

KELLY REPORT 2024

A VISION FOR A SAFER AMERICA

Congresswoman Robin L. Kelly represents Illinois' 2nd Congressional District, which includes sections of the city of Chicago, its southern suburbs, and rural communities that have been plagued by gun violence for decades. She believes that gun violence isn't just an urban problem — it's an American epidemic — and is committed to stopping the bloodshed, in all communities, across the country.

In her over ten years in Congress, Congresswoman Kelly has met scores of families of victims of gun violence whose stories of love and loss left an indelible mark.

This report is dedicated to them, to other families who live in harm's way, and to the gun violence prevention advocates working on the front lines every day to make America safer.



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Welcome

The Honorable Robin L. Kelly,
Member of Congress



I never thought that my public service journey would lead me to Congress. When a special election in 2013 gave me the opportunity to serve Illinois' Second Congressional District, I knew I had the chance to bring the voices of gun violence survivors to the halls of power. This is a public health crisis that touches all of us, but Illinois feels the pain of gun violence acutely and all too frequently. The Second District covers a part of the South Side of Chicago, most of the South Suburbs, and recently expanded into central Illinois. Gun violence impacts every corner of my district, just as it does in the United States.

Headlines tend to focus on mass shootings, our society is rightfully horrified by these unspeakable tragedies. But to truly prevent needless gun deaths, our country needs a holistic approach that acknowledges the tens of thousands of lives lost to community violence, firearm suicides, domestic violence, and accidental shootings. Year after year, the United States leads the developed world in gun deaths but lags far behind in meaningful policy solutions.

When I was elected in that 2013 special election, I maintained my commitment to gun violence prevention. I led a group of my fellow Members of Congress, gun reform advocates, public health professionals, and academic researchers to produce the 2014 *Kelly Report: Gun Violence in America*. The first-of-its-kind report framed gun violence as a public health crisis and offered solutions that truly matched the scale of the epidemic.

Despite all the great work and progress that has been made over the past 10 years, gun violence still plagues our communities. Since 2014, guns have become the number one cause of death for children and teens. Gun violence is killing a generation and robbing communities of future leaders, teachers, doctors, artists, and more.

But progress has been made. I've supported successful initiatives like funding for community-based violence prevention initiatives and CDC and NIH gun violence research; the establishment of the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention; and of course, the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.

As you read this over the next hour, nearly 5 more lives will be lost to gun violence. We can't afford to wait any longer.

I produced the 2024 Kelly Report to highlight the progress we've made and chart a path for the work yet to be done. *The Kelly Report: A Vision for a Safer America* provides a look back at the past 10 years' successes and challenges, examines the state of gun violence today, and offers solutions for ending the gun violence epidemic.

My wish is that this will be the last Kelly Report on gun violence I need to write. My wish is that our country will see a future where a child can safely walk to the park, a high school student can safely pick up her friends and go to the mall, and a father can safely play basketball with his son in their driveway. Americans should not have to live in constant fear of becoming another deadly statistic.

Thoughts and prayers are not substitutes for policy and action. I hope that this report not only sheds light on the public health crisis that is gun violence in America but also provides a meaningful roadmap to create change and save lives.

Thank you for your dedication to keeping our communities safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin L. Kelly".

Rep. Robin L. Kelly (IL-02)

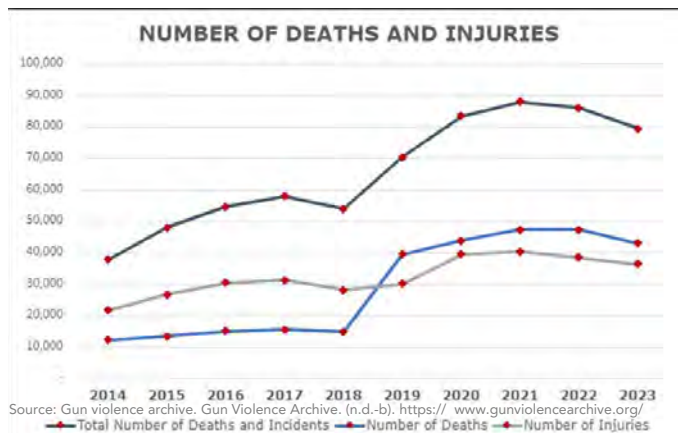
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: THE STATE OF GUN VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Have you ever driven the wrong way and turned around in a driveway? Run into your neighbor's yard to retrieve a lost basketball? Filled your car at a gas station? Walked to a park to enjoy the warm weather?

In a free society, these everyday occurrences shouldn't carry the risk of death. But when guns fall into the wrong hands, even life's smallest moments can turn deadly. Every community is impacted. Urban centers, suburban neighborhoods, and rural communities are all susceptible to gun violence. Throughout the United States, community violence, mass shootings, accidental firings, and firearm suicides are daily occurrences.

Ten years ago, *The Kelly Report: Gun Violence in America* helped transform the conversation around gun violence prevention. The Kelly Report went beyond the headlines that grieved mass shooting victims only to move on a few days later. The report discussed the impact of community violence in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The report talked about firearm regulation, but it also focused on a holistic public health approach to the gun violence epidemic.

Since the last Kelly Report, 167,263 people have died due to gun violence.¹ Nearly 12,000 were under the age of eighteen. There have been almost 5,000 mass shootings, defined as four or more victims, not including the shooter. 240,317 more people have taken their lives with a firearm. In all, more than 400,000 lives have been lost since the 2014 Kelly Report.



Public Health Approach and Community Violence

These deaths, whether it's homicide, suicide, or accidental, leave lasting scars on their communities. Experiencing or being close to gun violence has severe negative effects on one's mental health.^{2,3}

These effects disproportionately impact communities of color, contributing to a phenomenon known as community trauma. Even if someone has not experienced gun violence first-hand, just the fear of walking to school or waiting at the bus stop can cause lasting trauma to a community.

As mass shootings grab the headlines, community violence is transforming cities and towns for the worse. A report by the Urban Institute shows how gun violence raises costs for businesses and deters would-be patrons.⁴ Existing businesses close and others avoid the area, reducing available jobs. Home values drop as does homeownership, hurting the ability of residents to build wealth. These factors lead to less economic opportunities and investment, depriving communities of a prosperous future.

Since the last Kelly Report, there has been a shift toward treating gun violence as a public health crisis and addressing community gun violence. The public health approach uses evidence-based and science-backed strategies to address public health crises, in this case, the gun violence epidemic. As part of the public health approach, not only do solutions involve keeping firearms out of the hands of potentially dangerous individuals, but they also address the root causes of gun violence such as improving community safety and well-being through things like community violence intervention.

Gun violence not only hurts communities but also the overall healthcare system. A GAO report found that gun violence costs the American healthcare system more than \$1 billion every year.⁵ This cost of treating firearm injuries is largely covered by Medicaid and other public health programs. Additionally, it is estimated that taxpayers cover nearly \$8 million a day in medical and mental health bills related to gun violence.

An American Epidemic

Gun violence may not be unique to America, but it is a uniquely American crisis. The United States leads the world in civilian guns per capita with more than 120 firearms per resident. More than twice that of Yemen, the country with the second most firearms per capita. Unsurprisingly, the United States has some of the highest rates of gun deaths in the world.⁶ The United States far outpaces peer countries, having eight times as many violent gun deaths as Canada, the country ranking second among peers.⁷

This report is not about banning all firearms, nor is it advocating that law-abiding citizens should be barred from owning a firearm. This report is about personal freedom for everyone. Gun violence robs Americans of freedom; the freedom to attend school or visit the park or go to a movie or the bowling alley without fear of becoming a victim of a shooting.

The crisis of gun violence in America doesn't stem from inherent American violence, but rather from widespread access to firearms compared to other nations. Background checks are required for all sales from a federally licensed firearms seller, but many private sales, such as online or at a gun show, do not require them and make accessing firearms significantly easier.⁸ Background checks serve to prevent people with a criminal background or someone who is a danger to themselves or others from obtaining a firearm. Many private sellers online or at gun shows have claimed to sell as a hobby or have sold from a collection, creating what is known as the "gun-show loophole" where unregistered sellers are not required to conduct a background check and allow firearms to fall into the hands of bad actors.¹²

Fortunately, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act changed the definition of what it means to be "engaged in the business" which will cut down on a significant number of these sales.⁹ Data shows that states that require background checks for all firearms sales have a 10 percent decline in homicides.¹⁰

Background checks are just one of a myriad of policies that will help end gun violence and make our communities safer. This report will discuss many more policies such as community violence intervention which uses targeted interventions to reduce violence in the highest-risk populations. There is also a need for more research on gun violence. The public health approach cannot work without consistent and thorough research. The federal enforcement of gun laws also needs to be improved, and modernizing laws regulating federal firearm licensees is sorely needed.

The leaders who contributed to this report detail how the gun violence prevention community has grown since 2014, and how new generations are shaping our movement. They are experts, survivors, lawmakers, and advocates. You will read how the public health approach has become the main method of reducing gun violence. You will read how communities are using grassroots approaches to respond to gun violence. You will read about evidence-based policies and how you can advocate for them in your neighborhoods. You will learn that your voice is essential to stopping the cycle of violence.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword from The Honorable Lucy McBath (GA-07) - - - Page 1

Letter from the CBC Chair – The Honorable Steven Horsford (NV-04) - - - Page 2

Chapter 1-

Gun Violence in America: 10 years later - - - Page 3

The Honorable Mike Thompson (CA-04) - - - Page 4

Kris Brown, President Brady United - - - Page 6

The Honorable Maxwell Frost (FL-10) - - - Page 8

Chapter 2-

An American Nightmare: Stories of Survivors - - - Page 10

Trevon Bosley, President B.R.A.V.E (Bold Resistance Against Gun Violence) - - - Page 11

Florence McCray, Gun Violence Prevention Advocate - - - Page 13

Brenda Grisham, Gun Violence Prevention Advocate - - - Page 14

Chapter 3-

Voices to Stop Violence - - - Page 15

The Honorable Arne Duncan, Managing Director & Founder, Chicago CRED - - - Page 16

Po Murray, Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance - - - Page 18

Matt Forté, Founder, What's Your Forté Foundation - - - Page 22

Chapter 4-

Voices for Change - - - Page 24

Amber Goodwin, Founder & President, Community Justice Action Fund - - - Page 25

Everytown for Gun Safety – Federal Firearms Licensees - - - Page 28

Giffords: Courage to End Gun Violence – Litigation for Gun Reform - - - Page 31

Chapter 5-

National Reports on Gun Violence - - - Page 34

Impact on Cities

Dr. Phillip J. Cook and Dr. Jens Ludwig – Social Cost of Gun Violence - - - Page 35

Mayors Against Illegal Guns – Crime Guns - - - Page 37

Dr. Kenneth Corey, Dr. Max Kapustin, and Dr. Jens Ludwig – Police Management Matters a Lot - Page 40

The Personal Impact

Moms Demand Action – Community Trauma - - - Page 42

Center for American Progress – Veterans and Suicide - - - Page 44

Giffords – Gun Violence Impact on Women - - - Page 48

Policy Recommendations & Conclusion - - - Page 53

The Honorable Lucy McBath, Member of Congress



I've held many roles in my life – I am the daughter of civil rights leaders, I've been a flight attendant, I am a wife, and now a United States Congresswoman. Through all of that, the most important title I will ever hold is "Mom."

On Black Friday eleven years ago, my son Jordan Davis stopped at a gas station with his friends. Within three minutes, a man with hate in his heart began arguing with them about their "loud music." He pulled out a gun from his car and shot ten rounds at the boys, hitting Jordan three times, and ripping my child away from me forever. Jordan was a 17-year-old boy who lost his life before he really ever had a chance to live it. Since that day, I have chosen to turn my pain into progress so that other families don't feel the same despair that I have.

Gun violence continues to shred communities in our country. I saw our politicians pledge to take action after Trayvon Martin, after the murder of innocent children in Sandy Hook, and after the high school shooting in Parkland, Florida — and yet nothing changed.

So, I ran for Congress on a platform of gun safety in Georgia, which was — at the time — as ruby red as it could be. People told me I couldn't do it. They said I would fail. But I flipped my seat Democratic because the American people were calling out for change and tired of living in fear.

In the 5 years since I came to Congress, we have seen that change. We passed the first comprehensive gun violence prevention package in more than 30 years into law. That package included legislation I led to enact extreme risk protection orders, or 'red flag' laws, and millions of dollars in community violence intervention funding to give our communities the resources they have been crying out for. Those dollars are already hard at work keeping our neighbors safe and whole. Under the Biden-Harris Administration, the first-ever Office of Gun Violence Prevention has been implemented to keep the crisis of gun violence at the forefront of our federal work.

Through the work of people like Congresswoman Robin Kelly, our colleagues on the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, and bipartisan steps in Congress — the tides are

changing. We have a way to go; we must ban the weapons of war we see on our streets and in our classrooms and enact universal background checks on all gun sales. Together, with the desire for change I still see in our world, I am hopeful that our movement will continue to grow.

10 years ago, I stood on the steps of the Georgia State Capitol and called for action to make sure that my son, Jordan, did not die in vain. Now, I tell you that I am certain my son did not die in vain. I'm grateful for the leadership of my friend Congresswoman Robin Kelly, my fellow mom, on this mission to end gun violence, and I am immensely proud of the steps we have taken to make our nation safer for the American people.

Sincerely,

Rep. Lucy McBath (D-GA)
Vice Chair, House Gun Violence Prevention Task Force

The Honorable Steven Horsford, Chair, Congressional Black Caucus



Gun violence is a pervasive problem that indiscriminately impacts communities across the United States. This issue is not foreign to me. It has affected me on a personal level. At the age of 19, I lost my father to a senseless act of gun violence. This experience has profoundly shaped my legislative priorities and influenced my commitment to ending gun violence.

As Chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), I recognize the historical challenges Black people have faced because of gun violence. The history of gun violence coupled with our country's contemporary challenges are why the caucus remains committed to ending the harm inflicted upon American families by gun violence.

The CBC has stood at the forefront of combatting gun violence. I was proud to introduce The Breaking the Cycle of Violence Act, with Congresswoman Robin Kelly as a co-lead. A crucial part of this legislation is preventing the problem of gun violence before it starts in communities. This legislation strategically invests \$5 billion in anti-violence programs and \$1.5 billion to provide workforce training and job opportunities for youth ages 16-24.

Finding common ground on this topic has been challenging. Effective solutions often require a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that addresses both the availability of firearms and the underlying factors contributing to violence in society. Public engagement, open dialogue, and evidence-based policymaking are crucial components of successful gun violence reform. We must bring these solutions to fruition to break the cycle, reduce crime, and save lives.

Solutions should involve collaboration between communities, law enforcement, policymakers, and advocacy groups to create lasting change and ensure the safety and well-being of all individuals, regardless of their racial or ethnic background

As the "conscience of the Congress," our Caucus has championed vital legislation to prevent gun violence, like the Bipartisan Safer Communities law, which takes a page from my legislation and makes groundbreaking investments in community violence intervention programs. We must all be committed to ending gun violence in the United States. Today, we remain committed to legislatively fighting to protect Americans from the horrific consequences of gun violence and make sure we do not become numb to mass shootings and isolated events alike. All Americans deserve better.

Sincerely,

Rep. Steven Horsford (D-NV)
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus

1

GUN VIOLENCE
IN AMERICA:

10 YEARS LATER

The Honorable Mike Thompson, Chair, House Gun Violence Prevention Taskforce



10 years ago, Representative Robin Kelly produced the 2014 Kelly Report: Gun Violence in America, the first-of-its-kind Congressional report on the gun violence epidemic. In the decade since its publication, the gun violence prevention movement has made progress in the fight to help save lives and keep our communities safe. This progress would not have been possible without the leadership and dedication of Congresswoman Kelly. As a Vice Chair of the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, she has helped lead the way in ensuring that gun violence prevention remains a top priority for our government.

After the Sandy Hook shooting took the lives of 20 students and six teachers, there was an enduring determination to ensure something like that never happened again. The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force was formed, and I'm proud to serve as Chair and work to promote safer communities. The Task Force immediately set to work hearing from Americans of all stripes about how we can move past the gun violence epidemic.

The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force serves to coordinate and advance gun violence prevention efforts in Congress and with the Administration, and Robin's voice and leadership is an essential part of our work. Today, there are more than 180 members in the task force. These members lead a wide range of more than 50 bills that will make our communities safer and help end gun violence.

The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force has been at the forefront of advancing gun safety legislation. Each Congress following Sandy Hook, I have introduced the Bipartisan Background Checks Act. This bill would require universal background checks for all firearm purchases in our country. Requiring background checks for all gun sales is the fastest way to save lives. Every day, background checks stop more than 160 felons and 50 domestic abusers from getting a gun from a federally licensed dealer.¹ Even though background checks are supported by 90 percent of the American public, this bill has only passed the House when controlled by Democrats and has been stonewalled by Senate Republicans.²

The culmination of our efforts in the last Congress was the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act. It took nearly 10 years, and a horrific school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, but it is the most significant gun violence prevention legislation in 30 years to be signed into law. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act is helping to curb the impact of gun violence and provide more resources to state and local governments to ensure that their community is not the site of the next mass shooting. It provides funding for red flag laws that will help ensure deadly weapons are out of the hands of people who are a danger to themselves or others. It closes the boyfriend loophole so convicted domestic abusers in dating relationships are added to the National Instant Background Check System. It creates more strict penalties for gun traffickers and straw purchasers. It provides resources to invest in community-based violence prevention initiatives, helping to put those who may be at risk of a life of crime and violence on a better path to a more successful future. This law is historic, and while it is progress in the right direction, we know that it is not enough.

The only place in the United States where gun violence prevention is a partisan issue is in the United States Congress. While Democrats do not control the House, Robin has been instrumental in our efforts to force a vote on bills that would save lives, including my Bipartisan Background Checks Act, Rep. Lucy McBath's Assault Weapons Ban, Rep. Jim Clyburn's Charleston Loophole bill, and Rep. Rosa DeLauro's Ethan's Law for Safe Storage through a process using discharge petitions. Being in the minority means that Democrats do not control which bills are considered in committee or brought to the floor for a vote. A discharge petition is a tool in which a majority of members, typically 218 if the House has no vacancies, can sign the petition to circumvent the Majority party and force a vote on a bill. Only a handful of Republicans need to join Democrats to pass bills that are supported by the majority of Americans, including Republicans and gun owners, and would help end the gun violence epidemic.³

The Task Force is also working to pass other critical

legislation including the Federal Firearm Licensee Act to modernize the way gun dealers obtain a federal firearm license, the Keeping Guns from High-Risk Individuals Act to expand the categories of people who are prohibited from handling, transporting, or possessing firearms, and the Firearm Safety Act to issue safety standards for firearms.

