

# THE ECONOMIC COST OF GUN VIOLENCE IN MICHIGAN

In recent years, Michigan has experienced an average of 478 gun-related homicides, 647 gun-related suicides, 1605 nonfatal interpersonal shootings, and 309 unintentional shootings per year.<sup>1</sup> Michigan has the 27th highest gun death rate, and **gun violence in the state 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 3,289 shootings each year in Michigan are a serious drain on the state's economy. Based on the expenses we can directly measure, including **healthcare costs** (\$128 million per year), **law enforcement and criminal justice expenses** (\$226 million per year), **costs to employers** (\$14 million per year), and **lost income** (\$2.1 billion per year), the initial price tag of gun violence in Michigan is over **\$2.5 billion per year.** 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 Michigan taxpayers is approximately \$508 million.**<sup>2</sup>

## THE HIGH COST OF YOUTH VIOLENCE

Young people disproportionately contribute to the rate—and high costs—of gun violence, with data indicating 18- to 20-year-olds are at an elevated risk of committing gun homicide and dying by gun suicide.

In Michigan, 18- to 20-year olds make up 4% of the population, but account for nearly 9% of homicide and non-negligent manslaughter arrests. National data indicates that this disparity may be even sharper for gun homicide offenses. Nationally, this age group comprises only 4% of the population but commits 17% of gun homicides. Young adults are also at higher risk of gun suicide, with suicide attempts that result in death or hospitalization peaking between ages 16 and 21. In Michigan, the firearm suicide rate among 18- to 20-year-olds is nearly 6% higher than the overall firearm suicide rate in the state.

Gun violence imposes massive human and moral costs on young people in Michigan, and these shootings also have a direct economic impact. Limiting firearm access by people under 21 will save lives and help reduce gun violence's enormous financial toll.

**\$2.5+**  
**BILLION**  
TOTAL DIRECTLY  
MEASURABLE  
COSTS

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When the reduced quality of life attributable to pain and suffering (\$4.4 billion) is considered, the overall estimate of the economic cost of gun violence rises to **\$6.9 billion per year**. While this number is staggering, it actually understates the true cost 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

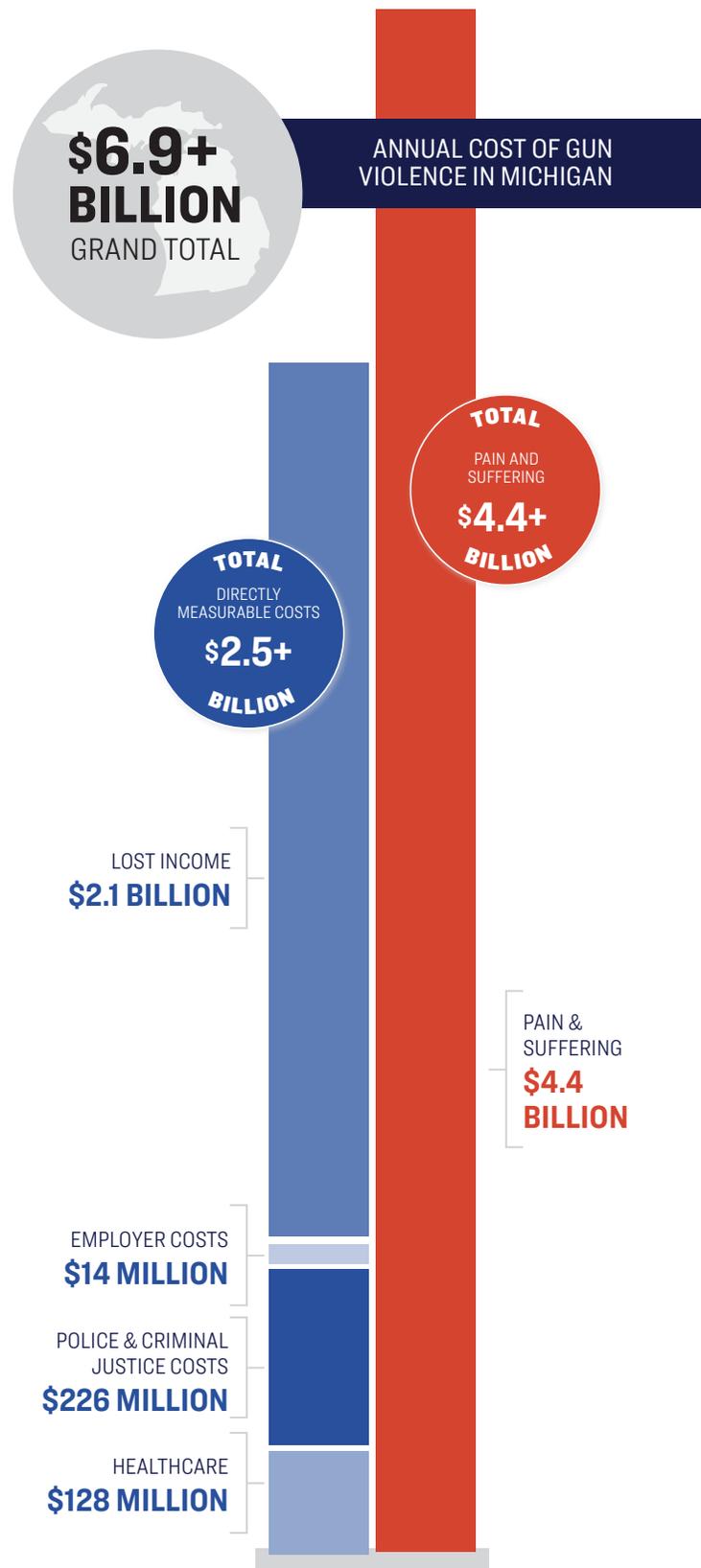
There is much work to be done. Fortunately, a number of proven solutions exist to reduce gun violence in Michigan, including universal background checks, limiting access to military-style weapons and large-capacity ammunition magazines, and funding urban violence intervention strategies. The investment required to implement these lifesaving solutions is minuscule compared to the yearly cost of gun violence in the state.

1. Fatal firearm injury data came from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports ([www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html)). Nonfatal firearm injuries came from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's HCUPnet Query System (<https://hcupnet.ahrq.gov/#setup>) and an estimation tool which creates a ratio of the national incidence of nonfatal shootings, sourced from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System's Firearm Injury Surveillance Study (NEISS-FISS), and the number of fatal shootings that Oregon experienced in a given year, sourced from WISQARS. NEISS-FISS data is available at [www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/198#studies](http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/198#studies).
2. Estimates of the cost of gun violence were created using a model published in 2012 by economists at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). PIRE is a nonprofit research organization that focuses on using scientific research to inform public policy. This model can be found at [www.pire.org/documents/gswcost2010.pdf](http://www.pire.org/documents/gswcost2010.pdf). All cost estimates were adjusted to 2016 dollars.

## WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

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