

## 2015 YEAR-END REVIEW

# GUN LAW TRENDWATCH

*A roundup and analysis of the latest state firearms legislation.*

This year, the nature and frequency of shootings in America shocked even the most jaded observers. Although the contexts differ, one common theme runs through all of this year's tragedies: our society makes it far too easy to obtain a gun to act out anger, racism or fanatical beliefs.

Polls have repeatedly shown that most Americans favor legislative solutions to the gun violence epidemic. This year, conversations about these solutions grew louder and more prevalent. **Support for common sense gun legislation and opposition to dangerous gun lobby laws was stronger than ever.** This support, along with concerted and coordinated effort by gun violence prevention activists across the country, produced numerous proactive and defensive victories in 2015, making the year a great success.

The Law Center tracked 1,323 bills relating to firearms in the states in 2015. The vast majority of state legislatures are now adjourned. This year-end edition of *Trendwatch* details the many ways state gun laws were strengthened in 2015 and the failure of numerous dangerous efforts to weaken gun laws, as well as newly enacted gun lobby legislation. Inside, you'll learn about trends in policy areas such as:

**1323**  
firearms bills  
tracked in 2015

BACKGROUND CHECKS

CAMPUS CARRY

CONCEALED CARRY (NO PERMIT)

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

GUNS IN K-12 SCHOOLS

GUNS IN PUBLIC

STAND YOUR GROUND

WAITING PERIODS

In addition to tracking and analyzing legislation, Law Center attorneys work closely with state activists and lawmakers, draft bill language, provide pro bono legal analysis, and offer letters and testimony supporting or opposing bills across the country. In 2015, our attorneys worked in 20 states, as well as DC.

The Law Center will shortly release the *2015 Gun Law State Scorecard*, in which we rank and grade the states based on the strength of their gun laws. Check it out at [gunlawscorecard.org](http://gunlawscorecard.org).

# STATE GUN LAW

## OFFENSIVE VICTORIES

### DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

**Alabama.** HB 47 prohibits domestic violence misdemeanants and the subjects of domestic violence restraining orders from possessing firearms.

**Delaware.** SB 83 establishes procedures for domestic abusers to relinquish guns and broadens the category of prohibited people.

**Louisiana.** HB 842 expands domestic violence restraining order parameters and prohibits gun possession by stalkers subject to protective orders.

**Maine.** HB 413 prohibits domestic abusers convicted of a misdemeanor from possessing firearms.

**Nevada.** SB 175 prohibits domestic violence misdemeanants from possessing a firearm.

**Oregon.** SB 525 prohibits domestic violence misdemeanants and the subjects of domestic violence restraining orders from possessing firearms.

**South Carolina.** SB 3 restricts access to firearms by domestic abusers for varying lengths of time depending on the severity of the crimes committed.

**Vermont.** SB 141 expands gun possession prohibitions for abusers and improves NICS mental health reporting.

**Washington.** SB 5381 enacts a process for notifying victims before a gun is returned to a domestic abuser.

### LOOKING AHEAD: 2016 BALLOT INITIATIVES

**California.** The Law Center has teamed with Lt. Governor Gavin Newsom to launch the “Safety for All” initiative to prohibit possession of large capacity ammunition magazines, require background checks for ammunition sales, provide a firearms relinquishment process for convicted criminals, require reporting of lost and stolen guns, and mandate that records are shared with the FBI for background checks. Learn more at [safetyforall.com](http://safetyforall.com).

**Nevada.** A ballot initiative will require all gun sales to be facilitated by a licensed firearms dealer and undergo a background check.

**Maine.** Advocates are collecting signatures for a measure to require background checks for all gun sales, closing the private sale loophole.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

**Nevada.** Nevada law specifically allows unlicensed sellers to request licensed dealers to facilitate sales and conduct background checks. SB 240, enacted this year, prohibits firearms dealers from charging a fee for this service and will encourage more unlicensed sellers to perform background checks.

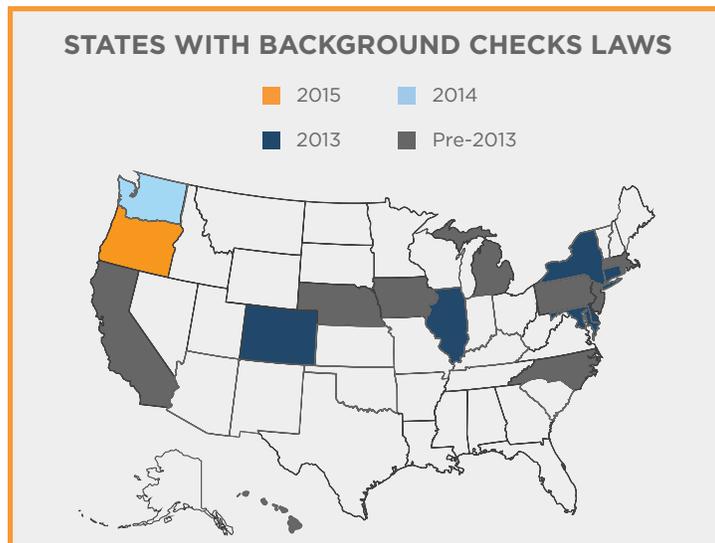
**Oregon.** The most significant development in 2015 was the enactment of SB 941 in Oregon, closing the private sale loophole. Oregon already required background checks at gun shows, but individuals could buy guns from unlicensed sellers online or in other private sales without a background check.

