by all 17 states with bills in 2008, thanks to the concerted efforts of the Brady Campaign, our activists, and allies.

2009

- Brady Campaign Vice President of Law and Policy and Legal Action Project founder Dennis Henigan publishes *Lethal Logic*, debunking NRA arguments on common sense gun policy.
- VA Tech massacre survivor Colin Goddard joins the Brady Campaign as an intern and takes a hidden camera to gun shows across the country to show how easy it is for dangerous people to purchase firearms without a background check.
- The U.S. Senate deals a sharp rebuke to the National Rifle Association by confirming Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court over their opposition. 12 Senators rated 'A' by the NRA – eight of whom were endorsed by the NRA in their last campaigns – vote to confirm her.
- Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger joins California Campaign Brady Chapter leaders to celebrate the passage, and his signing, of AB 962, a new law requiring maintenance of purchaser records by handgun ammunition vendors. Local law enforcement can use these records to track down and disarm prohibited persons in possession of illegal ammunition and illegal guns.

- 2010**
- U.S. Supreme Court releases the McDonald decision applying the Second Amendment to the states. In the decision, the court affirms that the Second Amendment allows for reasonable restrictions on firearms, including who can have them and under what conditions, where they can be taken, and what types of firearms are available.
 - The Brady Center files a lawsuit against Badger Guns, a top seller of crime guns in the nation, on behalf of injured Milwaukee police officers Alejandro Arce and Jose Lopez III. The complaint alleges that Badger Guns negligently and unlawfully sold the gun used against the officers to a drug-using gang member days before the November 6, 2007 shooting.
 - The Congressional Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security holds a briefing on a bill to require Brady background checks at gun shows.
 - Living for 32 is screened in New York City. The film chronicles the inspirational story of Colin Goddard, a survivor of the tragic mass shooting at Virginia Tech in April 2007.
 - Twenty-seven Democratic members of the U.S. House of Representatives who were endorsed by the National Rifle Association are defeated in the fall elections, while only two incumbent Democratic House members who co-sponsored a major gun control bill to require background checks at gun shows lose their re-election bids.
 - The Brady Campaign releases a report compiling news reports of mass shootings in the U.S. In 2010, more than 25 people were killed and 225 wounded in 68 mass shootings.
- 2011**
- A disturbed 22-year old man armed with an assault clip shoots nineteen people at a constituent meeting with U.S. Representative Gabrielle Giffords (D-AZ) at a grocery store in Tucson, AZ. Giffords is shot point blank in the head but survives. The shooter kills United States District Court Chief Judge John Roll, Rep. Giffords's staffer Gabriel Zimmerman, and 4 others.
 - Bills are introduced in Congress to ban assault clips holding more than 10 bullets and to extend Brady background checks to all gun sales.
 - Virtually all of the over 375 gun lobby challenges to gun laws under the Heller/McDonald interpretation of the Second Amendment fail in the courts.
 - Colin Goddard, VA Tech survivor, returns to Blacksburg, Virginia, for a screening of Living for 32. The documentary honors the dead and wounded shot at VA Tech and tells the story of Colin's advocacy to adopt common sense gun laws.
 - The Brady Campaign establishes Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence to mobilize the faith community to advocate for common sense gun policies.
 - 2 million gun purchases by dangerous and irresponsible people denied since the enactment of the Brady Law