While Congress faces endless Republican obstructionism, Robin's optimism and tenacity has helped us move forward. We work with President Biden, who is second to none for his actions in support of gun safety. The Task Force has pushed for executive action on ghost guns and background checks, and Task Force Vice Chair, Rep. Maxwell Frost's bill to create the Office of Gun Violence Prevention was put into action by the President.

In 2023, the Gun Violence Prevention Task Force held 14 meetings with numerous gun violence prevention leaders, hearing from those seeking to end domestic violence, legal experts, and firearms experts; hearing policy recommendations for gun violence solutions supported by responsible gun owners. The Task Force held a gun violence forum with a diverse range of witnesses.

As the Supreme Court was poised to make a major ruling impacting gun safety laws, the Task Force filed an amicus brief about the importance of keeping guns out of the hands of domestic violence abusers and other dangerous people. We also organized eight press conferences to keep up the drumbeat and ensure that the voices of the advocates, survivors, and victims are heard in Congress. At each meeting, hearing, and press conference, Robin is there to help move the conversation forward and provide important perspectives that guide our work.

This report makes clear that there is a lot more work to be done when it comes to stopping the senseless violence that devastates communities across our country. Robin Kelly is a true leader when it comes to taking on gun violence and ensuring that no parent needs to worry that the last time they see their kid alive is when they send them off to school. The Gun Violence Prevention Task Force is committed to finding a path forward on commonsense gun violence prevention legislation that will keep our communities safe from the scourge of gun violence while respecting the Second Amendment.

Sincerely,

Rep. Mike Thompson (D-CA)
Chair, House Gun Violence Prevention Taskforce

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Kris Brown, President, Brady: United Against Gun Violence



I will never forget sitting on the South Lawn at the White House in July of 2022.

Surrounded by my friends and colleagues in the movement, and moved to tears by the President's words, we celebrated the passage of the first major gun violence prevention law in nearly 30 years, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act.¹ It was a joyous occasion, one that was the culmination of years of hard work, and reminiscent of one of the earliest moments in my career to end gun violence.

In November 2023, we marked three decades since President Bill Clinton signed the landmark Brady Bill into law. After years of tireless advocacy by Jim and Sarah Brady, Brady's fearless namesakes, this law established our nation's first background check system to prevent prohibited purchasers from obtaining firearms.^{2,3}

At the time, I was just starting my career and working on Capitol Hill with Rep. Jim Moran. I had the unique privilege to witness Jim and Sarah's crusade for a safer America — and I know it wasn't easy. The original Brady Bill took seven votes over six years and three presidencies until Jim and Sarah were able to declare victory.

Notably, this life-saving legislation passed the U.S. Senate with bipartisan, unanimous consent. Yes, I'll say it again, unanimous consent!

Jim and Sarah knew our country needed common-sense solutions to prevent the pain and trauma that devastated their family. And while they're not with us anymore, I know they'd be proud of the results: since 1994, the Brady Background Check System has blocked nearly 4.9 million prohibited firearms transactions.

Now, 30 years later, it is clear that Brady Background Checks have saved countless lives. But it is also clear that there's much more work to be done. That's why I am proud to lead Brady, the very organization that inspired me to join this fight.

Our nation has watched in horror as innocent children were gunned down in Columbine in 1999, Sandy Hook in 2012, Parkland in 2018, and Uvalde in 2022. We also saw stark increases in everyday gun violence, police violence, firearm suicide, and acts of interpersonal violence.^{5,6}

Firearms have become the leading cause of death for youth in this nation, and in 2023 there were more mass shootings than days in a year.

Over this last decade, we have again seen a groundswell of public support for gun violence prevention policies, and in the 30 years since Jim and Sarah passed the Brady Law, there's more momentum than ever to address this public health crisis head-on.

For me, like so many others, the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in 2012 brought the reality of American gun violence into stark relief, galvanizing our movement and policymakers across the country. Leaders like the then newly-elected Rep. Robin Kelly, who had long fought for communities disproportionately impacted by this epidemic, stood up for a safer America and refused to be ignored. It was Brady's great privilege to contribute to the very first Kelly Report in 2014, as it is mine today, and I am filled with optimism to see how far we have come since the day it was published.

The movement and momentum continue to grow for this issue. In 2018, Americans went to the polls and elected a gun violence prevention majority in the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time in a generation, spurred by a youth movement never before seen in American politics. After the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, young people changed the landscape of our political discourse, helping to take an issue once considered to be a third rail and transform it into a badge of honor.⁷ Within weeks of taking office, newly elected gun violence prevention champions in the House of Representatives introduced and passed two bills to strengthen the Brady Background Check system, the first major gun violence prevention bills passed in that body in a quarter century.

Since that time, the movement and our champions in Congress have achieved incredible victories: Funding gun violence prevention research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institute of Health (NIH) for the first time in over two decades, delivering critical funds for community violence intervention and prevention programs, bolstering the Brady Background Check System, and providing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives with only their second confirmed Director, among many others.^{8,9}

In 2020, we elected the strongest gun violence prevention champions to have ever occupied the White House, and we crafted a robust agenda of recommended executive actions that President Biden could enact to reduce gun violence.¹⁰ The Biden-Harris administration swiftly took action to address gun suicide, enhance gun industry oversight, invest in our communities, and more. Notably, the Biden-Harris administration enacted more gun violence prevention executive orders than any other administration on record.

It is within this context that we entered the Summer of 2022: a grocery store attacked by a white supremacist; an elementary school terrorized by a mass shooter; an Independence Day parade interrupted by gunshots. In all, 38 people were killed, including 19 children. At least 68 others were wounded. These incidents, occurring only weeks apart, made national headlines, outraging communities across the country.

The U.S. Congress finally heard our cries, drafting and passing the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act: the most significant gun violence prevention legislation since Jim and Sarah Brady passed the Brady Bill 30 years ago.¹¹

The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act treats our nation's gun violence crisis as the multifaceted public health epidemic that it is. Among other things, it invests millions in community violence intervention, funds the implementation of state-based extreme risk laws, mandates enhanced background checks for individuals under the age of 21, and so much more.

I know it can sometimes feel like we're not making any progress in ending gun violence in America, but we are, and we have the overwhelming support of the American public on our side to end this epidemic.¹² We have much work left, but I remain optimistic about our future.

We at Brady will never stop fighting to strengthen our nation's gun laws, and we're grateful for the leadership of Rep. Kelly in our quest to free America from gun violence.

Sincerely,

Kris Brown
President, Brady: United to Prevent Gun Violence

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The Honorable Maxwell Frost, Member of Congress



Central Floridians are ready to see an end to senseless gun violence. As the first Member of Congress from Gen Z, the lockdown generation, elected with a mandate to tackle gun violence, I am proud of the ways I've helped bring the national movement for gun violence prevention – a movement I have been part of for over a decade – into my work in Congress. We've made strides toward combating one of the great public health crises of our time – gun violence.

Gun violence remains the leading cause of death for children and teens in our nation.¹ Young people, with the most at stake, overwhelmingly support lifesaving gun violence prevention policies.² That is why I take every opportunity to elevate youth voices and leadership when pushing for policies that safeguard our future.

2023 saw a volume of gun deaths similar to the record-breaking years of 2022 and 2021 and an increase in mass shootings.³ This trend cannot continue unchecked, which is why our response to this crisis must be multifaceted and inclusive. Gun violence prevention isn't just about legislative changes to gun ownership; it's about addressing the root causes of community violence and exploring the reasons why someone might feel they need to pick up a gun to solve their problems.

This means directing resources and support to Black and Brown communities, which disproportionately bear the brunt of this violence. These communities need empowerment, investment, and attention to break the cycle of violence.

Amid these challenges, there is a silver lining. We have watched as the movement against gun violence has continued to grow into the most intergenerational, cross-cultural coalition in our nation's history. This coalition transcends age, race, and background, uniting people across the spectrum in a shared mission for real progress and change, not thoughts and prayers. Seeing such diverse groups come together, driven by a common purpose and a shared vision for a safer, more peaceful future, is encouraging.

There is a supermajority of Americans who want to see the

end of gun violence, and fighting for that goal is not a political issue; it is a moral imperative. With the collective strength of this unprecedented coalition, I am hopeful. Together, we can turn the tide against gun violence and forge a future where all Americans can live without the fear of a gun taking their life.

We owe it to the victims and survivors of gun violence, to our children, and to future generations to create this safer world. This is our moment in history, a moment defined by our shared commitment to creating lasting change. Let's seize it with both hands.

In many ways, this first year in Congress has been a year of laying down groundwork, in partnership with the people of Central Florida. Along the way, there have been some incredible milestones that show our approach to this epidemic is working:

- We achieved an Office of Gun Violence Prevention.** Efforts to ensure that there was an Office of Gun Violence Prevention at the Federal level have been at the heart of the advocacy work that gun violence prevention groups have been working towards for years. In March, I was proud to introduce a bill to create this office and work with an outstanding coalition of partners to get over 90 cosponsoring Members of Congress on board. The bill aims to bring together those most impacted by gun violence with local, state, and federal leaders to advance relevant policies, collect and report data, and expand outreach efforts. In September, President Joe Biden created the office himself through executive action, and since then, the office has mobilized to prevent and respond to shootings that have continued to devastate our communities.
- We organized a bipartisan coalition of lawmakers to defeat a gun lobby amendment that would have defunded the new White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention.** The amendment ultimately failed in a 208-212 vote. Showing that even in a Republican controlled House of Representatives, we have a majority of members that are for gun violence prevention.

- **We provided funding for CVI through the creation of the CVIPI grant and BSCA.** This funding from the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act will help expand the City of Orlando’s Community Violence Intervention (CVI) Program into historically underserved communities in Orlando to reduce violence and promote public safety. We were able to bring around \$1.5 million to the City of Orlando’s CVI program, which will help them collaborate with various community-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, and academic institutions to help stop gun violence before it even takes place. The White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention is helping our community leverage these funds.
- **We are holding financial institutions accountable on gun violence prevention.** In the wake of the Marjory Stoneman Douglas school shooting in Parkland, Florida, several financial institutions re-evaluated the extent to which they are investing in, underwriting, or otherwise sponsoring the manufacture and sale of firearms – especially military-style weapons. As a result of this additional scrutiny, some institutions committed to severing ties with the industry. Our team is helping to drive efforts that will shed light on how much progress has been made and how much is yet to be implemented.
- **Leaders in Congress led a gun violence prevention roundtable.** A roundtable titled *Thoughts and Prayers — With Actions and Change: Practical Solutions to End Gun Slaughter in America, Part I*— convened policy experts, Second Amendment scholars, youth leaders, and educators to examine how gun violence and mass shootings ravage all aspects of the American fabric, tearing apart families, schools, communities, and congregations. The roundtable focused on the political inaction that perpetuates gun violence, the need for focus on community violence, and the importance of centering voices of young people in decision-making spaces to chart a path forward for commonsense reforms supported by the majority of Americans.

I am grateful to the gun violence prevention leaders who I have joined in Congress for their decades of work championing solutions and calling attention to this crisis. Solutions like banning assault weapons, requiring universal background checks, funding community violence intervention, and ending the corrupt influence of the gun lobby are essential. I look forward to continuing to build the movement to defeat senseless gun violence.

Sincerely,

Rep. Maxwell Frost (D-FL)

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2

AN AMERICAN NIGHTMARE:

STORIES OF SURVIVORS

Trevon Bosley,
President, B.R.A.V.E. (Bold Resistance Against Gun
Violence)



As a child growing up in Chicago, many days I woke up to the sounds of gunshots and police sirens, and many nights I went to sleep to the sounds of gunshots and police sirens. I thought of this as just the way of life. At the age of 7, in December of 2005, the violence outside my window became personal when my cousin Vincent Avant was shot and killed down the street from his home. Soon violence would hit even closer to home; on April 4, 2006, my brother, Terrell Bosley, was shot and killed at church while getting ready for band rehearsal. My brother was a prominent gospel bass player in Chicago. My brother was a college student. My brother was loved by many. My brother was at church, a place he thought was safe. My brother's shooting was immediately labeled gang related. My brother's character was investigated by police before his murder. My brother's case remains unsolved. My brother's story is far too common in Chicago, Illinois, or the United States.

When it comes to everyday or community gun violence, victims are seen simply as tallies in the newspaper or as criminals, and therefore deserved to die. The response we see to community gun violence is not by circumstance or coincidence, but because the majority of victims of community gun violence are Black and Brown. Survivors are often left to deal with this loss alone because victim services are lacking, and worse yet, they have to suffer as the media criminalizes their loved ones. In other cases, the victim doesn't make headlines but rather becomes a small number in the corner of the newspaper.

The children in these environments have it even harder. The day after experiencing a loss they are expected to attend school as normal, with no time to grieve or process their trauma. Too often, when they need a school counselor, there are none available. Youth in this environment are expected to return to school as usual after the murder of their friends or family. Youth in this environment have to deal with the loss of a loved one followed by more loss, as funerals occur all too often.

Where is the comfort if you are constantly under duress for fear of being shot walking to and from school every day,

sitting on your porch, or lying in your bedroom? Many underestimate the strain and lasting trauma of dealing with community gun violence. Not only for the multitude of those killed but those who survived and who must cope with loss and continue to live in the environment.

My violence prevention journey started not too long after the loss of my brother. My parents had me attending marches and vigils from the age of 8, and by the age of 11, I joined a youth-led violence prevention organization called Safety Network, later changed to B.R.A.V.E. (Bold Resistance Against Violence Everywhere) Youth Leaders. A group of youth from different communities coming together to create real change. Through our work, we held peace rallies, marches, and protests as well as offered tutoring, mentorship, care packages for seniors, and support for the community. We held peace events such as basketball tournaments, talent shows, poetry slams, and youth conferences. We often had days where we just met to talk about how violence was affecting us and how to remain hopeful in our fight. This sharing was especially important following the shooting of Teyonna Loften and then again after the murder of Laniyah Murphy, both members of B.R.A.V.E.

I later became the President of B.R.A.V.E., which led to a variety of new experiences in the violence prevention space. These included speaking to President Obama on CNN, speaking to over a million people at the first March for Our Lives Rally in 2018, introducing President Biden in 2022, speaking at the MLK 50th anniversary, and many other interviews and engagements. My goal in this fight is to highlight the experiences and problems many of us face in dealing with community gun violence. I represent an aspect of the violence prevention conversation that is often ignored and overlooked.

I've been in the violence prevention space for the majority of my life. I've been in this fight long enough to have seen the fact that firearms are the leading cause of death of Black children since 2006 be ignored, while firearms being the leading cause of death of all children since 2020 is being

highlighted.¹ Although there is some overlap when it comes to solutions for mass shootings and community gun violence, far too often the work, stories, and policies needed for community violence are neglected. While we've been involved in the violence prevention movement for some time we still are fighting for our seat at the table.

A different approach must be taken for community violence than the mass shootings that grab headlines. Community gun violence stems from years and years of poverty, disinvestment, and neglect from all levels of government. Believing there is just one or a few pieces of legislation that will solve this nuanced epidemic is misguided. Just saying we are fighting for violence intervention funding, while needed, is not the end. This funding has to get to the organizations and people doing the work. There are grassroots organizations without the resources to fill out a long grant application, or who are expected to front the money for their struggling organization while waiting and hoping the government will reimburse them. Better technical assistance is needed to help the grassroots organizations and there must be a focus on these organizations when funding is distributed.

When addressing community violence, we must understand that community violence prevention policy takes many different forms. For Illinois youth plagued by violence, a bus trip to experience downtown Chicago (a place some have never seen) is violence prevention, temporary housing for homeless youth is violence prevention, a bus card is violence prevention, a job readiness program is violence prevention, and legal services and expungement are violence prevention. These strategies need to be used by community violence prevention programs when applying for funding and working in communities.

As you read this report, in Chicago alone, a person is shot every 3 and a half hours.² Understand this is a reality that cities around the country live by. Many lives will be changed in the next 3 and a half hours what will you do to change that?

Sincerely,

Trevon Bosley
President, B.R.A.V.E (Bold Resistance Against Gun
Violence)

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Florence McCrary, Gun Violence Prevention Advocate



Terrence was a vibrant person whose life was cut short on August 14, 2016, as he attended a party at an art gallery in Oakland, CA for his best friend.

That night one of the party attendees picked a fight with another young man who protected his girlfriend from unwanted attention.

The person decided to pull out a gun and shot the man defending his girlfriend 7 times. In that shooting, my 22-year-old son Terrence was hit by one of the bullets and succumbed to his injury. He laid in the street all night long, as my husband and I stood behind the yellow tapeline.

Since that night my life has never been the same. Losing my only son has had a tremendous effect on my family. It has caused many sleepless nights for my husband and daughter and ignited a fight in me to see justice served for those who feel compelled to let a gun articulate their anger, frustration, and voice when simply talking would do.

We have trained people in America to be desensitized to gun violence. This cannot stand! As a result of my loss, I joined the Family Support Advocates, a group of Mothers who have all lost children to gun violence in Oakland, California.

We have helped provide support to other families who have had the same traumatic experience. We have worked with local Law Enforcement to provide dignity covers at the crime scene and developed training for Police on how to treat families who have been faced with this type of tragedy.

To honor Terrence Jr., we have held a yearly skateboard event to commemorate his passion for skateboarding and art. The skatepark in Berkeley, CA bears his name and has given us a way to celebrate his life yearly.

Nobody should have to bury their children due to senseless gun violence. There is a real epidemic going on in this country that needs help from elected officials and those with a voice to eradicate having to normalize something abnormal.

I am a voice for my Son and will always be. I hope by telling his story I can inspire others to care more about life and not turn to killing as a way to exhibit power. We will miss Terrence Jr. but know that he was well loved and dearly missed.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Florence McCrary



Terrence P. McCrary Jr.
Born 9/15/1993, Passed 8/14/2016.

