

THE ECONOMIC COST OF GUN VIOLENCE IN NEW YORK STATE

In recent years, New York has experienced an average of 432 gun-related homicides, 473 gun-related suicides, 1,499 non-fatal interpersonal shootings, and 105 accidental shootings per year.¹ New York has the third-lowest number of gun deaths per capita among the states. **Nevertheless, gun violence in New York exacts a high physical, emotional, and financial toll on families and communities.** We often hear about the heartbreak and physical pain these shootings cause, but there is another aspect of the gun violence epidemic that doesn't receive as much attention: the overwhelming financial cost.

TALLYING THE NUMBERS

The 2,747 shootings that occur each year in New York are a serious drain on the state's economy. Based on the expenses we can directly measure, including **healthcare costs** (\$106 million per year), **law enforcement and criminal justice expenses** (\$203 million per year), **costs to employers** (\$12 million per year), and **lost income** (\$1.7 billion per year), the initial price tag of gun violence in New York is **over \$2 billion per year.**²

Much of this tab is picked up by the public. Up to 85% of gunshot victims, for example, are either uninsured or on some form of publicly funded insurance. Additionally, law enforcement efforts are funded entirely by taxpayer dollars. **As a result, the direct annual cost of gun violence to New York taxpayers is approximately \$433 million.**

GUN VIOLENCE IS BAD FOR BUSINESS

New York's business community is severely impacted by the negative economic consequences of gun violence. Shootings engender fear in affected neighborhoods, which keeps potential customers away, forces businesses to relocate or limit hours of operation, and decreases foreign and local tourism.

A 2016 report by the Urban Institute found that in Washington DC **each additional homicide was associated with the loss of two retail or service establishments** in the following year.

A single shot fired earlier this year in a Brooklyn shopping mall caused chaos and forced the mall to be completely evacuated and temporarily closed—keeping customers away and causing revenue losses. Fortunately, no one was hurt in that shooting, but with thousands of shootings occurring each year throughout the state, it's easy to see how the economy is directly impacted by gun violence.

Conversely, reducing shootings improves local economies. The same Urban Institute report found that in Minneapolis just **one fewer gun homicide was associated with the creation of 80 jobs and an additional \$9.4 million in sales** across all businesses the following year.



When the reduced quality of life attributable to pain and suffering (\$3.6 billion) is considered, the overall estimate of the economic cost of gun violence rises to **\$5.6 billion per year**. While this number is staggering, it actually understates the true cost of gun violence in New York State because it doesn't include significant, yet difficult-to-measure costs, including lost business opportunities, lowered property values, and reductions in the tax base.

REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE

There's much work to be done. Fortunately, a number of proven solutions exist to reduce gun violence without limiting responsible gun ownership. These include **universal background checks** for gun sales, **neighborhood revitalization programs**, and **evidence-based violence intervention strategies**. The investment required to implement these lifesaving solutions is minuscule compared to the yearly cost of gun violence in our state.

1. Fatal firearm injury data in New York came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports (www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html). Non-fatal firearm injuries were estimated using a ratio based on the national incidence of non-fatal shootings, sourced from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System's Firearm Injury Surveillance Study (NEISS-FISS), and the number of fatal shootings that New York experienced in a given year, sourced from WISQARS. NEISS-FISS data is available at www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/198#studies. The gun-related injury figures listed in this report represent the average number of fatal and non-fatal injuries from 2010 to 2015.
2. Estimates of the cost of gun violence in New York were created using a model of the cost of gun violence published in 2012 by economists at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). This model can be found at www.pire.org/documents/gswcost2010.pdf. PIRE Researchers estimated a variety of costs associated with each gun injury, making adjustments based on whether the injury in question was a fatal injury, a non-fatal injury requiring hospitalization, or a non-fatal injury only requiring emergency department treatment. Because this model is based upon 2010 dollars, all cost estimates in our calculations were adjusted to 2016 dollars. All cost estimates are derived from a model created by the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). PIRE is a nonprofit research organization that focuses on using scientific research to inform public policy.

ABOUT US

Led by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and Navy combat veteran and retired NASA astronaut Captain Mark Kelly, Americans for Responsible Solutions and the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence are committed to advancing commonsense change that makes communities safer from gun violence. Operating out of offices in New York, Washington DC, and San Francisco, our staff partners with lawmakers and advocates to craft and enact the smart gun laws that save lives. We provide expertise in firearms litigation, lead grassroots coalitions, and educate the public on the proven solutions to America's gun violence epidemic.

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