FACTS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE

The United States is in the grip of a gun violence crisis that impacts every community across the country. Our nation’s high rate of shootings can be reduced, but because of weak gun laws riddled with loopholes, too many dangerous people still have easy access to deadly weapons. By enacting strong gun safety laws—policies that enjoy broad support from a majority of Americans—we can fill these dangerous gaps and save lives.

ON AVERAGE, 100 AMERICANS ARE KILLED BY GUNS EVERY DAY

Gun violence takes an enormous toll on our country. 36,000 Americans are killed by guns each year—an average of 100 per day—and 100,000 are shot and injured. Nearly two thirds of all gun deaths are gun suicides, and one third of gun deaths are gun homicides. Other types of fatal shootings comprise a small percentage of gun deaths.¹

SUICIDE

HOMICIDE

SHOOTINGS BY LAW ENFORCEMENT

UNINTENTIONAL

UNDETERMINED

AMERICA HAS EXCEPTIONALLY HIGH RATES OF GUN VIOLENCE

Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed in a gun homicide than residents of other high-income countries.⁴

Women in the United States are 21 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than women in peer countries.⁵

Americans are ten times more likely to die by gun suicide than people in peer countries.⁶

Across 29 high-income countries, 93% of children ages 0 to 14 years killed with guns are from the United States.⁷

280+
lifesaving gun safety laws have been enacted in 45 states and DC since the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

136,000
Americans are shot each year—over one million in the past decade.²

97%
of Americans support universal background checks, one of the most effective tools we have to ensure that guns do not fall into dangerous hands, preventing deadly shootings and saving lives.³

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HISTORICAL TRENDS
The overall gun death rate has remained relatively stable for more than a decade, with decreases in gun homicides offset by increases in gun suicides. But that is starting to change.

• In 2017, gun deaths reached their highest level in at least 40 years, with 39,773 deaths that year alone.8 Gun deaths increased by 16% from 2014 to 2017. Nonfatal firearm injuries are also on the rise.9
• National gun violence rates obscure the true levels of violence in certain places, particularly in underserved communities of color.

THE ECONOMIC COST OF GUN VIOLENCE
Gun violence has an outsized economic impact on Americans beyond the devastating human toll it wrecks on society.

• Economists estimate that gun violence costs the American economy at least $229 billion every year, including $8.6 billion in direct expenses.10
• Gun violence costs each American roughly $700 every year.11

SUICIDE AND GUNS
The majority of gun deaths are self-inflicted. The easy availability of firearms to those in distress makes suicide attempts far more likely to result in death.

• More than half of all suicides in the United States are carried out with a firearm.12
• White men comprise 74% of gun suicide victims.13 Gun suicides also have a disproportionate impact on young adults, older Americans, and veterans.14
• Access to a gun triples the risk of suicide death.15 As such, gun suicides tend to concentrate in states with higher rates of firearm ownership and broad firearm access.16

URBAN GUN VIOLENCE
The gun violence epidemic hits underserved communities of color particularly hard. Gun homicide rates in these neighborhoods have reached a crisis point.

• Gun homicides are concentrated in cities, and within cities, gun violence is further clustered among racially segregated, economically disenfranchised neighborhoods.17
• Black Americans are 10 times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide.18

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
For the millions of American women and their children affected by domestic violence every year, guns in the hands of domestic abusers pose a serious and lethal threat.

• Each year, 800 women in America are shot and killed by an intimate partner,19 and millions of women have been nonfatally shot or threatened with a gun by an intimate partner.20
• When an abuser has access to a gun, a domestic violence victim is five times more likely to be killed.21

KIDS AND GUNS
Beyond the young lives cut short and debilitating injuries, exposure to gun violence can cause lasting trauma, psychological distress, and decreased potential among children.

• Each year, nearly 1,500 minors are killed by guns,22 and three million children are directly exposed to gun violence.23
• Young children are most affected by gun homicides in the home—often related to domestic or family violence.24 Older children are at increased risk of gun suicide and gun homicides in their neighborhoods and communities.25

For more details and underlying research, visit lawcenter.giffords.org/stats
FACTS ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE CITATIONS


5. Id.

6. Id.

7. Id.


9. Id.


11. Id.

12. Id. Calculations were based on five years of most recent available data: 2013 to 2017.

13. Id.


24. Id.

25. Id.