Brenda Grisham, Gun Violence Prevention Advocate



My Name is Brenda Grisham and I am from Oakland, California. I am a mom, nunu (grandmother), activist, and business owner. To me gun violence really does not have a definition, we still question the Who, What, Where, and Why does it happen. December 31, 2010, in Oakland, California I lost my son Christopher L. Jones. My oldest Daughter, Deshonda, was shot as well. This is a day I can still see in my sleep 13 years later. They were not after us so why, in broad daylight, did they open fire on a mother, my daughter, her 5-month-old baby, my son, and my other daughter.

The shooters were after someone they felt wronged them, and we ended up being in the middle of it all. This traumatic day in time threw me into advocacy work. They were young people, armed with assault rifles, who left over 73 shell casings in my yard. They had no regard, nor did they care, that we were standing there.

My advocacy work began with creating The Christopher LaVell Jones Foundation to lend support and provide counseling and referral services to families who have experienced or lost a loved one to gun violence. Next, I started Their Lives Matter, which is an organization advocating for stricter gun laws. Over the years I have worked with our District Attorney's office as well as The Oakland Police Department whom have become great allies to the families.

I also serve on the executive board of The Family Support Advocates which is a group of 5 mothers who have lost children and work in the community. I also sit on the Executive Board of the Violence Prevention Coalition and serve as the Chair of their Gun Violence Subcommittee. I am a civilian speaker for Ceasefire in which I speak to individuals most at risk of being killed or to kill someone. Lastly, I am the Co-Executive Director of ROYALS, a human trafficking Non-Profit.

What are the root causes of violence is a question we all seek an answer to. Some say better jobs, education access, or improved home lives. The biggest question is where do we start? Community violence and mass shootings are two separate fights. You cannot fix the offender without fixing

those around them. Stronger communities and more opportunities are critical in fixing the offender.

I grew up in a close family setting. Our family is big, so my grandparents had big dinners every Sunday. My doing this work is a direct reflection of my son and our tight family. I never refer to my son in the past tense, he is and always will be a good kid.

Communities need to come together to help make it easier for our loved ones and neighbors to navigate the hardships of life. As much as policy is needed at the state and national levels, a grassroots movement is also needed. We live in a world where it seems no one wants to have a conversation and instead will resort to violence to solve disputes. As a speaker for Ceasefire, I am helping to start the conversation. Part of this conversation is that you don't have to kill anybody to take care of your family. Many communities, however, lack the resources to help those that need help.

I ask anyone considering turning to violence to look at all of the RIP shirts in your closet, or think about the loved ones you have lost and ask yourself if you would want your friends and family to feel the same kind of hurt. We all have ideas on what the root causes are, but the most troubling question is how do we change the narrative. The root causes can vary from state to state and community to community, but the problem of gun violence impacts us all. How do we move forward and where do we start? The Kelly Report will help answer this question.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Brenda Grisham

3

VOICES TO STOP
VIOLENCE

The Honorable Arne Duncan, Managing Director & Founder, Chicago CRED



Eight years ago, I returned to Chicago after serving in the Obama Administration and was overwhelmed with despair over the surging gun violence. I had begun losing basketball friends to gun violence back in my teens in the 1970's and, like all Chicagoans, had suffered through some tough times in the 1990's when gun violence hit another high point. But, what I saw in 2016 was heartbreaking and I had to get involved. With support from Emerson Collective, I founded an organization called Chicago CRED.

CRED is founded on the simple belief that the best way to prevent shootings is to engage directly with those most at risk of shooting or being shot. "Engaging" starts with direct outreach at the street-level by trusted friends, neighbors, peers, and elders in order to recruit them into our program. It continues with life coaching, trauma treatment, support to return to school, job training, and eventually a job in the legal economy. For CRED, it takes 12-24 months to get through our program, during which we provide a weekly stipend so participants can feed and house themselves and their families.

In eight years, we have served about 1,300 mostly men, but also women, and increasingly high-school age students. More than 300 have graduated from the program, and hundreds more are in the pipeline. Some have also dropped out. When you are working with the highest risk, you are not going to bat 1.000. But we are saving lives. In fact, we have partnered with Corner, a social science research organization at Northwestern University, and they have built a body of research affirming that our program and others like it are significantly reducing the likelihood of getting shot or rearrested.^{1,2}

What we have yet to prove is that transforming individuals will eventually transform whole communities. Part of the problem is that community violence intervention (CVI) organizations are simply not at scale in Chicago. We estimate that we are serving about 15-20 percent of the highest-risk population citywide. They are mostly concentrated in about 15 communities, although CVI organizations are currently active in 37 of the 77 neighborhoods of Chicago.

Over the last two years, we partnered with four other organizations to scale up in North Lawndale on Chicago's West Side—one of the most violent communities in Chicago. In partnership with Northwestern University, we identified approximately 1,250 high-risk individuals and more than 30 active street factions.

Through our outreach teams, we recruited into our programs more than half of the 1,250 highest-risk people, mediated hundreds of separate disputes, any one of which could have led to a shooting, and negotiated several peace agreements among warring factions. Since 2021, gun violence is down about 35 percent in North Lawndale, which is slightly more than the citywide decline over the same period.³ We do not claim that our work is the cause of the decline, but we celebrate the positive trend.

On February 1, 2024, a broad coalition of public and private sector leaders announced a plan to expand on the North Lawndale strategy and go to scale in six more communities over the next five years.⁴ At the moment, philanthropy, business, and government are collectively spending about half of the \$400 million we think we need to go to scale in these additional neighborhoods. We are well on the way to raising the other half.

Today, Chicago and Illinois are becoming national leaders in the field of CVI. If our plan to scale up leads to community-level transformation it could become a new model for public safety in communities plagued by gun violence. Conservatively, we estimate that investing in CVI will generate a return of \$19 for every dollar invested so it not only saves lives in the long term, but can also save billions in terms of economic and social costs.

Best of all, long-neglected neighborhoods and thousands of traumatized individuals will begin to heal from decades of gun violence affecting multiple generations of Chicagoans. Healing from trauma, however, is only a first step. We also need to hire from these communities and invest in them.

In June of 2023, a task force of the Civic Committee of the Commercial Club released a five-pillar framework that

includes investing in CVI, hiring of CVI program graduates, reforming the Chicago Police Department to be more effective, and spurring community investment.⁵ This is a major commitment from the business community to be a full partner in public safety. Business involvement represents an unprecedented level of alignment among a broad group of stakeholders around our work and provides a path into the legal economy for individuals who have only functioned in the illegal economy is critical.

Equally critical is improving the effectiveness of the police department. In the neighborhoods we serve, arrest rates for non-fatal shootings are in the single digits and only slightly higher for fatal shootings, which means that most of the shooters are walking around free.⁶ Tragically, many of these shooters are bragging about their actions online, goading their victims into retaliation, which is one of the biggest drivers of gun violence. In the absence of real justice, you get street justice and people take matters into their own hands.

It is our hope that the Chicago Police Department can boost clearance rates for shootings. To get there, police must rebuild trust with the communities, which have suffered years of abuse at the hands of law enforcement. We know that many police officers recognize the need to rebuild trust and strengthen relationships with the community, but culture change takes time. With the new leadership at the Chicago Police Department, we are more hopeful than ever.

As we move into 2024, Chicago is coming off two years of double-digit declines in shootings.⁷ Today we have a growing body of promising evidence in support of CVI. We have consensus among philanthropy, business, government, and community, and committed leadership at the City, County, State, and Federal levels of government. Now, more than ever, we must take our work to scale, reach more of the at-risk population, be transparent about results, and bring Chicago into a new era where everyday gun violence is no longer a fact of life. We have no time to waste.

Sincerely,

Arne Duncan,
Managing Director & Founder, Chicago CRED

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Po Murray,
Chairwoman, Newtown Action Alliance



Newtown Action Alliance (NAA) is a national grassroots gun violence prevention advocacy organization formed by community members from Newtown, Connecticut, weeks after the heartbreaking tragedy that shook our quiet suburban town on December 14, 2012. It's been over 11 years since a 20-year-old with an AR-15 and high-capacity magazines hunted and murdered 20 children and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

Escalating Gun Violence During the Last Decade

Since that tragic day in Newtown, over 1.1 million Americans have been shot; nearly 450,000 Americans have been killed by guns; the number of annual gun deaths has increased to 43,000 in 2023; and there were 4949 mass shooting incidents where four or more people were shot in one incident.¹ Guns are now the leading cause of death among children and teens ages 1-95.² There are 100 million more guns in the hands of civilians and the gun industry profited \$11 billion from selling an additional 13.7 million AR-15s to civilians – which accounts for nearly two-thirds of all AR-15s in circulation. AR-15s accounted for 1.2 percent of all manufactured U.S. guns in 1990 and by 2020, it made up 23.4 percent of all guns produced.^{3,4,5}

Since the 2014 Kelly Report was released, we have witnessed increased gun sales and escalating gun violence in our nation. Despite our bold and unapologetic advocacy efforts for the last decade, our nation was generally safer in 2014 than now. Fearful Americans panicked and purchased nearly 60 million guns during the COVID pandemic in 2020 and 2021 fueling a historic surge in gun deaths and injuries - despite the fact that having a gun in our homes doubles the risk of homicides and triples the risk of suicides.^{6,7,8}

Progress Made During the Past Decade

After a decade of escalating gun violence and tireless advocacy efforts, there were a series of federal gun reform victories.

- **Executive Actions:** After President Joe Biden was elected in 2020, he issued an unprecedented number of executive orders on gun violence prevention. More than 24 executive actions to include reining in the

proliferation of ghost guns and better regulating firearm stabilizing braces; ordering the Justice Department to publish model extreme risk protection order, safe storage, and reporting of lost and stolen firearms legislation to make it easier for states to adopt these laws; calling for cities and states to use American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to reduce gun crime and other violent crime; investing in community violence interventions and prevention; keeping guns out of the wrong hands; providing law enforcement with the tools and resources they need to reduce gun violence; and addressing the root causes of gun violence.⁹

- **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act:** After an 18-year-old used an AR-15 to hunt and kill 19 children and two educators in Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas and another 18-year-old used an AR-15 to hunt and kill black grocery shoppers at the Tops Market in Buffalo, New York, the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA) was negotiated in the U.S. Senate and 15 Senate Republicans and 14 House Republicans joined their Democratic colleagues to pass the first major gun safety bill in nearly 30 years. On June 25, 2022, President Biden signed S.2938, the BSCA into law.¹⁰ The BSCA improved the background check system by broadening the definition of licensed gun dealers; established enhanced background checks for buyers under age 21; made straw purchasing and gun trafficking a federal crime; addressed domestic violence by partially closing the dating partner loophole; funded the implementation of extreme risk protection orders, crisis intervention services in the states, establishment of positive learning environments in schools, and mental health services; established a pipeline of mental health professionals; and provided additional funding for community violence intervention programs.
- **Confirmation Of The Director Of Bureau Of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, And Explosives (ATF):** On July 12, 2022, President Biden's nominee Steve Dettelbach was confirmed as the Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF).¹¹ Mr. Dettelbach was the first permanent head of the ATF in over seven years. As the ATF Director, Mr. Dettelbach plays a

leading role in the implementation of the BSCA and driving forward other executive actions to fight crime and save lives.

- **Funding For Gun Violence Research:** For more than 20 years, Congress prohibited federal funding for gun violence research by including a provision known as the Dickey Amendment in annual appropriations legislation.¹² This amendment prohibited the use of federal funds to advocate for gun reform. In 2018, Congress clarified that the federal government can study gun violence, and in 2019, Congress began to fund gun violence research with an annual investment of \$25 million split evenly between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health.¹³ Senator Ed Markey and Representative Elissa Slotkin have introduced the Gun Violence Prevention Research Act of 2023 to authorize the appropriation of \$50 million over 5 years to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \$50 million for the purpose of conducting or supporting research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.¹⁴
- **Funding Community Violence Intervention Programs:** Newtown Action Alliance is a proud member of the Invest in Us Coalition that is pushing for historic investments in community-based violence intervention (CVI) programs.¹⁵ In addition to making ARPA funds available for CVI, President Biden helped to secure additional funding. On September 22, 2022, the Department of Justice announced grant awards totaling \$100 million to help communities across the U.S. reduce gun crime and other serious violence.¹⁶ CVI funding is crucial for the black and brown communities that are most impacted by violence. Black men make up 6 percent of the population but over 50 percent of gun homicide victims.¹⁷
- **White House Office Of Gun Violence Prevention:** Newtown Action Alliance joined a coalition of gun violence prevention groups and survivors to unapologetically advocate for a White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention to be established by President Biden.¹⁸ On September 22, 2023, President Biden announced that Vice President Kamala Harris would oversee the office and Stefanie Feldman, a long-time policy advisor to President Biden on gun violence prevention would serve as a Director, alongside leading gun violence prevention advocates Greg Jackson and Rob Wilcox, who joined the Administration as Deputy Directors.¹⁹ The office has made ending gun violence in the United States a daily priority.

These federal gun safety policies and investments were important first steps to help save lives. Murder rates rose 30

percent between 2019 and 2020 at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁰ Murders are down 12.8 percent from 2022 to 2023 across more than 175 cities, according to criminal justice data analyzed by firm AH Analytics.²¹ Since BSCA was signed into law, more than 500 illegal gun purchases were stopped due to enhanced background checks for under-21 buyers and there have been more than 250 gun trafficking prosecutions.²²

While we wait for these policies to be fully implemented, Newtown Action Alliance will continue to boldly and unapologetically push the President, Congress, governors, and state legislatures to act with a sense of urgency to pass policies that will dramatically reduce gun deaths and injuries in our nation. In April of 2019, a coalition of gun violence prevention survivors, advocates, and researchers gathered at the GVPedia Conference in Denver, Colorado to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Columbine shooting, and to forge a path forward to a safer America. From this assembly the Denver Accord was born, a declaration of guiding principles and policies to end the scourge of gun violence in America.²³

We firmly believe the time is now for all elected officials to immediately pass our priority bills and work towards passing other policy proposals recommended in GVPedia's Denver Accord to steadily reduce gun homicides, gun suicides, unintentional shootings, mass shootings, police violence, and gun injuries.

Next 10 Years

Newtown Action Alliance is working to expand the gun violence prevention movement and build a large coalition to ensure that Congress is prepared to pass a historic package of gun control legislation once American voters make it a true priority at the polls.

We worked closely with various Members of Congress to ensure that common sense lifesaving bills are written, introduced or reintroduced, and supported. We go door-to-door with gun violence survivors to change hearts and minds, educate, and seek cosponsors for our priority legislative proposals. During the 117th Congress, we collaborated with Representative David Cicilline and his team to pass his Assault Weapons Ban legislation and Representative Rosa DeLauro and her team to pass Ethan's Law to Keep Kids Safe from unsecured guns. After the Uvalde and Buffalo mass shooting tragedies in 2022, Speaker Nancy Pelosi successfully passed these bills with bipartisan support.

During this Congress, we are collaborating with Representatives Lucy McBath and Rosa DeLauro on the Discharge Petitions on the assault weapons ban legislation and Ethan's Law. The House Republican Majority is blocking

these lifesaving proposals. Last December, we worked with Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on the Unanimous Consent votes on Senator Diane Feinstein’s legislation to ban assault weapons, Senator Richard Blumenthal’s bill to #KeepKidsSafe from unsecured guns, and Senator Chris Murphy’s universal background check bill. Unfortunately, the Senate Republicans filibustered these crucial policies.

We are not deterred by the Republican and gun lobby obstruction. Our foundation brings nearly 200 gun violence survivors to Washington, D.C. for the Annual National Vigil for All Victims of Gun Violence. Last year, President Biden attended the vigil service to support the gun violence survivors. This year, the Second Gentleman Douglas Emhoff did the same. The day after the vigil, the survivors met with their Senators to implore them to pass key legislative proposals, including:

- H.R.698-Assault Weapons Ban of 2023 (Feinstein/McBath), H.R.660-Ethan’s Law (Blumenthal/DeLauro),
- H.R.4184-Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act (Blumenthal/Schiff),
- S.494-Background Check Expansion Act (Murphy),
- H.R.715-Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2023 (Fitzpatrick),
- H.R.2403- Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2023 (Clyburn),
- H.R.5003 -Break the Cycle of Violence Act (Booker/Horsford), and
- H.R.2390-Gun Violence Prevention Research Act of 2023 (Markey/Slotkin)

In 2024, we will continue to work closely with the fierce and dedicated gun violence survivors to #HonorWithAction. We will encourage more Americans to join our fight before gun violence impacts their lives. In a nation with 465 million guns, it’s not a matter of if, it’s when. This year, we will go door-to-door to seek support for Senator Blumenthal and Representative Adam Schiff’s bill to repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) that was passed in 2005 to give the gun industry broad legal immunity.²⁴ When needed, we will support state groups or state legislators who are working to pass common-sense gun legislation.

Sincerely,

Po Murray,
Chairwoman of Newtown Action Alliance

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Matt Forté, Founder, What's Your Forté Foundation



Chicago's gun violence is indeed a public health crisis. The most violent and dangerous neighborhoods in the city remain on the South and West sides. "The city's gun-homicide rate is four times the national average with 90 percent of all homicides involving gun use and an overwhelming majority of the victims are young Black men," according to research from Northwestern University.¹ Specifically, persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years have had the highest percentage of gun-related deaths. By utilizing a public health approach, we can identify solutions and offer programs to help communities most affected by gun violence.

In 2013, while I was playing with the Chicago Bears, I started the What's Your Forté Foundation with a mission to invest in Chicagoland youth and families, specifically those in South and West side communities. We strive to impart social change that facilitates transformational development on the South & West sides of Chicago. What's Your Forté Foundation holistically supports the entire family by offering character development, career exploration, wellness, and wealth building.

Research shows that providing opportunities and basic needs to families and youth can reduce community violence.² What's Your Forté focuses on providing opportunities to families and youth, as well as educational and workforce trainings. This helps steer youth toward positive activities as they learn valuable life skills and sets them up for success beyond the program. This effort centers around three signature programs, The Your Forté – Our Finance, The Reach 4 Life, and the Matt Forté Career Camp.

