

THE ECONOMIC COST OF GUN VIOLENCE IN MISSOURI

In recent years, Missouri has experienced an average of 339 gun-related homicides, 562 gun-related suicides, and 996 nonfatal gun assaults per year.¹ **Missouri has the seventh highest gun death rate among the states**, and gun violence exacts an enormous 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 thousands of shootings that occur each year in Missouri are a serious drain on the state's economy. Based on the expenses we can directly measure, including **healthcare costs** (\$98 million per year), **law enforcement and criminal justice expenses** (\$159 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 Missouri is over **\$1.9 billion per year**. Much of this tab is picked up by the public, in part because up to 85% of gunshot victims 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 Missouri taxpayers is over \$384 million.**²

THE DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF GUN HOMICIDES

Interpersonal gun violence in Missouri disproportionately impacts underserved communities in urban areas, with young men of color being particularly vulnerable. For example, in 2016, **more than two-thirds of gun homicide victims in Missouri were black**. In fact, black men are more than 17 times as likely as white men to be the victim of a gun homicide in Missouri.

Moreover, in recent years Missouri has seen a sustained increase in interpersonal gun violence, with cities in particular suffering increased gun homicide rates. From 2014 to 2016, gun homicides increased by nearly 43% across the state. Many of these deaths are concentrated in cities like St. Louis and Kansas City—**these two cities alone account for nearly 63% of all gun homicides in Missouri.**³

Interpersonal gun violence, as well as gun suicides and unintentional shootings, impose massive human, moral, and fiscal costs on the state. More can and must be done to prevent these costly tragedies.

\$1.9+
BILLION

TOTAL DIRECTLY
MEASURABLE
COSTS

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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 \$5.5 billion per year.** While this number is staggering, it actually understates the true cost of gun violence in Missouri 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

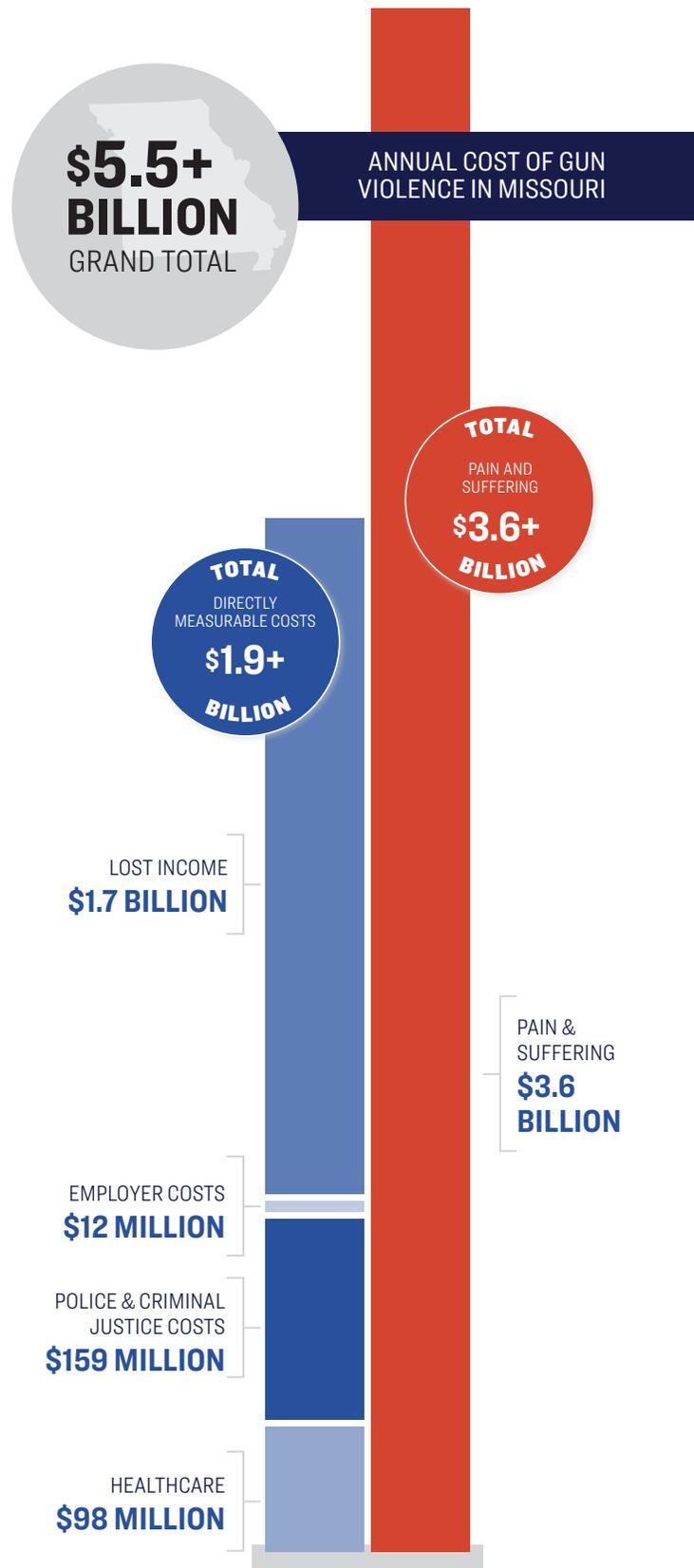
There is much work to be done. Fortunately, a number of proven solutions exist to reduce gun violence, including gun safety laws and evidence-based violence prevention and intervention strategies that focus on delivering services to those at the highest risk of participating in violent behavior. The investment required to scale up and expand these lifesaving solutions in Missouri is minuscule compared to the yearly cost of gun violence in the state.

1. Fatal firearm injury data came from the CDC's WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports (www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html). Nonfatal firearm injury data came from the Missouri Public Health Information Management System (webapp01.dhss.mo.gov/MOPHIMS/QueryBuilder?qbc=IM&q=1&m=1).
2. Estimates of the cost of gun violence in Missouri 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. All cost estimates were adjusted to 2016 dollars.
3. Based on 2016 crime data from the St. Louis Metropolitan Police Department (www.slmpd.org/images/2016_Homicide_Stats_for_Website.pdf) and the Kansas City Police Department's 2016 Annual Report (kcmo.gov/police/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/05/2016-KCPD-Annual-Report.pdf).

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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