# VICTORIES 2015

## DEFENSIVE VICTORIES

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

**Iowa and North Carolina.** Smart gun laws scored critical victories in Iowa and North Carolina this year. In both states, activists and legislators thwarted gun lobby efforts to repeal permit-to-purchase requirements. Currently, handgun buyers in Iowa and North Carolina are required to obtain a permit and undergo a background check before purchasing handguns, including from unlicensed sellers. The efforts to repeal these requirements were defeated and the laws remain intact.



### GUNS IN K-12 SCHOOLS

Gun lobby bills to allow carrying concealed weapons on the grounds of K-12 schools were largely unsuccessful in 2015. **Bills permitting guns in K-12 schools were stopped in 15 states this year, dealing a critical defeat to the gun lobby.**

### CAMPUS CARRY

Forcing colleges and universities to allow guns on campus is a dangerous policy the gun lobby devoted tremendous resources to in 2015. **“Campus carry” bills were introduced in 16 states and defeated or not acted on in 14, dealing a significant blow to the gun lobby’s agenda.** Bills are still pending in Ohio, and campus carry passed in only one state, Texas (SB 11). Fortunately, gun violence prevention advocates and safety-minded legislators succeeded in reducing the danger of the new Texas law by giving schools the right to prohibit guns in certain parts of campuses.

In addition, a proactive measure to keep guns off campus was enacted in California (SB 707). The new law will require concealed carry licensees to obtain written permission from school officials before carrying firearms or ammunition onto the grounds of K-12 schools or on a university or college campus.

### CONCEALED CARRY (NO PERMIT)

A top gun lobby priority in 2015 was loosening concealed carry laws. The gun lobby introduced bills to allow carrying hidden guns in public without a permit in 21 states.

**Governors vetoed four no permit bills.** In Montana, Governor Bullock vetoed HB 298 and HB 533, calling the policy “an absurd concept that threatens the safety of our communities.” New Hampshire Governor Hassan vetoed SB 116 and West Virginia Governor Tomblin vetoed SB 347. Although some permitless carry bills were enacted into law, **these bills were stopped in 15 states** thanks to hard work by gun violence prevention advocates.

## NEW GUN LOBBY LAWS

**Arkansas.** HB 1505 allows firearms in a locked car on the premises of a K–12 school, college campus, public building, the state capitol, and public parking lots.

**Georgia.** HB 492 prohibits school districts from regulating gun possession on school grounds.

**Kansas.** SB 45 permits individuals to carry loaded, concealed handguns in public without a permit.

**Idaho.** HB 301 clarifies that carrying a concealed firearm without a license is permitted when outside the confines of a city.

**Maine.** SB 245 allows concealed handguns to be carried in public without a permit.

**Michigan.** SB 34 removes the limited discretion that was previously granted to the authorities issuing concealed weapons permits.

**Mississippi.** SB 2394 allows guns to be carried in a fully enclosed purse, bag, or case without a permit.

**Nevada.** SB 175 allows for the use of deadly force with no duty to retreat to defend a motor vehicle and makes it easier for the NRA and other groups to sue local governments for regulating firearms.

**North Carolina.** HB 562 weakens criteria for issuing a handgun permit, loosens restrictions on guns in vehicles in certain locations and creates a cause of action for bringing suit against a local government for regulating firearms.

**North Dakota.** HB 1241 allows guns in public parks and at concerts. HB 1450 allows possession of a firearm in a locked motor vehicle on college or university property.

**Oklahoma.** HB 2014 allows designated K–12 school employees with concealed weapons permits and training to carry loaded guns at school functions.

**Tennessee.** HB 995 removes local authority to prohibit guns in parks.

**Texas.** SB 11 allows concealed carry permit holders to carry firearms on college and university campuses but allows school officials to regulate firearms in some areas of campus. HB 910 allows people with concealed carry permits to carry loaded firearms openly in public.

**Wisconsin.** SB 35 repeals the state's 48-hour waiting period prior to purchasing a handgun.

### ABOUT THE LAW CENTER TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Founded in the wake of the July 1, 1993, assault weapon massacre at 101 California Street in San Francisco that left eight dead and six wounded, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence is now the premier resource for legal expertise and information regarding state and federal firearms laws. We track and analyze gun laws in all 50 states, file amicus briefs in Second Amendment cases across the country, and work with lawmakers and advocates to craft and promote legislation that will reduce gun violence and save lives. We regularly partner with law firms and nonprofit organizations dedicated to combating the epidemic of gun violence in our country, and we invite you to learn more about our work by visiting our website or connecting with us on social media.