Impactful Programming

We take a multipronged approach to combat gun violence and give youth other skills and pathways to success. The Your Forté – Our Finance program helps entrepreneurs and small businesses build wealth. The Reach 4 Life program is a 40-week coaching application that guides youth to positive pathways and provides guidance to develop successful habits. This violence prevention tool along with our year-round initiatives, allows for instant corrective training and mentorship assistance to be easily accessible. Finally, the Matt Forté Career Camp allows families to hear from C-Suite

and senior-level employers who can offer mentorship to individuals without traditional skill sets or long resumes. Legal employment offers pathways to keep individuals off the streets. We focus on programming initiatives that are holistic and sustainable in areas that include economic equity, access to employment, health, education, and a throughline of violence prevention and opportunity are woven in.

We also have the Finding Your Forté program, which is an innovative approach to reduce and prevent community-based violence through sustained action. Through this weekly series, I educate and uplift Chicago's youth to make impactful, positive choices. Teens hear from today's most influential speakers and learn athletic skills with me. We play basketball, football, soccer, and baseball year-round. If sports aren't one's forté, participants can attend just for our speaker series.

One of our most impactful programs, the Community Justice Fellows, is a dynamic cohort of 14 to 20-year-olds who have been impacted by gun violence. Our outstanding fellows include Darius, whose twin brother was killed by a stray bullet and died in his arms, and LaKiya, who was shot in her home from street violence happening just outside her front door. The Fellows' body of work will utilize their experiences and unique perspectives to foster innovative solutions to reduce gun violence. With guidance and training provided by *Community Justice Action Fund* and *Black with No Chaser social media consultants*; the fellowship culminates in recommendations that will transform the conversation around gun violence and its messenger. I'm proud to say the 2023 cohort impacted more than 3,000 youth and engaged nearly 900 community members this year.

In addition to our signature programs, I've ensured that the foundation has a host of annual programs like our Back to School (Drip) Giveaway where we've distributed over 1,000 backpacks and over 15,000 worth of school supplies to youth and families. The Back to School Drip is rooted in resources so while we promote fun, (face painting, games, and inflatables), there is also a food truck, dental cleanings, and arts workshops. Our foundation focuses on the hardest-hit

neighborhoods in the South- and West-sides, however the giveaway is open to the entire city thereby reducing conflict and providing equity for “the basics” which were once out of reach.

Traditionally the time between when school ends and youth camps begin is the most dangerous in Chicago. To combat this, I started the Summer Experience to give youth structure and purpose during this gap. I wanted to engage Chicago’s young people with personal growth opportunities and a chance to enhance their future development. The What’s Your Forté Foundation along with coalition partners Ada S. McKinley, Youth Guidance (Becoming A Man-B.A.M.), and Salem Baptist church, seeks to provide attendees ages 12-18 with activities and tools to enjoy their summer break by combining educational sessions alongside physical activities. These evening engagement sessions were designed to reach the most at-risk youth, provide on ramps to alternative avenues for experiencing Chicago, and offer workforce options that give participants skills for when they complete school. I intentionally selected evening hours to offset the usual mischief that happens when youth “don’t have anything to do.”

The Chicago Police Department’s annual report showed shootings in 2022 continued to persist upward by nearly a third compared to 2019.³ This must stop. I am committed to helping reverse this trend, and I hope that the What’s Your Forté Foundation can be a leader in Chicagoland violence reduction by providing opportunities to youth and families. The marriage between prevention and opportunity includes a “top-down” (physical needs) and “bottom-up” (spiritual needs) approach. Investing holistically ensures the community has access to and can experience positive role models and eventually take their place as rising leaders.

As a founder, I want to be a catalyst for change that uplifts the family unit as a whole, understanding that strong families can transform culture in positive ways that last for generations to come. Our community-based strategies are making sustainable impacts. Youth face unbelievable obstacles and rely on support from their communities. The What’s Your Forté Foundation is one of many answers to the root causes of inequity that seeks to provide change from the inside out. I look forward to working with Congresswoman Kelly on gun violence prevention and expanding our collective impact in Chicago and becoming a model for organizations in other cities.

Sincerely,

Matt Forté,
Founder, What’s Your Forté Foundation

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VOICES FOR
CHANGE

Amber Goodwin, Founder, Community Justice Action Fund



Community Justice is a Black-led and founded non-profit organization that strives to end gun violence in Black and Brown communities by empowering those who intimately understand the effects of gun violence to advocate for solutions at all levels of government. We were formed in 2016, shortly after the tragic, anti-Black Charleston church shooting, which was only a few years following the inaugural Kelly Report. Community Justice was established with a specific focus on amplifying the national voice of communities most affected by gun violence by aiming to position them at the forefront of discussions surrounding firearms. Since 2016, we have been dedicated to empowering those closest to pain. We are proud to stand with the families, survivors, and communities shaken by gun violence and targeted acts of hate, including front-line workers, survivors, and families from Buffalo, Uvalde, Houston, Chicago, Los Angeles, and cities across the country.

Since the first Kelly Report, there has been a tremendous increase in support for Black and Brown-led organizations focused on prevention and intervention, as well as including communities traditionally left out of the public conversation on gun violence. One of the most significant strides forward has been support for community-based violence intervention (CVI) and the use of a public health approach to tackle the crisis of gun violence.

The Gun Violence Crisis in Communities & Addressing Violence as a Public Health Issue

Gun violence disproportionately affects Black and Brown communities, revealing a disturbing trend that extends beyond mere statistics. Due to the impacts of past and enduring systemic racism, gun violence has inflicted disproportionate devastation on our communities. It remains the leading cause of premature death for Black men, as well as the number two cause of premature death for Latino men and Black women.¹

Violence, in general, and gun violence specifically, is one of the most significant threats to health and public safety in the United States. Gun violence advocate Reggie Moore from the Medical College of Wisconsin stated in early 2024, 'Ending

the physical, social, economic, and psychological harm that gun violence inflicts on youth and adults is one of the most profound public health challenges of our generation. Gun violence causes a broad range of mental and physical health problems that disproportionately impact children, youth, and communities of color. Safety is a foundational social determinant of health that requires comprehensive, strategic, and sustained strategy, partnerships, and investment."

Many communities have taken comprehensive public health approaches to increasing community safety and well-being. These efforts are rooted in the belief that violence is preventable and is a symptom and manifestation of systemic conditions that increase risk factors for persistent gun violence. A public health approach acknowledges these factors and calls for collective action to address these systemic conditions. In addition, a public health approach involves addressing violence across a continuum of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention strategies. Primary prevention for gun violence prevention might involve ensuring social-emotional learning (SEL) skills are taught from primary school through high school graduation. Tertiary prevention could involve support services for survivors of gun violence and their families. This spectrum of prevention is the building block for a CVI ecosystem. CVI is not the totality of a public health approach but a powerful component of addressing individuals at the highest risk of injury or death as a result of gun violence.²

According to the National Center for Injury, Prevention, and Control Division of Violence Prevention, a public health approach also emphasizes input from diverse sectors, including health, education, social services, justice, policy, and the private sector. Collective action on the part of these critical collaborators can help in addressing problems like violence.³ In 2022, Community Justice released a first-of-its-kind report and website called the Community Violence Prevention Index to provide a framework for localities to assess their readiness to address gun violence. This report described how the public health approach was started and has grown to support community-based violence prevention efforts.

“Violence was first recognized as a public health issue by the U.S. Surgeon General in 1979. A public health approach draws on science and expertise from various disciplines and emphasizes input from diverse sectors, including health, education, social services, policy, and the private sector.”⁴

In taking a public health approach, a cross-sector effort would engage in the following four-step process: defining the problem, identifying risk and protective factors, developing and testing prevention strategies, and assuring widespread adoption.

Community Justice and its partners like Life Camp, Inc, Cities United, and the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention, among many others, are national champions for advancing public health approaches for community safety.

How We Won and Are Winning: Taking a Public Health Approach

Since 2014, as a movement, we have recognized that gun violence is a public health crisis of epidemic proportions, inflicting indescribable devastation on families and communities across the country. In 2022, more than 48,000 lives were taken by firearms, and Black children and teens were 20 times more likely to be killed by gun violence than their white counterparts.⁵

While no one approach or strategy will dramatically reduce violence alone, as previously stated, CVI is widely recognized as an essential part of a comprehensive public health approach to violence prevention. These strategies focus on the individuals at the highest risk of engaging in or having violence perpetrated against them and leverage their relationships to intervene before violence starts.

“Credible messengers employ mediation techniques to negotiate cease-fires between individuals and groups and provide personal mentorship and support to help shift the conflict resolution culture away from violence. Violence interrupters play a central role in numerous strategies, including outreach-based violence intervention (also known as street violence intervention), hospital-based violence intervention, and cognitive behavioral therapy-integrated mentorship programs. They also help link victims and survivors of violence with essential services and supports, including trauma-informed behavioral and mental health care, financial assistance, and legal aid.”⁶

Historic Wins for the Community at the Federal Level

Thankfully, communities have seen reductions in gun violence, and it is fair to say that part of that was possible due to the incredible Federal investments made in community-based strategies. Many of these strategies have been spearheaded and championed by Congresswoman Kelly,

who intimately understands that one life lost is too many.

Over the past decade, there have been significant advancements in community violence prevention efforts within Congress and our communities. In 2021, the Biden-Harris Administration emphasized their commitment to supporting CVI by proposing a \$5 billion investment in community-based violence intervention and prevention programs through his American Jobs Plan. If signed into law, this funding would have provided resources to save countless lives in Black and Brown communities from the spiraling crisis of gun violence through a public health approach.

From hospital and street intervention to group violence prevention and behavioral therapy programs, there are multiple proven, evidence-based community violence intervention models that we know can save lives today that have been passed or signed into law at the Federal level since 2014, including:

- **The Federal Office of Violence Prevention was established in 2023**, and we are honored that our former executive director and survivor Greg Jackson now co-leads with Rob Wilcox under the leadership of Stef Feldman.
- **American Rescue Plan Dollars to Communities**, President Biden authorized \$130 billion in funding for governments through ARPA funds to prevent or address gun violence in cities. The Department of Treasury states funds can be used for “evidence-based practices like focused deterrence, street outreach, violence interrupters, and hospital-based violence intervention models.”
- **Medicaid Expansion**: Organizations like the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention championed federal-state partnerships that provided Medicaid expansion for community-based violence. “Medicaid’s unique federal-state partnership allows the program to provide state-specific, comprehensive coverage designed to meet the needs of each state’s population. As a result, it plays an important role in meeting the health care needs—both immediately and over a lifetime—of those who have experienced violence and trauma.”⁷
- **The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act** allocated \$250 million over five years to Community Violence Intervention.
- **The establishment of a Community-based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI)** at the Department of Justice (DOJ) earned a collective total of \$100 million through the FY22 and FY23 appropriations packages.

- **Congressionally Directed Spending for CVI.** Members of Congress also secured over \$80 million for CVI organizations in FY22 and FY23 through the Community Project Funding process.
- **House Passage of Congressman Horsford's (D-Nev.) Break the Cycle of Violence Act in the House during the 117th Congress.** This bill would invest \$5 billion in community-based violence intervention and prevention programming over eight years. It would also authorize \$3 billion to award grants for youth workforce development programs in communities that suffer high rates of gun violence.
- **House Passage of Congressman Ruppberger's Bipartisan Solution to Cyclical Violence Act during the 117th Congress.** This bill would award \$10 million to trauma centers that want to create or expand existing violence intervention and prevention programs to reduce the rate of firearm injury.

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The Urgent Work Ahead to Reduce Community Violence

The CDC recently reported that although national firearm homicide rates decreased from 2021 to 2022, the rate remained elevated compared to 2019. Public health approaches to violence like CVI are effective tools to reach long-term gun violence but will need continued investment from the Federal government in order to be sustained, address capacity issues, and support research and evaluation. The underlying causes of gun violence continue to fuel cycles of violence within Black and Brown communities. Breaking this cycle will require urgent attention and comprehensive solutions at all levels of government.

Sincerely,

Amber Goodwin,
 Founder of Community Justice Action Fund

Federal Firearm Licensee Regulations



The 117th Congress brought us the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA)—the first significant gun violence prevention legislation to be passed and signed into law in almost 30 years. But BSCA was born out of tragedies: first, on May 14, 2022, 10 Black Americans were shot and killed in a Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, New York. Ten days later, 19 students and two educators were shot and killed—and another 17 were shot and wounded—at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas.

With BSCA, Congress came together on a bipartisan basis to do something about gun violence, including the 120 Americans who are shot and killed every day, and the more than 200 who are shot and wounded.¹ In BSCA, Congress invested billions of dollars in gun violence prevention efforts, mental health services, and school safety programs, and made critical changes in federal firearms laws to strengthen our background check system, disarm domestic abusers, and crack down on the sources of illegal firearms and crime guns.

It was—and remains—a watershed moment in the gun violence prevention movement, and it would not have been possible but for the grassroots networks, including Moms Demand Action and Students Demand Action, who, united with survivors, sent Congress a clear and unequivocal message: Don't Look Away.² Everytown for Gun Safety policy experts also provided key support to leaders in Congress who passed this law over the objection of the National Rifle Association and without any gun lobby giveaways.³

While it is critical to pass laws, ensuring that the laws are effectively and optimally implemented is a separate undertaking. That is now the task at hand: to ensure that states, local governments, school districts, and community-based organizations can access and use the historic funds that Congress appropriated in BSCA, and to make sure that law enforcement is maximizing the new and enhanced tools that Congress provided. Everytown continues to work with lawmakers, the Biden-Harris Administration, and other stakeholders to do just that.

BSCA, however, was a starting point—not the finish line. There is more work to be done, building on BSCA at every

level of government to keep firearms out of the hands of individuals who shouldn't have them, to require background checks on all gun sales, to regulate the military-style assault weapons that were designed for the battlefield, to grow investments in evidence- and community-based violence intervention programs, and to implement extreme risk protection order programs. This is the mission, and Everytown continues to help lead the charge to drive policy change at the federal, state, and local levels.

That charge must include holding bad industry actors accountable, including rogue Federal Firearms Licensees (FFLs) whose nonfeasance often puts lives at risk and whose malfeasance fuels gun trafficking and gun crime in communities across the United States. For more than 50 years, gun sellers “engaged in the business” of dealing in firearms have been required to become FFLs. And, since the 1990s, FFLs have been required to run background checks on prospective purchasers to prevent prohibited persons from obtaining firearms as well as keep records of all gun sales.

In BSCA—for the first time in almost four decades—Congress revised the “engaged in the business” statute to cover more gun sellers, requiring them to become licensed and conduct background checks. In September 2023, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) proposed a new rule to implement this change.⁴ If finalized as proposed, this rule will protect our communities and save lives: more unlicensed gun sellers will have to become licensed dealers, run background checks, and keep records of gun sales, and law enforcement will be better equipped to investigate more gun crimes through crime gun traces. Everytown submitted a comment letter strongly supporting the proposed rule on December 7, 2023, calling for ATF to finalize it as written and without deletions.⁵

In July 2023, Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund published a new, first-of-its-kind report on FFLs—*Inside the Gun Shop: Firearms Dealers and their Impact*—detailing facts about FFLs, both commercial and residential, across the United States.⁶ Per this report, there were nearly 78,000 licensed gun dealers in the United States in 2022—more than all McDonald's, Burger King, Subway, and Wendy's locations

combined, and more than twice the number of U.S. post offices.⁷ Over half of these dealers are located in residential communities, including nearly 9,000 dealers licensed to manufacture firearms and ammunition, including handguns, shotguns, silencers, and other accessories.⁸ These residential license holders—some in private homes—do not need to notify neighbors or place signage indicating that they can sell or manufacture guns in their homes.

Everytown also found that there are roughly five incidents per day where firearms go missing from gun dealers across the United States through robbery, burglary, larceny, or other loss. In 2021, over 10,300 guns were either lost by or stolen from gun shops.⁹ And, far too often these guns are diverted to the illegal market. In addition, Everytown concluded that states with weaker gun violence prevention laws have more gun dealers per capita, and states with the most gun dealers per capita have 10 times higher rates of guns trafficked to another state and subsequently used in a crime than states with the fewest gun dealers per capita.¹⁰

In *Inside the Gun Shop*, Everytown also asked and answered whether FFLs are adequately regulated. Under longstanding federal law, FFLs are regulated by ATF, whose mission is to protect the public from violent crime—which is made all the more violent when firearms are involved. ATF is one of our nation’s leading law enforcement agencies and works hand in hand with state and local law enforcement partners across the United States to prevent and investigate crime. While some extremists in Congress have introduced legislation to abolish ATF and have demanded that ATF be defunded, full funding and strong support for ATF is critical for ATF to meet its law enforcement and oversight requirements, including FFL regulation.

ATF, however, has been underfunded and under-resourced for decades, leading to the under-enforcement of critical measures designed to protect the public. As documented in *Inside the Gun Shop*, ATF aims to inspect each FFL every three years, but in 2022, it only inspected about 7,300 dealers, or 9 percent of FFLs.¹¹ At the same time, ATF’s own data reveals that when FFL compliance inspections occur, inspections generally result in a large number of violations.

In Fiscal Year 2020, ATF inspectors found violations in just under half of inspections¹², and frequently found multiple violations—issuing over two million citations from 2016 through 2020.¹³ In 2022, ATF revoked 88 licenses, and an additional 69 FFLs ceased operations after inspections revealed violations that could result in license revocation.¹⁴ But revocations are inconsistent, and a recent report from the Department of Justice Office of the Inspector General found multiple instances in which ATF inspectors did not revoke licenses from dealers with multiple revocable offenses.¹⁵

In June 2021, President Biden and the Biden-Harris Administration took a significant step to hold rogue FFLs accountable: establishing zero tolerance for willful violations of the law.¹⁶ These violations include transferring firearms to prohibited persons, failing to conduct background checks, falsifying records like firearm transaction records, failing to respond to ATF trace requests, or refusing to allow ATF to conduct compliance inspections. Since then, through December 2023, ATF has revoked 250 licenses and 173 other FFLs voluntarily stopped operations after inspection.¹⁷

The laws which FFLs must follow, and that ATF enforces, are outdated and long overdue for an update to prevent firearms from falling into prohibited hands. These laws shouldn’t just be modernized for the 21st century, but also strengthened to require more of and from FFLs. FFLs should be required to implement minimum physical security measures like video surveillance to prevent theft, to meet stronger licensing standards, to improve recordkeeping and electronic data management, and to increase information sharing with regulators and law enforcement. Federal Firearms Licensee Act introduced by Representative Robin Kelly (D-IL) would help do all that—and more.

