

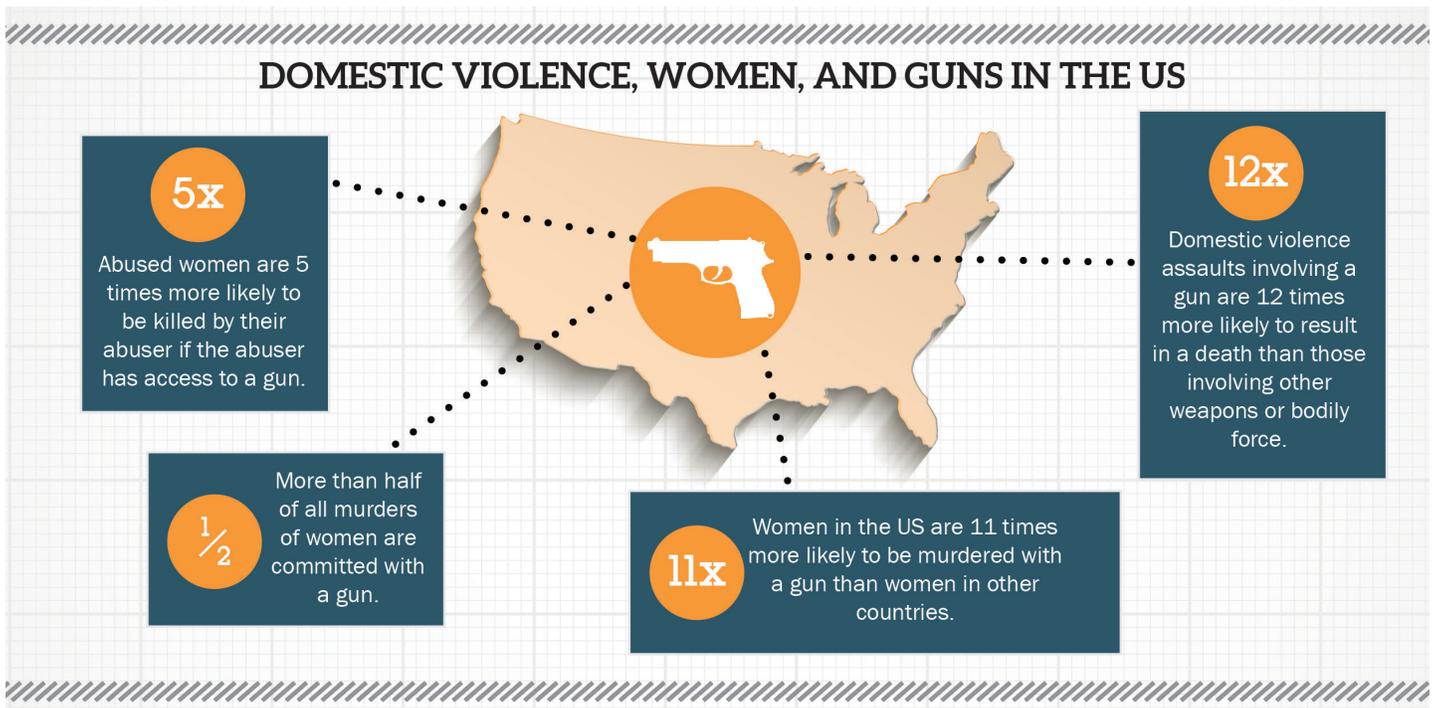
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE & GUNS: PROBLEMS & SOLUTIONS

THE PROBLEM

Guns in the hands of violent abusers are taking a terrible toll on women. Between 2001 and 2012, more than 6,000 women were murdered in the United States by an intimate partner using a gun. Gun violence against women differs from gun violence against men in one main feature: women are significantly more likely to be victimized by someone they know, while men are more likely to be victimized by a stranger. Approximately 30% of women murdered with guns are murdered by their intimate partners.

Stronger gun laws could have prevented many of these tragedies. **Situations in which a woman is being abused precede about 70% of intimate partner homicides. When an abuser has access to guns, he is five times more likely to kill his victim.** Consequently, laws that remove guns from domestic violence situations can prevent those situations from turning fatal.

That's why federal laws enacted in the 1990s prohibit certain domestic abusers from possessing firearms. However, these laws don't cover many types of abusers, such as dating partners. These laws also don't lay out the procedures that state and local authorities must use to implement them. As a result, many domestic abusers still have access to firearms, and too many American women have lost their lives at the barrel of a gun.



THE SOLUTIONS

Federal law prohibits purchase and possession of firearms and ammunition by persons who have been convicted in any court of a “misdemeanor crime of domestic violence” and/or who are subject to certain domestic violence protective orders. Unfortunately, federal law is filled with loopholes—some states have enacted laws to address these loopholes, but too many remain open.

Stronger laws will make a difference. State laws that restrict access to firearms by a person subject to a domestic violence restraining order, for example, are associated with a 19% reduction in the risk of intimate partner homicides.

Policies that protect victims of domestic violence enjoy tremendous public support. A 2006 survey of California residents demonstrated that 70% of men and 84% of women want firearms taken away from domestic violence perpetrators. Similarly, a poll published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in January 2013 found that 81% of people surveyed, including 76% of gun owners, support prohibiting gun ownership for 10 years after a person has been convicted of violating a domestic violence restraining order. The same survey found that 74% of gun owners and 72% of non-gun owners support prohibiting gun ownership for 10 years after a person is convicted of domestic violence.

FEDERAL LAW DOES NOT:

- Prohibit all abusive dating partners from access to guns
- Prohibit people convicted of misdemeanor stalking from possessing guns
- Prohibit abusers subject to temporary restraining orders from possessing guns
- Ensure that all domestic abusers are properly reported to the background check system, so that they cannot buy a gun
- Provide a procedure for the surrender or removal of guns from abusers who lose their eligibility to possess guns

STATE LAWMAKERS SHOULD:

- Prohibit possession of firearms by domestic violence misdemeanants and require abusers to surrender firearms when convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor
- Prohibit firearm possession by abusers subject to domestic violence protective orders
- Enact laws to facilitate the reporting of domestic violence misdemeanants to the database used for background checks
- Require law enforcement officers to remove firearms when they arrive at the scene of a domestic violence incident.

57%

...of mass shootings involve the killing of a family member or an intimate partner of the shooter.

ABOUT THE LAW CENTER TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence (formerly known as the Legal Community Against Violence) was founded after the 1993 shooting in San Francisco that left eight dead. Today, it is a prominent national law center focused on providing comprehensive legal expertise in support of gun violence prevention. As a nonprofit organization, the Law Center is dedicated to preventing the loss of lives caused by gun violence by providing trusted, in-depth legal expertise and information on America’s gun laws. The Law Center partners with state legislators, advocates, community groups, and others to advance its mission to prevent gun violence in America.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, VISIT OUR WEBSITE [SMARTGUNLAWS.ORG](https://www.smartgunlaws.org)
OR CALL OUR OFFICE AT (415) 433-2062.**