For decades, the firearms industry has put profits first—profits before people and profits before public health and safety. While there is no single solution that will end gun violence, accountability for members of the gun industry who flout the laws and endanger public safety can—and must—be part of the comprehensive approach to prevent gun violence. That is why FFL reform is needed to untie ATF’s hands in the fight against rogue FFLs and equip ATF with better tools to hold them accountable.

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Litigation Efforts for Gun Reform



America's gun violence epidemic will never improve if we fail to strengthen gun laws in states and at the federal level. GIFFORDS's 2023 Gun Law Scorecard proved once again that states with stronger gun laws have lower rates of gun violence.¹ However, there is an absence of political will to pass strong gun laws in many states and in Congress. Because of this, it is critical that other tools, including litigation, are utilized to protect existing gun safety laws and hold those responsible for gun violence accountable. Over the past 10 years, the legal experts at GIFFORDS and GIFFORDS Law Center have played an active role in litigation involving state and federal gun laws, as well as bad actors in the gun industry.

GIFFORDS is advocating for a commonsense and historically accurate understanding of the Second Amendment that respects both gun owners and public safety.

In 2008, the Supreme Court issued the landmark Second Amendment decision *District of Columbia v. Heller*. *Heller* established an individual right under the Second Amendment; specifically, to possess a handgun in the home for self-defense. It also led to an increase in Second Amendment litigation as the gun industry challenged all manner of gun laws.

This first post-*Heller* wave of litigation culminated in 2022, when the Supreme Court again heard a case about the scope of the Second Amendment. This case, *New York Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen*, addressed state licensing standards for carrying a concealed handgun in public. The *Bruen* decision struck down a longstanding New York state licensing law and announced a completely new standard for the Second Amendment—one that ignores the public safety justifications and other government interests that are usually at issue when evaluating Constitutional issues. Instead, *Bruen* says that gun laws that implicate the Second Amendment must be justified by looking to historical laws.

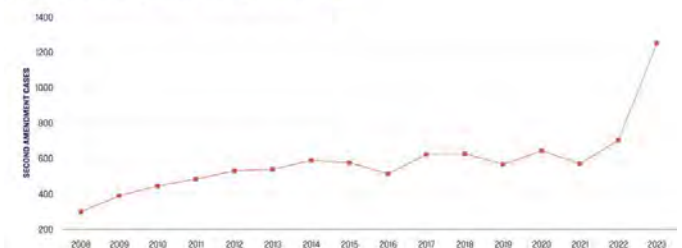
There have been two major consequences of this ruling. The first is that we have seen a second, and much larger, wave of litigation following *Bruen*. In the years after *Heller*, we would typically see between 400 and 600 court decisions

referencing the Second Amendment. In 2023 alone we saw over 1,200.

But the second major consequence may be even more important. The test the Court announced in *Bruen* was not just novel but also very different from the usual tests and tools that courts use in Constitutional law. And *Bruen* left many substantive and methodological questions unanswered. What period in history do we look to? How much historical support is needed? What kind of historical laws are relevant, given changes in technology, public safety challenges, and social relations?

As courts have struggled to answer these questions and apply the *Bruen* standard, GIFFORDS has stepped into the void and confusion to offer our understanding of the Second Amendment, a view that respects the rights of lawful gun owners and recognizes that gun ownership has historically gone hand in hand with commonsense regulation. GIFFORDS has presented that view to courts at all levels across the country, filing more than 50 "friend of the court" briefs in 2023 alone. This includes filing a brief in *United States v. Rahimi*, the Second Amendment case currently before the Supreme Court, in which an individual who was prohibited from owning guns because he was subject to a domestic violence restraining order challenged the constitutionality of that prohibition.²

Second Amendment Cases Following *Heller* and *Bruen*



GIFFORDS is fighting the corruption of our political system by gun extremism.

A continual problem in the fight against gun violence has been the corruption of our political system by bad actors, first among them the NRA. Since at least 2014, the NRA has been

playing a shell game to violate our campaign finance laws. Under those laws, direct contributions to federal candidates are subject to a strict cap, while there is no cap on money spent independent from a campaign. The NRA disguised direct contributions as independent ones using a “common vendor” scheme: the NRA would retain the same consultants as the candidates they were supporting, but would have the consultant use two different names, as if they were two different and unrelated companies.³ They used this scheme for years, making at least \$35 million in excessive contributions to US Senate and presidential candidates.⁴

Along with our partners at the Campaign Legal Center, GIFFORDS brought complaints to the Federal Election Commission, and when the FEC failed to act, GIFFORDS sued the commission and won a judgment from the court allowing us to sue the NRA⁵ directly over those violations.

With that victory in hand, GIFFORDS sued the NRA³ over its corruption scheme, seeking a court order to put an end to its shell game and to return the illegal contributions to the US treasury.

GIFFORDS is taking the fight to bad actors in the gun industry.

Bad actors in the gun industry are a major driver of gun violence. They disregard industry norms, standards, and even laws and regulations because they enjoy exceptional immunity under federal law.⁶ This makes it much harder for people hurt by their misconduct to sue them. To address this, GIFFORDS is taking the fight to the gun industry, to hold bad actors accountable for the harm they cause and force them to abide by the law.

For example, in May 2022, a heavily armed 18-year-old fueled by white supremacist ideology drove hundreds of miles from his home to a Tops Friendly Markets supermarket in the predominantly Black East Side of Buffalo where he murdered 10 Black Buffalonians and wounded three others. The Tops shooter had spent months planning for the attack, which he live-streamed. He documented in extensive detail the horrific planning of his massacre, including the weaponry and other products he sought out to increase the lethality of his attack and achieve his stated purpose of “killing as many blacks as possible.”

One year after the tragedy, GIFFORDS partnered with attorneys from across the country—including a multi-generational, African-American-owned Buffalo law firm, the Law Offices of John V. Elmore P.C.—to sue the gun companies and others whose actions enabled the mass shooting on behalf of the families of three victims who were killed in the massacre and one survivor.⁷ The lawsuit was

brought to hold all defendants accountable and hopefully force the change necessary to spare other families the loss, devastation, and despair that so many survivors experience.

Another clear example of irresponsible gun companies flouting our laws and compromising public safety for a quick buck are ghost guns.⁸ These are gun products that are sold without any regard to our gun laws. The goal is to sell the buyer everything they need to make a gun without conducting a background check, retaining records of the sale, or marking the gun with a serial number so that law enforcement can trace it in the event it is used in a crime.⁹ According to ATF data, over the course of five years, the number of ghost guns recovered in connection with a crime increased 10 times over.¹⁰

For gun traffickers, ghost guns are a dream come true. They are a way to source guns easily, with no paper trail and no way to trace the guns back to them. And gun traffickers are turning to ghost guns again and again and again.^{11,12,13}

To address this, GIFFORDS partnered with the leaders of the communities that have been most affected, including the California attorney general and the district attorney of San Francisco to sue the companies proliferating ghost guns on the west coast, and with the City of Philadelphia to sue those on the east coast.^{14,15,16}

GIFFORDS is pushing the regulators to rise to the generational challenge of gun violence.

Chronically underfunded, frequently under attack by the gun industry, and historically subject to the dynamics of agency capture by the industry it regulates, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms & Explosives (ATF) is charged with the difficult task of implementing and enforcing our gun laws.^{17,18,19} Under the leadership of Director Steve Dettelbach, ATF has made progress, but there is still much work to do.

One of the areas of concern is firearms trace data. When law enforcement agencies submit firearms for tracing, they receive information about the initial retail sale of the firearm. This data can provide advocates and policymakers with a wealth of information. It can tell them where and how crime guns are sourced and trafficked. But ATF has long refused to release this data, even when it is requested under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). ATF cites the Tiahrt Amendment, which creates unnecessary barriers to the sharing of tracing information in a way that only benefits a small share of irresponsible gun companies, but the Tiahrt Amendment does not exempt ATF from its FOIA obligations to disclose aggregate trace data.²⁰

When ATF denied a request by John Lindsay-Poland—a journalist and advocate against illegal transfers of guns from the United States to Latin America—for data about crime guns recovered in Latin America, GIFFORDS took on the case and successfully obtained a court ruling that the Tiahrt Amendment was not a proper basis to withhold the data.²¹ The court ordered ATF to properly respond to Mr. Lindsay-Poland's request.

GIFFORDS is committed to using litigation as a tool to advance gun safety.

Gun violence is a multifaceted problem, and to solve it we must use a range of strategies, approaches, and tools. Litigation is one of those important tools. In recent years the courts have played an outsized role in shaping our country's gun laws, and the role of the courts will only increase in the years to come. This means that litigation will be critical to the gun violence prevention movement's success. GIFFORDS and GIFFORDS Law Center are proud to be engaged in that fight for commonsense laws, for accountability to bad actors, and for safer communities both inside and outside the courts.

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5

NATIONAL REPORTS
ON GUN VIOLENCE

Part I. The Impact on Cities

The Social Cost of Gun Violence

The following is an article authored by Philip Cook and Jens Ludwig and taken with permission of the authors. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

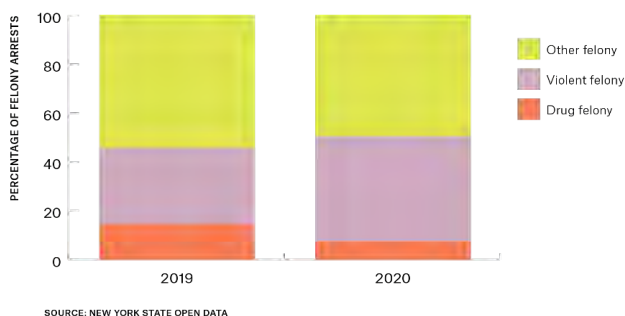
Republished from Vital City NYC. 03.02.23 Gun Violence is THE Crime Problem <https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/articles/gun-violence-is-the-crime-problem>

In 2020, there were 375,800 fewer serious crimes in America compared to 2019, about a 5 percent decline. Amidst the overall decline, one specific type of crime ran counter to trend: murders, most of which are committed with guns, were up by 5,000, rising nearly 30 percent.

How should we think about these statistics? Should we be happy that serious crime is down or concerned about the increase in homicides? We argue this trend is actually bad news overall. As Berkeley criminologists Franklin Zimring and Gordon Hawkins have noted, crime is not the problem—gun violence is. This distinction has a number of implications for how we think about criminal justice.

Our logic might be easiest to see through analogy. The United States in 2020 also saw a decline in the total number of respiratory viral infections, driven by a massive reduction in the seasonal flu. But amidst this overall decline, there was an increase in one new, specific kind of respiratory virus you have probably heard of: COVID-19. The result is that amidst a large decline in illness, the number of deaths from respiratory viral infections increased from the normal level (30–60,000) to over 600,000.

New York City drug, violent and other felony arrests, 2019–2020



What's immediately obvious from this analogy is that every virus is not the same. The public health consequences of the seasonal flu versus COVID-19 are vastly different. Because COVID-19 is so much deadlier than the seasonal flu, billions of people around the world fundamentally changed how they lived their lives. Online replaced in-person, with devastating effects on social life and the economy. A whole generation of

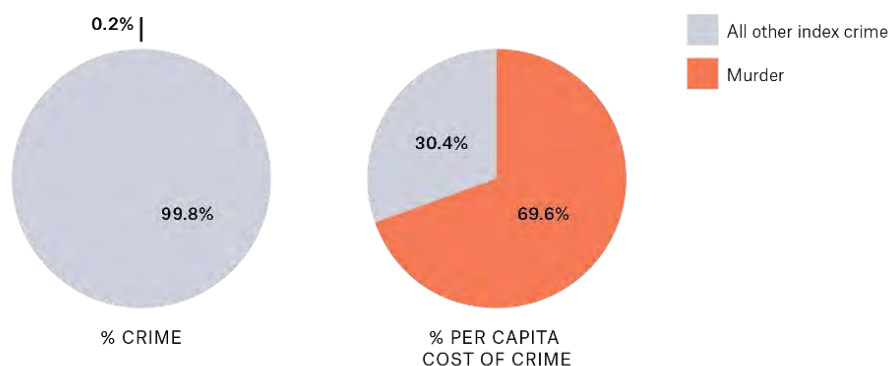
schoolchildren were unable to make normal progress in their studies, or in learning how to get along with their peers. The elderly lost contact with their children and grandchildren. A Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sponsored survey in the summer of 2020 found that 40 percent of American adults were struggling with their mental health during the pandemic. Among people ages 18–25, the figure was more like 70 percent; fully 1 in 4 young people said that they had considered suicide. Meanwhile, as a direct result of our behavioral responses to COVID-19, the global economy was devastated. In the United States, the unemployment rate of 3.7 percent in 2019 surged to 8.9 percent in 2020.

As with COVID-19, so with crime. Property crime accounts for something like 80 percent of all crime in America. For the victims of a pickpocket or a break-in, crime is a major irritant. For retailers, protecting and insuring against shoplifting and employee theft is a real cost of doing business. However, property crimes are rarely life-changing events for the victims. And while the threat of property loss might lead us to take extra care to lock our cars, or install an alarm system, it doesn't substantially impair the quality of our lives.

In contrast, the fear of gun violence substantially distorts the way that millions of people live their lives. There is increasing evidence that children who witness gun violence tend to underperform in school and have a variety of psychological problems that interfere with normal development. In response to gun violence, families that can afford to move often do. One estimate by economists Julie Berry Cullen and Steve Levitt suggests that, on average, a neighborhood murder has 70 times the effect of other crimes in persuading households to relocate. A high-violence neighborhood suffers reduced property values and business investment. Employers and people of means seek more attractive places to locate. Reduced tax revenues make it harder for the surrounding city to address these challenges. It is easy to see the linkage here between endemic violence and poverty.

The Nobel-laureate economist Thomas Schelling came up with a way to measure the total social harms from different social problems—what people would be willing to pay to avoid or have less of them. A reduction in serious violence would have tangible effects on property values and the cost of the myriad activities to avoid and mitigate victimization, such as long commutes to the suburbs. "Contingent valuation" studies, where a cross-section of the public is asked how much they would be willing to pay for reductions in different types of crimes, provide further evidence.

■ Social cost of crime



SOURCE: CHALFIN, A. AND J. MCCRARY, "ARE US CITIES UNDERPOLICED? THEORY AND EVIDENCE" THE REVIEW OF ECONOMICS AND STATISTICS, MARCH 2018, 100(1): 167-186

One study of this sort by Mark Cohen of Vanderbilt and colleagues estimated the public's willingness to pay for each prevented crime equaled: \$5,098 for larceny, \$21,666 per stolen car, \$44,606 per burglary, \$108,329 per aggravated assault, \$369,593 per rape, \$356,849 per armed robbery and fully \$15.04 million per murder. Crime overall may have declined by about 5 percent in 2020, but the social harm from the rise in murders, most of which were committed with guns, more than offsets the reduction of several hundred thousand fewer reported crimes total. The result is that, on net, the total costs or harms of crime in America (murders plus all other crimes) increased by \$72 billion according to the willingness-to-pay framework.

If the problem of crime in America is indeed first and foremost a problem of gun violence, several important implications follow. The first is to ensure that law enforcement agencies prioritize violence prevention. "Public safety" begins with protection against fear, injury, and death. Further, the victims of gun violence, most of whom are from low-income minority households, need help of all kinds. They also need to believe that their cases are being taken seriously. Ensuring accountability for gun violence can improve public safety without exacerbating the problem of mass incarceration; murders account for only about one-tenth of one percent of all arrests. In a country where the share of unsolved murders increased from 1-in-20 in 1965 to 1-in-3 today (and is more like 1-in-2 in cities like Chicago), law enforcement in America for some reason made 1.5 million arrests for drug charges in 2019—the vast majority of which, research suggests, have very little public safety value.

We must account for the consequences on crime, especially violent crime, when we are thinking about how much to invest in social policies. New York's summer jobs program for

teens is a case in point; knowing that this program not only provides valuable income and work experience to young people, but also reduces homicide, is surely relevant for decisions about how widely to scale those efforts. Another example is the effort to clean up vacant lots in Philadelphia, which might initially be thought of as a "nice to have" in a city struggling with so many other big problems—until we see in the data that such beautification efforts reduce gun violence. While some criminologists have disputed large estimates for the social costs of gun violence on political grounds, fearing that they may be used to justify policies they don't like (such as imprisonment), the large burden gun violence imposes on society is equally an argument for more spending on social programs.

The direct victims of gun violence tend to come from a fairly narrow slice of society, but the threat of gun violence has far-reaching implications. It is serious violence that does the most damage to our quality of life. We recall the "crack" era a generation ago and shudder. As gunplay once again becomes common in formerly peaceful neighborhoods, peace of mind is among the victims.

Thanks to Elizabeth Rasich for valuable assistance.

Crime Guns

The following is an article authored by Mayors Against Illegal Guns and taken with permission of the authors. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

Republished from Everytown Research & Policy. 01.19.23 *G Who is Manufacturing Crime Guns? - City-Level Data on Crime Gun Recoveries by Manufacturer* <https://everytownresearch.org/report/city-level-data-crime-gun-recoveries/>

Executive Summary

The gun industry has long attempted to avoid taking responsibility for the use of its products in crime. The industry has even successfully fought for protections like federal immunity from most lawsuits and a rule that makes it difficult for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to share information about the guns that are used in crimes.

To combat this head-in-the-sand approach to gun violence, Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund embarked on a city-by-city collection of data on recovered crime guns, specifically seeking to answer the question of which gun manufacturers' weapons are showing up at America's crime scenes. The data collection was made possible by Everytown's long-standing coalition of mayors fighting to end gun violence — Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

The data received included 171,501 crime guns recovered across 31 U.S. cities, including recoveries from 2017 to 2021. Guns recovered in connection to crimes — referred to as "crime guns" — are important to our understanding of gun violence, trafficking and public safety solutions.

Our analysis finds that Glock has the dubious distinction of being the gun manufacturer with the most crime guns. On average, over 1.5 times more Glocks were recovered at crime scenes than the second-leading manufacturer across the collected data. In 2021, four gun manufacturers accounted for over half of the recovered crime guns in the dataset: Glock, Smith & Wesson, Taurus, and Ruger.

Further, this data demonstrates the dramatic rise of ghost guns and their increasing popularity among criminals. The data indicates that recoveries of ghost guns nearly tripled from 2020 to 2021. Polymer80, the largest producer of ghost gun parts and kits, was the fifth-largest producer of crime guns in the cities surveyed in 2021.

Crime Guns

Everytown has previously analyzed crime guns, examining gun trace data from the ATF over the five-year period from 2017 to 2021. The ATF has found that, among traced crime guns, "new guns that have moved rapidly from the shelf of a [federally licensed dealer] to recovery by law enforcement in three years or less...may have been trafficked." This short "time-to-crime,"

when combined with other factors, like crossing a state border, is a strong indicator that a gun was trafficked. Everytown's previous findings related to this data include:

- Over a quarter of traced guns were brought across state lines before being used in a crime. The 10 states that exported the highest number of guns recovered in crimes were Georgia, Texas, Arizona, Florida, Virginia, Indiana, South Carolina, North Carolina, Alabama, and Mississippi, respectively.
- Of the over 1.4 million crime guns traced over this five-year period, more than 45 percent — 642,306 — were used in a crime within just three years of their initial retail sale. From 2020 to 2021, the number of guns recovered within three years of purchase increased 33 percent, from 144,102 to 191,763.
- Over the five years studied, 122,089 traced crime guns were likely purchased with the intent to traffic them, and the number of trafficked guns increased 48 percent from 2020 to 2021.

But ATF crime gun reporting does not include data on the make or model of the firearm. The gun manufacturers, for their part, have taken a head-in-the-sand approach to the use of their guns in crimes. As an example, though they are generally informed when their products are recovered and traced by law enforcement, five gun manufacturers recently asserted that they do not track crimes committed with their AR-15-style weapons. Indeed, in a recent report on the sale and marketing of AR-15-style weapons, the House Oversight Committee in the 117th Congress found that gun manufacturers Bushmaster, Daniel Defense, Ruger, Sig Sauer, and Smith & Wesson all told the Committee that they "do not have any systems in place to monitor and analyze deaths and injuries associated with their products." It is also unclear what, if any, systems the companies maintain to prevent the diversion of their products to the criminal market. Gun manufacturers will often point to the fact that they generally sell guns to wholesalers, gun stores, and other federally licensed dealers who then complete sales to consumers. But this ignores the role of the gun manufacturer in the tracing process: When a crime gun is traced by the ATF, the process often starts by contacting the manufacturer to begin to follow the gun's path through the supply chain.

The House Oversight Committee also found that "a small number of gun dealers are disproportionately responsible for flooding our streets with guns that are used in crime," according to the committee's then-chair, Representative Carolyn B. Maloney. The committee's investigation found that

a single gun store in Georgia sold more than 6,000 crime guns from 2014 to 2019, “accounting for more than half of Georgia’s reported guns later recovered at crime scenes.”

There are several steps gun manufacturers could take to prevent diversion of their products to the criminal market. These include:

- Establish a dealer code of conduct to ensure that retailers who sell their firearms adhere to basic guidelines;
- Implement “Know Your Customer” practices and better monitor their supply chains to detect dealers breaking the law or contributing to crime and cut off those who repeatedly sell guns used in crime;
- Stop working with dealers who sell guns in situations where someone may be able to avoid a background check, including gun shows and online marketplaces.

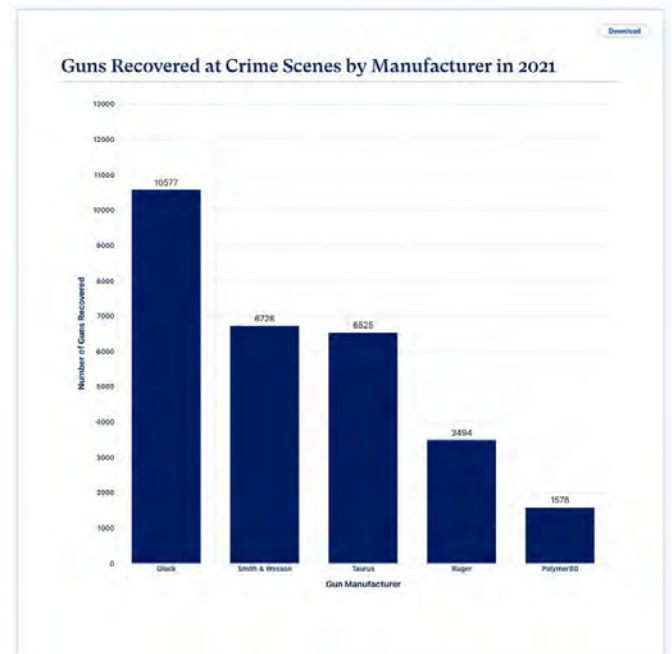
These types of reforms would not be burdensome for the gun industry. In fact, the largest U.S. gun manufacturer, Smith & Wesson, previously agreed to many of them. In March 2000, the company struck a deal with the Clinton Administration, agreeing to implement a dealer code of conduct, keep better track of its inventory, refuse to sell firearms at gun shows where background checks aren’t conducted, and develop smart guns, among several other safety initiatives. However, after facing a nationwide boycott from the gun lobby, Smith & Wesson almost went bankrupt and was sold to new owners. The company never lived up to the terms of the deal.

City Crime Gun Data by Manufacturer

To begin to answer the question of who makes the guns most often recovered at crime scenes, Mayors Against Illegal Guns embarked on a city-by-city collection of recovered crime guns. More than 30 cities participated.

The data received includes 91,703 crime guns recovered by police departments across 31 cities in 2020 and 2021. Researchers at Everytown then analyzed this data. In 2021, four gun manufacturers accounted for over half of the recovered crime guns: Glock (21.1%), Smith & Wesson (13.5%), Taurus (13.0%), and Ruger (7.0%). The findings highlight the potential power these four manufacturers have to combat trafficking; if these four manufacturers took action on their own, the national impact could be substantial. Of course, other gun manufacturers also have a role to play in reducing trafficking and addressing our nation’s gun violence epidemic. Of potential interest to investors, two of the top four manufacturers of recovered crime guns are publicly traded companies: Smith & Wesson and Ruger.

The data received indicates that Glock pistols have become the leading weapon of choice for criminals. Glock was the top manufacturer of recovered crime guns across the entire



pool of cities surveyed, in addition to being first in crime gun recoveries in 19 of the reporting cities, respectively. On average, over 1.5 times more Glocks were recovered than the second-leading manufacturer across the collected data.

The reasons are multifold. Glock has a large market share, but it also primarily produces relatively low-cost pistols that are very easy to operate. Lacking more traditional safety mechanisms and requiring a lighter trigger pull than other pistols, you simply point and shoot — a selling point to some consumers and criminals. Considering its dubious distinction of being America’s number one crime gun, it is imperative that Glock take active steps to reduce the use of its products in crime.

For their part, Smith & Wesson, the second-leading manufacturer of crime guns in this dataset, recently told the House Oversight Committee that it does not “monitor or track” when, for example, its AR-15-style products are used to commit crimes or have injured or killed others, while Ruger, the fourth-leading manufacturer of crime guns, stated that it “only learns of these incidents through its customer service department, the media, or occasionally from lawsuits.” In 2018, shareholders of both publicly traded companies voted on proposals requiring that they track and disclose information related to their products’ use in crimes, but Smith & Wesson asserted that most of the public, its business partners, customers, and end users “understand that the manufacturer of a firearm is not responsible in any way for its illegal misuse,” and Ruger claimed that it was “not feasible” to monitor criminal events involving its products and that it “does not have visibility through the distribution channel.”

This dataset of city crime gun recoveries also underscores the dramatic rise of ghost guns showing up at crime scenes in America’s cities.

The data received indicates that recoveries of ghost guns nearly tripled from 2020 to 2021. Polymer80, the largest producer of ghost gun parts and kits, was the fifth-largest producer of crime guns in the cities surveyed in 2021 — a stunning finding that quantifies both the danger of untraceable ghost guns and their popularity among criminals. To further underscore the point, in a subset of 17 cities that were able to report five years of recovered crime gun data, Polymer80 rose from zero in 2017 to 757 in 2021.

The Costs of Gun Violence and the Path Forward for the Gun Industry

While the firearms industry takes in an estimated \$9 billion in revenue annually, tens of thousands of Americans are killed and injured by firearms every year, forever shattering the lives of survivors. But even those who aren’t directly affected by gun violence end up paying for it. An analysis by the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund using a PIRE injury cost model and data from federal, state, and scholarly sources shows that gun violence costs \$557 billion every year through the resulting police investigations, medical costs, long-term physical and mental health care, earnings lost to disability or death, criminal justice costs, and more.

To put it another way, taxpayers, survivors, families, and employers pay an average of \$7.79 million daily in health care costs and lose an estimated \$147.32 million per day related to work missed due to injury or death. American taxpayers also pay \$30.16 million every day in police and criminal justice costs for investigations, prosecutions, and incarcerations. Employers lose an average of \$1.47 million on a daily basis in productivity, revenue, and costs required to recruit and train replacements for victims of gun violence, and society as a whole loses \$1.34 billion daily in quality-of-life costs from the suffering and lost well-being of gun violence victims and their families.

However, while the rest of the country absorbs these staggering costs, the gun industry continues to profit from the sale of guns — including those used by criminals — while developing even deadlier weapons to boost profits, irresponsibly marketing their products in such a way that ignores or downplays the risks that come with owning a firearm, and taking a hands-off approach to policing their own supply chains. It is time for gun makers and sellers to step up and do their fair share to protect our communities — especially our kids, as firearms are now the leading cause of death among children and teens. Empty “thoughts and prayers” and gun industry PR efforts are not enough.

The crime gun data that Everytown received and analyzed for this report should add to the mountain of evidence available

to gun manufacturers about the use of their products in crimes. It is high time that firearm companies took their obligation to the public more seriously, by, at the very least, beginning to seal the cracks in their supply chains and cutting off irresponsible dealers who sell a disproportionate number of guns later recovered at crime scenes.

Would that cost the gun industry some sales? Maybe. But the rest of the country is already paying the tab for the death and carnage caused by the guns made by these manufacturers. The industry can no longer pretend that it has no responsibility for how its products are sold and used.

Police Management Matters A Lot

The following is authored by Kenneth Corey, Max Kapustin, and Jens Ludwig and taken with permission of the authors. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

Republished from Vital City NYC. 09.27.23 Police Management Matters a Lot <https://www.vitalcitynyc.org/articles/police-management-matters-a-lot>

Talking to a cab driver in Manhattan is often like consulting a history book: You'll learn where the most famous residents lived, which bodega has the best breakfast sandwich and how the city has changed. That's what happened several weeks ago when one of us was driving westbound on 45th Street near Times Square. A cab driver who'd been on the job since 1965 recalled how he would never have driven down this street in the 1970s — it was too dangerous. In fact, the first time he was robbed driving his cab, he explained, he had flagged down a nearby cop and pointed out the fleeing culprit. The cop looked at him and shrugged — something that's much less likely to happen today, the driver said.

Another one of us saw what happened behind the scenes to create this change, joining the New York Police Department as a rookie officer back in 1988. Like most other police agencies, the NYPD in that era largely responded after a crime had been committed, perhaps without an excessive amount of concern about whether the case got resolved (and certainly without a lot of thought about how to prevent future crimes from happening in the first place). Today, such an approach would never fly with any NYPD supervisor, as the department has been on the front lines of the shift toward data-driven management and accountability.

For all the public talk and debate about police funding and policing strategy, we think something much simpler but perhaps even more important is being overlooked: police management. With policing, like everything in life, how organizations are managed — how they implement what they set out to do — matters a lot.

Research by the University of Chicago Crime Lab shows that strengthening police department management can drive reductions in both violent crime rates and police use of force can drive reductions in both violent crime rates and police use of force, holding constant all the other measurable determinants of crime.

Data from the 50 largest police departments across the country demonstrate that when a new police chief comes in — inheriting the same department personnel, policies, union relationship and resources, as well as serving the same public in the same social and economic conditions — rates of violent crime can change substantially relative to what would have been expected to occur without a change in leadership.

To see exactly how important this can be, note that Chicago and New York City had almost the same murder rate per capita in 1990. New York has been an early and rapid adopter of modern data-driven management methods. Chicago has not. Chicago's murder rate today is nearly five times New York's (25.8 versus 5.2 per 100,000). Not coincidentally, New York City has seen a resurgence in the city's overall vitality while Chicago has not.

It's not just about how police try to fight crime. It's also about how police view and interact with the public they serve. There isn't as much data as we'd like, or need, about fairness, transparency, and how police relate to their communities (and vice versa). But one relevant measure that is available is how often police officers kill civilians. When departments change their leaders, the number of civilians killed by the police can change by up to 36%, holding constant other determinants of police killings.

We see a similar pattern when we look at what happens within a city when district-level leadership changes. The data suggest a similar thing happens when some district leaders are given assistance (think of something like "management consulting") to implement the basic principles of data-driven management. Shootings decline substantially in the short term without any increase in arrests. And better police implementation and management seem to translate into more violence prevention at less cost to the communities being served.

Why is this important? Because Americans are concerned both with the recent rise in gun violence and with the sort of policing that alienates our communities. We believe there's a potential path to alleviating both problems.

These principles — improving leadership and management with a data-driven approach — are routine in other domains of modern life yet remain too rare in policing. In the private and public sectors, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent to train rising leaders and managers in improved approaches to implementing changes as well as successfully incorporating data and technology into their decision-making.

Through better leadership and management, it should be possible to reduce gun violence, incarceration and police violence against the public.

To promote that shift, we recently launched the Policing Leadership Academy (PLA) at the University of Chicago, a first-of-its-kind program to train the next generation of police leaders across the country. The PLA's first cohort of policing leaders is undergoing a six-month education program on data-driven management, violence reduction and community

trust. The program will be rigorously evaluated to ensure it is achieving its two interconnected goals: reducing violence and increasing policing fairness on the ground.

But there are also lots of things that local departments can do on their own. Those include more meritocratic selection of middle- and top-level leadership, more investments in the human capital of the people running these important public institutions and better (and more accessible) data systems capturing what police departments do so the public can hold departments accountable for their performance.

Any serious attempt to address gun violence in America must start with the recognition that there surely isn't any single solution. Instead, substantial progress is most likely to come from making incremental steps on many different fronts. From the cab driver's perspective, that starts with a cop who doesn't shrug when a crime is committed. From our perspective, getting there will involve better and more effective management to get more social good out of the \$130 billion per year the U.S. spends on policing.

Part II. The Personal Impact

Community Trauma

The following is an article authored by Moms Demand Action and taken with permission of the authors. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

Republished from Everytown Research & Policy. 05.17.23
Beyond Measure - Gun Violence Trauma
<https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-trauma/>

Community trauma, an understudied area, is a product of persistent exposure and interactions of many forms of violence, including gun violence. Community trauma is not only the sum of trauma that individuals experience; it is also the collective trauma experienced in communities with elevated levels of violence. There are three dimensions of violence that combine to produce community trauma: interpersonal violence, structural violence, and historical and intergenerational violence. Each of these forms of violence can be linked to firearms.



Trauma from gun violence reverberates through the nation of survivors as collective trauma. Collective trauma refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affects an entire society. In this case, after an incident, a collective traumatic memory is produced that is remembered and recollected by community members through various times and spaces. For example, an LGBTQ+ survivor whose friend died in a mass shooting discussed the collective trauma among LGBTQ+ survivors by drawing on their experiences from the Pulse shooting:

“The ripple effect from the Pulse shooting... It was the thousands of us who were friends with the people who were lost. It’s the queer community in general that is afraid to go to gay clubs because there are so many people out there who are working to legislate against our lives. People are afraid to go to drag shows... And all of that is a ripple effect from Pulse... it widens out to the entire community in the wake of the shooting being afraid to go out and be themselves.”

Trauma extends beyond the victims and survivors to their families, communities, and extended communities that share the same identities as the survivors and victims of gun violence and people with similar experiences. Gun violence instills trauma responses such as hopelessness, fear,



numbness, and hypervigilance in communities across the nation—permeating through social and interpersonal systems and creating lasting effects.

Disproportionate Impact on Communities of Color

Black, Latinx, and other communities of color bear a disproportionate burden of gun violence, and they struggle to cope with the impacts. Trauma from gun violence is compounded with other forms of violence, such as structural violence, which includes under-or-disinvestment in health care, the education system, social and protective services, and housing. Structural violence also encompasses historical violence, such as the legacy of slavery, predatory housing practices, and banking practices. Therefore, it is essential to recognize the layers of trauma experienced by communities with high rates of gun violence.

Black and Latinx survivors or someone they cared about were more likely to experience gun violence by law enforcement officers compared to other respondents. A key contributor to trauma in the Black and Latinx communities is police violence.

Every year, police in America shoot and kill more than 1,000 people. Black Americans are 2.77 times more likely to be shot and killed by police than white Americans, and, in an average year, police shoot and kill over 180 Latinx people, a rate higher than white people. Survivors in the focus groups shared experiences of physical assaults and threats by law enforcement officials who were armed with guns, and loved ones who were killed by a law enforcement officer with a gun.

Focus group participants also experienced stigma, racism, and discrimination from law enforcement during the post-incident investigation process. A Latinx survivor whose brother died by gun homicide stated, “[The police] already had a theory and assumption and a bias. And that’s what led their work.” During the investigation process, Black and Latinx survivors reported experiencing less attention, yet more blame from law enforcement. They also experienced law enforcement’s disbelief as they were persistently questioned about the validity of their experiences with gun violence. Black and Latinx participants were also more likely to report that their cases were less prioritized than white

survivors. As a result, Black and Latinx survivors were more likely to have a loved one whose homicide remains unsolved. A Black survivor whose son died by gun homicide reflected on this:

"I feel when it's a Black or non-white [victim]... it's just... not enough urgency to solve the case, to work on the case... from what I've seen in these past 14 years that the people who can do something about solving cases really aren't that interested when it's a Black male or when it's a Black person."

Unsolved cases in Black and Latinx communities can further fuel community mistrust of law enforcement officials. Research consistently shows that homicides committed with a gun take longer to solve, and are solved less often than when committed with other weapons. Additionally, cases are less likely to be cleared when the victim of gun violence is Black and/or male. As a result, survivors are left with no closure, no accountability for the deaths of people they care about, and no justice. When this lack of justice is compounded with experiences of trauma, survivors have difficulty coping for not just years but lifetimes.

Generational Loss

Another effect of gun violence on communities described by survivors is generational loss. Survivors described themselves as *"being in the ripple"* as family members died by guns. Many did not get a chance to meet family members who died, and bereaved parents are raising the grandchildren of a missing generation. Survivors have a heightened concern about the generational loss for the youth in the United States. A Black survivor whose son died by gun homicide stated:

"It just seems that gun violence is the worst that it has ever been in my lifetime that I'm aware of and the perpetrators seem to be so young. We're losing generations. Generations. We're not only losing the lives of the victims, but the ones who are... convicted, their lives are lost as well."

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teens in the United States. Every year, nearly 4,000 children and teens (ages 0 to 19) are shot and killed, and 15,000 are shot and wounded. This generational loss impacts communities witnessing the death and wounds of their friends and classmates. A bereaved parent whose son died by gun homicide stated that when youth die by violence, *"we never know what their full potential would have been."*

Loss of Community

A loss of community is also felt among survivors as networks and structures in their environments erode due to trauma and gun violence's ripple effects. One factor that influences this breakdown of community as a result of trauma is the

normalization and desensitization of gun violence. A Latinx survivor whose brother died by gun homicide stated that people in a neighborhood with gun violence *"just chalk it up as, like, another incident of violence that happens in the community, right?"*

Participants and their communities feel *"numb"* to gun violence. Feelings of numbness also stem from the lack of investment and attention to their realities of gun violence from policymakers and the media. As a result, some people may ignore or avoid talking about gun violence in their area, which leads to fewer chances for solidarity to create safer communities and fewer outlets to rebuild trust.

Gun Suicides Among Former and Current Military Members

The following is an article authored by Eugene Weigend Vargas, and Marissa Edmund and taken with permission of the authors. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

Republished from [AmericanProgress.org](https://www.americanprogress.org/article/gun-suicides-among-former-and-current-military-members/). 03.02.22 *Gun Suicides Among Former and Current Military Members* <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/gun-suicides-among-former-and-current-military-members/>

Suicides are a major public health problem in the United States. From 2015 to 2019, close to 232,180 people died of suicide in the country. In fact, during 2019, suicide was among the top 10 causes of death in the United States.

Firearms play a major role in these deaths. From 2015 to 2019, half of people that died by suicide used a gun, putting firearms as the main mechanism of suicide deaths in the country. Moreover, when looking at overall gun deaths, roughly two-thirds are attributed to suicides—a proportion that is consistent across most states. Notably, the United States has a gun suicide rate that is 10 times higher than that of peer nations. And unfortunately, gun suicides appear to be on the rise: While the rate of gun suicides in 2010 was 6.28 per every 100,000 people, it rose to 7.29 per every 100,000 people by 2019—a 16 percent increase. Data also indicate that men, white Americans, older people, and individuals living in rural areas present higher rates of gun suicides.

This issue brief focuses on a group that presents a unique risk of gun suicides: former and current military members. As with the overall population, suicides among current and former members of the military are far more likely to involve a firearm than any other means. The objective of this brief is to describe how military members—current or former—represent a disproportionately high percentage of gun suicides across different demographics, such as race, ethnicity, and age. Additionally, this brief highlights factors that contribute to this problem, including significantly higher levels of gun ownership among former and current military members. Finally, the issue brief outlines policy recommendations and actions to address veteran suicide.

These policy recommendations include:

- Increasing public awareness about the role of firearms
- Prioritizing timely physical and mental health services
- Disrupting access to guns for those in crisis by facilitating voluntary relinquishment of firearms and encouraging
- Safe storage practices among veterans
- Passing laws that allow extreme risk protection orders
- Passing waiting period laws

The United States is home to approximately 18 million military veterans. It is imperative that policymakers act swiftly to address their needs. Implementing these recommendations would save lives and work to ensure a future free from firearm suicide.

A high percentage of gun suicide victims are current or former military members

Unfortunately, suicide gun-deaths among former and current military members occur with staggering frequency. According to data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), in 2019, close to 4,332 veterans died by gun suicide in the United States, representing close to 18 percent of the total number of gun suicides reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) during that year. Perhaps more alarming is the fact that this figure shows a veteran is killed by gun suicide every two hours.

Gun suicides are also a problem among active military members. A report from the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) found that 498 active members lost their lives to suicide in 2019. Of these suicides, 64 percent—318 cases—were perpetrated with a gun, close to one gun suicide per day.

Devastating impact of firearms and PTSD on an Iraq War veteran

On September 9, 2020, Ronnie McNutt, a 33-year-old Army veteran from Mississippi, died by suicide using a gun. Close friends had expressed concerns and had desperately attempted to stop this from happening. The victim had recently lost his job and suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after serving in Iraq. “He didn’t seem to be the same guy,” a close friend said of McNutt. When live video surfaced of McNutt in distress, friends and loved ones reached out to both him and the police, who were on site just before his death. While VA and DOD data on suicides among current and former members of the military are limited, data collected by the CDC through the National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) allows for a comparison of how gun suicide affects the military population versus the general population. The database has some limitations, as a few states do not report information to the NVDRS system and the category of military status cannot be broken down to distinguish between former and current military members. Nonetheless, despite its limitations, the NVDRS is an important source of information.

Based on available data, the Center for American Progress found that at least 8,710 former or current military members died by gun suicide from 2003 to 2019.¹⁶ While this number is an undercount, it shows that the number of current and former military members who have died by gun suicide is greater than the number of soldiers that died while deployed during the post-9/11 wars—7,057.

Additionally, when analyzing 2019 data on gun suicides from 41 states and the District of Columbia, CAP found that roughly 23 percent of gun-suicide victims that year were former or current military members. This represents close to 1 in every 4 gun suicides in the United States.

Military members represent a high percentage of gun suicides in the United States

Gun suicides by military status, 2019

■ Military members ■ Nonmilitary members ■ Unknown

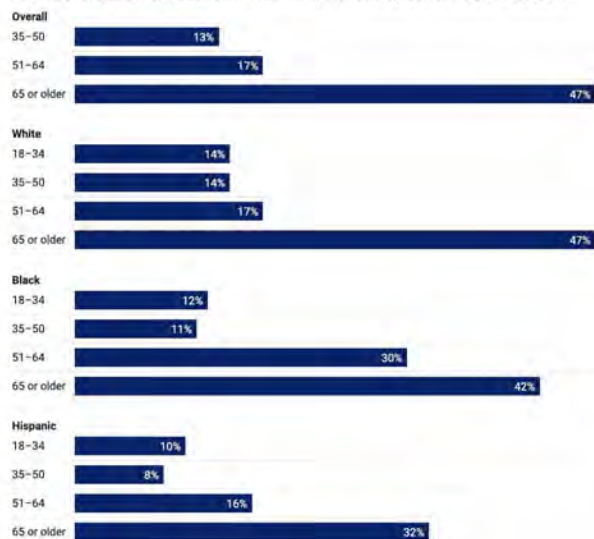


Source: Center for American Progress analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Violence Death Reporting System (NVDRS)," available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nvdrs/index.html> (last accessed January 2022).
Chart: Center for American Progress

Furthermore, gun suicides among former and current military members represent a high percentage of total gun suicides across various demographics. In 2019, former and current military members represented 25 percent of gun suicides among men across all age and racial/ethnic groups. While the percentages are lower for women, women veterans are still more likely to use firearms in a suicide attempt than are non-veteran women.

Military members represent a high percentage of gun suicides in the United States across various demographics

Percentage of total gun suicides that involved military members, by race/ethnicity and age, 2019



Source: Center for American Progress analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Violence Death Reporting System (NVDRS)," available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/datasources/nvdrs/index.html> (last accessed January 2022).
Chart: Center for American Progress

Yet the group where current or former military members represent the highest percentage of gun suicides is older Americans—those ages 65 and older. Roughly half of gun suicides within this age group involved current or former military members. As presented in Figure 2, the high proportion of gun suicides involving current or former military members within this age group is present across different race and ethnic groups.

An important factor to consider regarding the significant increase in suicides among older Americans is the circumstances of their time in the military and their current

stage in life. This age group would have primarily served in the Vietnam War from the mid-1950s through the mid-1970s, making it the last group of military veterans to experience a draft. This group also represents the largest cohort of veterans in the United States. Notably, a 2019 study found that Vietnam veterans were undergoing significant life events that could contribute negatively to their mental health, aging and reprocessing wartime trauma later in life.

Tragedy struck a young Missouri veteran shortly after he returned home

In October 2015, Kindall Johnson, a 22-year-old former Marine from Missouri, left his home for a football game but instead drove to a police station where he shot himself. Less than a year out of the Marine Corps, the victim was struggling to readjust to civilian life. Johnson was buried a week later with full military honors.

When looking at gun suicides among young Americans ages 18 to 34, current or former military members still represent a high percentage at close to 13 percent. As shown in Figure 2, this percentage does not vary significantly across race and ethnicity groups. This means that current or former military members represent 1 in every 6 gun suicides among young Americans. In fact, in some states, gun suicides among young veterans have been increasing at alarming rates. In Missouri, for example, rates of gun suicide are even higher among young veterans than older veterans.

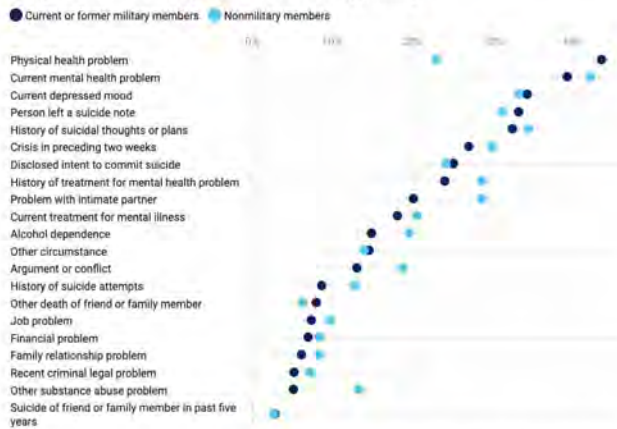
Risk factors and circumstances surrounding gun suicides among current or former military members

There are numerous factors that contribute to the high rates of suicide among current and former military members. One major factor is higher access to firearms. According to NVDRS data, close to 72 percent of suicides among current or former military members in 2019 were perpetrated with a gun. This is higher than the percentage of suicides perpetrated with a gun among the overall population during that year—50 percent. Similarly, while the rate of gun suicides among nonveterans increased 22 percent from 2005 to 2019, the rate of gun suicides among veterans increased 31 percent during that period.

Compared with the general population, current and former military members also have significantly higher rates of gun ownership. According to a 2015 study, nearly 50 percent of U.S. veterans own a gun.³⁰ In contrast, studies suggest that only about 22 percent of the general U.S. population owns firearms. Similarly, the age groups of 50 to 64 years old and 65 and older have the highest rates of gun ownership, according to a 2017 Pew Research Center study. This can further explain the high rates of suicide among older veterans.

Major circumstances surrounding gun suicides among military and nonmilitary members

2019 gun suicide cases involving a specific circumstance, by percentage



The authors have only included the top twenty circumstances for current or former military members. Twelve other reported circumstances individually represented less than 3 percent of the cases and were not included. These circumstances are identified by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The National Violence Death Reporting System collects information on circumstances surrounding suicides—including circumstances found in investigative reports and perceived by the deceased or those close to them as well as circumstances reported to have occurred right before the fatal injury by the deceased, someone close to them, medical professionals, or law enforcement agencies. The CDC has specific instructions on how to compile and label these circumstances. See Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Violence Death Reporting System Web Coding Manual Version 5.4.1," available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/nvdrr/nvdrrCodingManual.pdf> (last accessed February 2022). See source for more information.

Source: Center for American Progress analysis of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Violence Death Reporting System (NVDRES)," available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/oasasources/nvdrr/index.html> (last accessed January 2022). Chart: Center for American Progress.

Research has shown that higher levels of gun ownership tend to present higher rates of gun suicide. When looking at current military members, studies have found that the rate of suicide among soldiers who own firearms is higher than it is for those who do not own a gun at home. One of the main reasons is that firearms can easily be accessed and are considerably more lethal than other means. Indeed, while 85 percent of suicide attempts with a gun result in a fatality, this percentage drops to 3 percent in cases of drug overdose—the most widely used mechanism in suicide attempts.

Overall, access to firearms by former and current military members has been acknowledged by both the military and scholarly community as a risk factor for suicides.

In addition to access to firearms, there are other factors that may increase the likelihood of gun suicides among current and former military members. Using NVDRS data, CAP analyzed the circumstances of gun-related suicides in 2019 for both current and former military members as well as nonmilitary members. As Figure 3 shows, circumstances shared by military and nonmilitary members include mental

health problems, depression, a crisis in the preceding two weeks, history of suicidal thoughts, and intimate partner problems. However, a particular circumstance of gun suicide that is frequent among current or former military members but not as frequent among the general population is physical health problems. A 2018 study found that nearly 30 percent of all U.S. veterans had a service-related injury. Indeed, many former military members have physical injuries due to the strenuous physical activity involved in their work or from being wounded in combat. Physical injuries have been associated with PTSD, depression, and anxiety months after patients are released. Notably, while only 23 percent of gun suicides among the general population involved physical health problems, this percentage rises to 44 for current or former military members. In fact, out of all the analyzed circumstances of gun suicide, physical problems were the most common for current and former military members.

There are also strong links between PTSD and suicidal ideation. A 2014 study revealed that PTSD—along with other comorbidities caused by trauma, such as substance abuse—increases the likelihood of suicide ideation. Notably, 2 in 10 veterans struggle with substance abuse.

Recommendations

To reduce gun suicides in the United States, a major step would be to focus efforts toward reducing gun suicides among former and current military members, a group that represents up to 23 percent of gun suicides in America. There are no one-size-fits-all solutions to this problem; it demands a comprehensive approach that includes the following actions.

- Increase public awareness about the role of firearms.** Access to firearms is likely the most important factor associated with suicide among veterans. However, many veterans are unaware that having a gun in the home is a suicide risk factor. Therefore, it is fundamental to increase public awareness about this risk. Former military members such as Chris Marvin have advocated for the VA administration to explicitly discuss the impact that access to guns has on veteran suicides. In October 2021, the VA launched its "Don't Wait, Reach Out" campaign, targeting veterans who may be at risk for suicide and encouraging them to seek support. As a part of this campaign, the VA promoted "Firearm Suicide and Lethal Means Safety," acknowledging that the time and distance between access to lethal means, especially firearms, can reduce the risk of suicide among veterans. The campaign also promotes safe storage practices for firearm owners.
- Prioritize timely physical and mental health services.** In addition to reducing access to firearms, other factors must be addressed. This includes the need for mental health treatment and services as well as physical health treatment

and services. For example, veterans need timely access to medical care. They often face unreasonably long wait times to see either a VA physician or a physician out of the VA network, even after a clinician has deemed medical attention necessary. While waiting for medical attention, veterans may be in physical pain or even have their conditions worsen.

Moreover, veterans' injuries can have lasting, adverse effects on their mental health. Both physical and mental health services are therefore necessary to ensure that veterans are safe and healthy. Indeed, there is a strong link between mental and physical health. A 2016 study found that individuals with chronic pain were at higher risk for mental health disorders. Similarly, scholars have concluded that conversations between physicians and veterans about firearms should be encouraged to prevent suicides. While this can be challenging, studies have concluded that veterans are receptive to having these discussions in the proper setting, particularly for veterans who are at an elevated risk for suicide.

- **Disrupt access to guns for those in crisis by facilitating voluntary relinquishment of firearms and encouraging safe storage practices among veterans.** When suicidal thoughts are combined with easy access to guns, outcomes are fatal. One way to mitigate suicides, therefore, is by creating time and space between those impulses and access to lethal means such as guns. One way to do so is by encouraging and allowing at-risk veterans to temporarily transfer or store their firearms away from home. This has shown positive results. For example, former Marine Jason Stavely has given testimony on how he occasionally gets his guns out of the house when bad memories of war are triggered. Additionally, research shows that veterans favor measures limiting access to guns for those veterans at risk.

Another way to disrupt access is to encourage safe storage practices. Studies have concluded that veterans often exhibit risky gun storage behaviors such as not locking firearms or storing loaded guns. Studies have also shown that among current military members, storing loaded guns at home increases the likelihood of suicide. It is important to incorporate strategies that encourage safe storage practices such as locking guns, unloading firearms, and storing guns and ammunition separately. In January 2021, the VA released a firearm safety training brochure to assist primary care physicians in educating veterans on safe storage practices. The guide explains that safe firearm storage is a key factor in preventing gun-related suicides among veterans and active military personnel.

- **Pass laws that allow extreme risk protection orders (ERPOs).** ERPOs allow law enforcement officers and family members to petition a court to temporarily remove firearms from individuals who show signs of being a risk to themselves or to others. These laws are effective at preventing gun suicides: Research shows that for every 10 to 20 orders issued, a life is saved.
- **Pass waiting period laws.** Suicides are an impulsive action. In addition to generating space and time between that impulse and an individual's access to firearms, actions can also create time and space between that impulse and an individual's ability to purchase a firearm. Waiting periods require a certain time to pass between the purchase of a gun and the actual acquisition of the firearm. A 2015 study showed that the implementation of waiting periods on gun purchases is associated with lower rates of gun suicide.

Conclusion

There are multiple factors driving the high rates of suicide among current and former military members, including easy access to firearms and a lack of timely mental and physical health services. However, suicide among this demographic can be prevented. By both prioritizing health care and passing safe and effective gun laws, we can reduce the rates of suicide among veterans. Addressing this issue cannot wait. Policymakers must act swiftly to protect military members.

Gun Violence Impact on Women

The following is the condensed version of the article "Devastating Toll of Gun Violence on American Women and Girls" authored by Kelly Drane. Most emphases are original to this report. Citations and ellipses have been omitted.

Republished from GIFFORDS 00.13.23 *Beyond Measure: Gun Violence Trauma* <https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-trauma/>

Introduction

In many ways, men have historically been the focus of conversations about guns and gun violence in the United States. Nearly two-thirds of gun owners are male. Eighty-six percent of gun deaths in the US involve men, and men are six times more likely to die from gun violence than women.

However, gun violence also takes a grueling and devastating toll on women, with women of color experiencing a particularly disproportionate impact. Each year, more than 6,000 women die from gun violence. More than half of these deaths are gun suicides, and women are also heavily impacted by the deadly intersection of guns and domestic violence, which claims hundreds of lives each year. Thousands more women are left in the wake of gun violence's trauma, forced to grieve and recover from the loss of the many sons, husbands, brothers, and fathers who die as a result of gun violence.

The toll of gun violence on women in the US is particularly stark when compared to peer nations: compared to women in other high-income countries, US women are 21 times more likely to die from gun violence.

It is clear that gun violence is an issue with deep, multi-faceted impacts on women's safety, health, and well-being. Understanding this burden is essential to creating and implementing responsive solutions that will protect women, their families, and their communities.

Gun Suicide

Each year, an average of more than 3,250 women die by firearm suicide, representing 54 percent of all gun deaths among women. Like firearm suicide rates overall, gun suicide rates among women are on the rise. In the last decade, the gun suicide rate rose 17 percent for women. These increases were larger for women of color. While gun suicide rates rose just 15 percent for white women, increases were much sharper for American Indian and Alaska Native women (114%), Black women (103%), Hispanic women (96%), and Asian American and Pacific Islander women (26%).

Research also suggests that the rise in suicides among women is concentrated, in part, among young women and girls. A survey from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that more than one in four teen girls reported they seriously considered attempting suicide, and

more than one in 10 teen girls reported they attempted suicide in the past year. This research also found that teenage girls are experiencing high levels of hopelessness, sexual violence, and alcohol use—each of which is associated with elevated suicide risk. Alarming, gun suicide rates among girls aged 10 to 17 have risen 79 percent in the past decade, compared to a 74 percent increase among boys of the same age. Similar trends are mirrored for 18 to 24-year-old women, who saw a 67 percent increase in gun suicides in the last decade.

Unlike suicides among men, suicides among women have historically involved means other than guns. In fact, from 2012 to 2021, 57 percent of suicides among men were firearm suicides, compared to just 32 percent of suicides among women. However, this dynamic appears to be changing, with women increasingly using firearms in suicide attempts. In 2012, 31 percent of suicides among women were gun suicides; by 2021, this number had risen to 35 percent.

The rise in firearm use in suicides and the increased firearm suicide rate may be explained, in part, by the broader access that women have to firearms in the home. Historically, a smaller proportion of women have owned firearms as compared to men. Recent research, however, suggests that women are increasingly purchasing firearms and becoming gun owners, which is partly attributable to the increased gun lobby marketing of firearms to women under the false pretense of protection. Approximately half of the people who became new gun owners between January 2019 and April 2021 were women. Numerous studies show that firearm ownership and access are associated with an increased risk of suicide. In fact, one study found that women who own handguns are more than 35 times more likely than women who do not own handguns to kill themselves with a gun.

Finally, it is important to note that despite these alarming trends, the vast majority of firearm suicide prevention programs in this country are predominantly tailored to the needs and experiences of men. It is critical that gun suicide prevention programs, including those that advocate for secure firearm storage and temporary relinquishment of firearms during times of crisis, are designed so as to take into account the needs and messages most salient for women.

Gun Homicide

In 2020, the US saw an unprecedented spike in assaultive gun violence. In fact, 2020 saw a 35 percent increase in gun homicide rates—the largest one-year increase on record. These increases continued in 2021, and were felt across nearly every age, racial and ethnic group, and geography.

However, evidence suggests that these increases were particularly pronounced for women. While gun homicides rose 44 percent for men from 2019 to 2021, women experienced a 49 percent increase. Women of color saw an even more

disproportionate burden: gun homicides increased 27 percent for white women, while Black women experienced a 78 percent increase.

Each year, more than 2,600 women die in gun homicides.

Women of color make up 61 percent of these deaths, despite comprising less than 40 percent of the US population. In particular, Black and American Indian/ Alaska Native Women are approximately five and three times as likely, respectively, to be killed in gun homicides compared to white women.

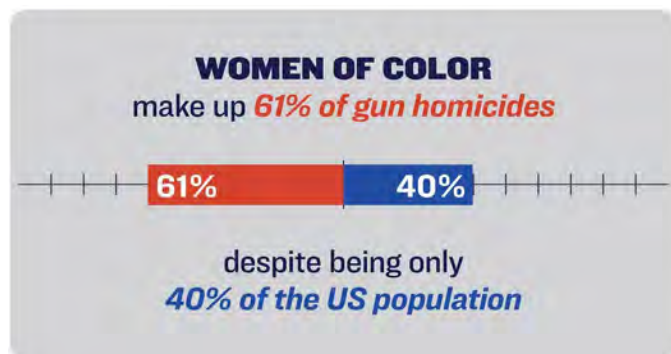
Although women are impacted by many forms of gun homicide, they bear a disproportionate burden of the deadly intersection of firearms and domestic violence in particular. More than two-thirds of all intimate partner homicides of women are committed with guns. In 2020, more than 700 women were killed in firearm-related intimate partner homicides, most often by male intimate partners.

Guns play a critical role in fueling lethal domestic violence. When a gun is present in the home where there is a domestic violence situation, a woman is five times more likely to be killed. One study found that cohabitants of California handgun owners were killed at home by a spouse or an intimate partner at more than seven times the rate of people who did not cohabit with a handgun owner.

Critically, while this deadly intersection impacts all women, women of color bear an even higher burden. American Indian and Alaska Native women and Black women are killed in firearm intimate partner homicides at two and three times the rate of white women, respectively.

Domestic Violence

The combination of intimate partner violence and access to firearms is an especially deadly mix. Research also suggests that other marginalized and vulnerable women experience a disproportionate impact of firearm-related intimate partner violence. For example, homicide is a leading cause of death for pregnant and postpartum women—outpacing deaths from hypertensive disorders, hemorrhage, and sepsis—and firearms are involved in nearly 70 percent of homicide deaths



among this population. Women with disabilities are also significantly more likely to experience domestic violence, including psychological aggression and stalking by an intimate partner, than women without disabilities.

The consequences of firearm intimate partner violence extend, however, beyond just deaths. A recent study found that roughly one in seven women had experienced nonfatal abuse with a firearm by an intimate partner, including being shot at or threatened with a firearm. Research suggests that women who experience intimate partner abuse with a firearm are significantly more likely to experience severe PTSD symptoms, compared to women who experience abuse that does not involve firearms.

Gun Violence Related Trauma

Although women die from gun violence at lower rates than men, women—particularly women of color—disproportionately bear the social, psychological, and financial burden of gun violence survivorship. Too often, women are left to grieve and recover from the loss of their loved ones to gun homicide and gun suicide.

Mothers who lose children in homicides experience an incredibly devastating and debilitating psychological trauma. Studies show that parents whose children are murdered experience elevated levels of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), major depressive disorder (MDD), and other adverse mental health outcomes. **In fact, researchers who study community violence describe how Black mothers experience what they call a “living death” or a “second killing” in living with the trauma wrought by gun homicides.** Importantly, these traumas can be compounded for women of color who face other systemic inequalities after the loss of a child, including feeling that their child’s death is treated as less worthy by the media and police investigators.

Studies also suggest that mothers bereaved by the loss of a child to suicide can experience significant impairments to their mental and physical health. The loss of a loved one to suicide can leave family members with a distorted sense of responsibility for the death, feelings of being blamed, and social stigmatization.

These traumatic impacts alone can be debilitating, but this unique trauma is often accompanied by further stressors. For example, women bereaved by gun violence are frequently left to settle the financial affairs of their lost loved one. Women who lose a partner to gun violence in many cases must contend with the loss of this partner’s income. These stressors can amplify trauma and its deleterious effects.

For women raising children in neighborhoods that experience disproportionately high rates of gun violence, the toll of chronic exposure to gun violence can also have adverse

impacts on their mental health and the well-being of their families. One recent study shows that compared to mothers who have not witnessed gun violence, mothers who witnessed at least one shooting in their neighborhoods or local communities are up to 60 percent more likely to meet the criteria for depression and to show more physical manifestations of depression symptoms.

These pernicious impacts are felt not just by mothers, but by their entire families: maternal depression has been shown to have short and long-term associations with behavioral problems and depression among their children. In other words, the consequences of gun violence exposure and the trauma it creates can persist over generations.

Solutions

The toll of gun violence against women and communities writ large is devastating, but we know that it is also preventable. There are a number of policies that can help keep women and their loved ones safe from gun violence and its trauma, including:

- **Comprehensive background checks through firearm licensing.** Background checks help prevent people at significant risk of both gun suicide and domestic abuse from accessing firearms, yet federal law does not require a background check to be performed before every sale of a gun, including sales by unlicensed, private sellers. For example, one in 13 background check denials are connected to a disqualifying history of domestic abuse. States that have closed this loophole through a purchaser licensing system have seen dramatic reductions in gun homicides and gun suicides.
- **Gun suicide prevention policies like waiting periods, extreme risk protection order laws, and safe storage laws.** Laws like these are proven to help prevent suicides. One study found that waiting period laws may reduce suicide rates by up to 11 percent, and extreme risk laws in Connecticut and Indiana have been associated with 14 percent and 7.5 percent reductions, respectively, in gun suicides in these states.
- **Stronger domestic violence laws.** These laws can help keep guns out of the hands of abusive partners and are associated with reductions in both overall and firearm-involved intimate partner homicides. In fact, states that restrict access to guns by people subject to active domestic violence restraining orders (DVROs) have seen a 13 percent reduction in intimate partner homicides involving firearms, with reductions of up to 16 percent observed when states require proof of firearm relinquishment for DVROs.

- **Investments in community violence prevention programs.** By helping prevent community gun violence, we can help protect women from the trauma it brings. These programs can involve a variety of strategies to reach out to those involved in gun violence in their communities, build relationships and provide supportive social services, address conflict through nonviolent means like de-escalation and mediation, and work to support community healing from violence. Research suggests these programs are associated with substantial reductions in gun homicides and shootings.

Various federal and state policies are designed to address the toll of gun violence on women and the lethality of firearms in suicide and domestic violence situations. In 2022, Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act (BSCA), which includes provisions to address firearm suicide, community violence, and domestic violence. This law provides funding for the implementation of extreme risk protection order laws and other crisis intervention services to help prevent gun suicides, as well as \$250 million to support community violence intervention strategies. Additionally, the BSCA addresses a loophole in federal law that allows abusive dating partners with domestic violence misdemeanor convictions to access guns.

Federal law has also specifically addressed the role of firearms in domestic violence since the mid-1990s. The Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) includes support for the implementation of domestic violence prohibitions in both the criminal and civil contexts. This legislation is renewed by Congress every five years, providing opportunity for its existing protections to grow to better protect survivors and their needs. In 2022, the reauthorization of VAWA included the NICS Denial Notification Act of 2022, which requires the US attorney general to notify local law enforcement whenever a person, including someone convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence or subject to a domestic violence protection order, fails a NICS background check to buy a gun. Continuing to strengthen and develop a comprehensive approach to preventing gun violence against women is crucial to addressing the devastating toll it enacts.

In addition to laws and programs that prevent gun violence, policies that address the unique needs of gun violence survivors can also play an important role in addressing the burden of gun violence on women. Women surviving gun violence face a number of unique challenges, with survivorship often impacting mental health, financial well-being, and individual safety. It is critical that people who have lost loved ones to gun violence have access to assistance to

help cope with trauma wrought by gun violence—and that there are policies in place to ensure people can easily access these resources.

Conclusion

Women have long been at the forefront of the movement to end gun violence in America, with gun safety advocacy becoming a salient feature of survivorship for so many women.⁵² We've seen this in the countless mothers who have turned the pain of losing their child into a movement to protect others. And in women like Gabby Giffords, who knows the consequences of our gun violence epidemic all too well. Women across the country from so many walks of life—Republicans, Democrats, and gun owners alike—support stronger gun laws that would protect them and their families.

Despite these efforts, too many women are dying from gun violence or being forced to learn how to live with its devastation. Our women, our families, and our nation deserve better. We know that gun safety laws can keep firearms away from abusive partners, prevent gun suicides, and protect our communities from the trauma of gun violence. These solutions can save lives—but only if our leaders have the courage to pass and implement them.

Special thanks to Julia Weber for her review of and comments on this.

POLICY
RECOMMENDATIONS
& CONCLUSION

Policy Recommendations

Bills

Below are pieces of legislation that should be passed out of the U.S. Congress. These bills, if passed into law, would significantly help reduce gun violence and its disastrous effects on society.

Update and modernize laws that regulate federal firearm licensees (H.R. 1478 - Rep. Robin Kelly).

The Federal Firearm Licensee (FFL) Act would update federal law to expand who must register as an FFL, require stricter security measures, and allow the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to access digital gun records, among other things. These changes will both cut down on crime gun transfers and improve law enforcement's ability to trace firearms.^{1 2}

Invest in the root causes of gun violence (H.R. 5003 - Rep. Steven Horsford).

The Break the Cycle of Violence Act would invest \$5 billion over eight years into community violence intervention programs and another \$1.5 billion in job training and opportunities for youth in communities impacted by violence. This grassroots approach to addressing the root causes of gun violence will make all communities safer.^{3 4}

Mandate background checks for all firearm purchases (H.R. 715 - Reprs. Brian Fitzpatrick and Mike Thompson).

The Bipartisan Background Checks Act would require background checks for all private sales of firearms. This will effectively close loopholes that allow private sellers to sell firearms without conducting a background check.^{5 6}

Establish a permanent Office of Gun Violence Prevention (H.R. 1699 - Rep. Maxwell Frost).

The Office of Gun Violence Prevention Act would create an office within the Department of Justice to coordinate the Federal government's gun violence prevention efforts. The Biden Administration made historic progress by establishing the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, this bill, however, would build on that and protect the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention from possible interference from future administrations.^{7 8}

Reauthorize the Federal Assault Weapons Ban (H.R. 698 - Rep. Lucy McBath).

The Assault Weapons Ban would ban the sale, transfer, manufacture, and importation of semi-automatic assault weapons and large-capacity ammunition-feeding devices. This bill would ensure that weapons designed for war are taken off the streets for good.^{9 10}

Repeal the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA) (H.R. 4184 - Rep. Adam Schiff).

The Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act would repeal PLCAA and allow the gun industry to be held accountable by victims of gun violence.^{11 12}

Support the safe storage of firearms (H.R. 660 - Rep. Rosa DeLauro).

Ethan's Law would require that all gun owners safely and securely store their firearms if they could be reasonably accessed by a child. The bill would also provide support for states to implement their own safe storage laws.^{13 14}

Support Gun Violence Research (H.R. 2390 - Rep. Elissa Slotkin).

The Gun Violence Prevention Research Act would provide \$250 million over five years to fund gun violence research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Research is essential in the public health approach and this bill would build on the growth in gun violence research from the last 10 years.¹⁵

Regulate firearms as consumer products (H.R. 3096 - Rep. Robin Kelly).

The Firearm Safety Act would remove the firearm exemption from the Consumer Product Safety Act. This would allow the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to issue safety standards and recalls for firearms. For example, the CPSC was unable to issue a recall for the SIG Sauer P320 despite at least 80 people getting injured from misfirings.^{16,17}

Priorities for States

Below are policies that state and local governments should implement.

Repeal Permitless Carry Laws.

Permitless carry allows individuals to purchase a firearm and carry it in public with no training or limitations by law enforcement. Requiring a permit will enable states to run background checks and prevent criminals from obtaining a permit. States can also require training and safety standards a person must meet before being granted a permit. Research shows that states with weak and permitless carry laws have higher rates of both violent crime and firearm homicides.^{18,19}

Repeal Stand Your Ground Laws.

States should require that individuals make a good-faith effort to retreat before they use deadly force in self-defense. Stand-your-ground laws empower individuals to “shoot first,” even when it is possible to flee a situation safely. Repealing stand-your-ground laws can decrease homicide rates and create accountability in the criminal justice system.²⁰

Expand Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) programs.

Enable law enforcement and family members to petition courts to temporarily remove firearms from individuals who pose a threat to themselves or others. This allows for intervention in situations where individuals show signs of dangerous behavior or the potential to harm themselves or others. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act provided funding for states to create and expand ERPO programs.²¹

Invest in Community Violence Intervention Programs.

The Department of Justice established a grant program to provide communities with funding for community violence intervention programs. This program, however, relies on funding from Congress and can fluctuate from year to year. States should model the DOJ’s Community Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative grant and develop their own funding stream so CVI programs can expand throughout the country.²²

Conclusion

When the first Kelly Report was first released ten years ago, the Gun Violence Prevention Movement as it is today was just beginning. The wide network of advocates fighting for gun safety now outpaces the size and strength of the gun lobby. An increasing number of policymakers are winning elections on clear platforms of gun reform. While mass shootings still grab the headlines, the growing movement has created more space to treat gun violence as a systemic crisis of public health.

As you read in this report, strong gun laws save lives. Common sense regulations of firearms reduce homicide and suicide rates, make mass shootings less frequent, and make shootings that do occur less deadly. Gun reform is not an easy fight. There is a strong gun lobby that has fought for decades at the federal, state, and local levels to weaken gun laws.

Strong gun laws are important, but identifying and fixing the root causes of gun violence is just as critical. Strategies such as community violence intervention do just that. Community leaders are essential in helping connect community-based organizations with resources and members of the community.

The Kelly Report heard from community-based programs doing the on-the-ground work and policy experts gave recommendations on how we can support these programs and evidence that shows the impact they make.

This movement is not possible without the work of community-based organizations. Providing support and education to policymakers, and working with local officials to reduce community violence. Groups such as Good Kids Maad City, Purpose Over Pain, Project Unloaded, Kids Off the Block, Polished Pebble, My Block, My Hood, My City, and many more have been doing the work making communities safer, one child and one neighborhood at a time.

Whether you are an advocate, a policymaker, a policy expert, a community leader, or are just trying to learn more about the issue of gun violence, you have a network of supporters who will stand beside you. The Kelly Report is a tool to resist the gun lobby, use it well.

To end gun violence in America, it will take all of us. Thoughts and prayers are nice, but policy and action are needed. The time to act is now.



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