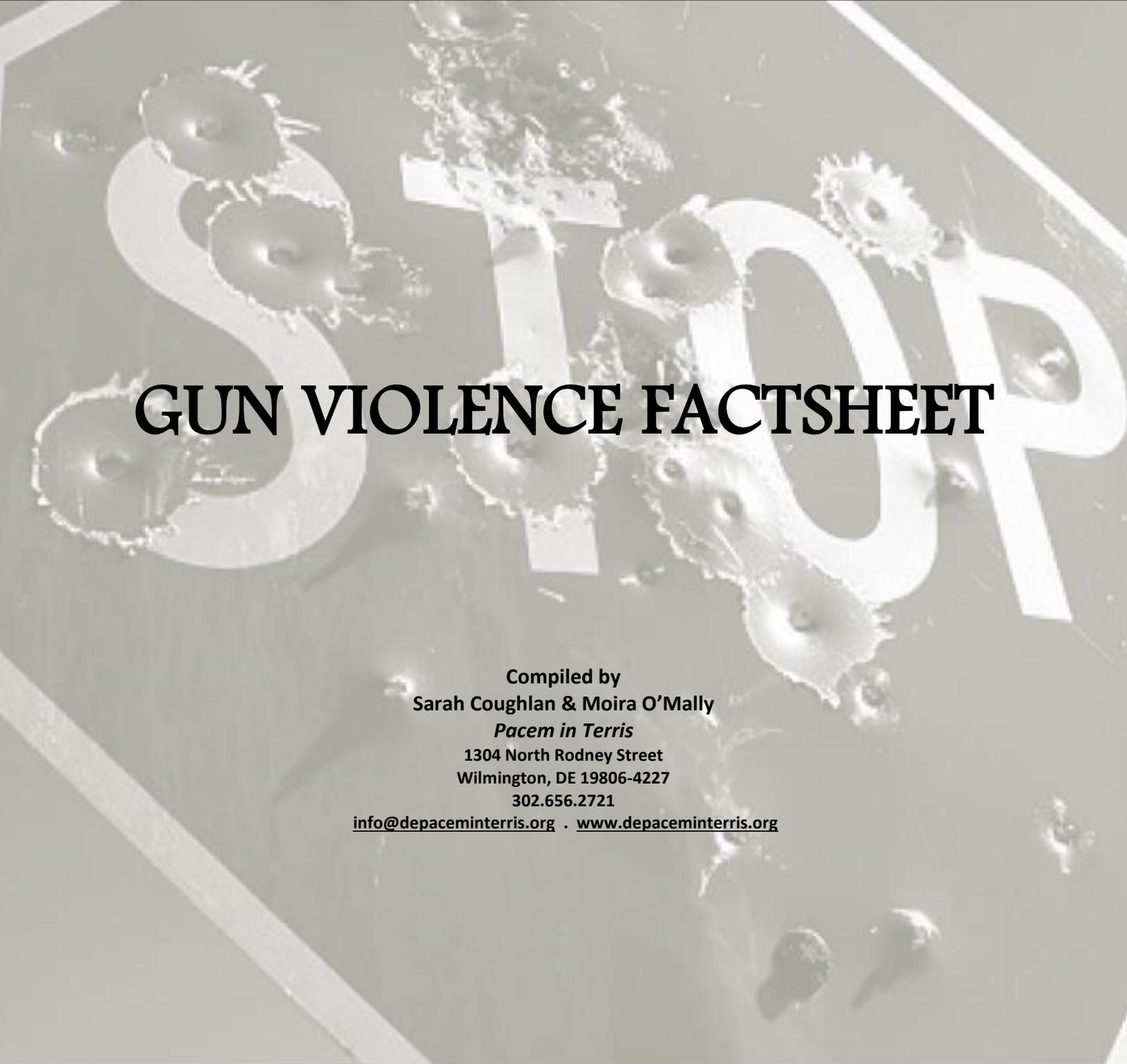




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GUN VIOLENCE FACTSHEET

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GUN VIOLENCE FACTS

Land of the Free/Home of the Guns:

- Since 1968, *more Americans have been killed by gunfire than have died in all of the wars in all of American history.*¹
- Each year, almost 100,000 people in America are injured or killed with a gun.²
- Last year, 31,593 people died from gun violence. 66,769 people were injured. Of those who were shot unintentionally, 592 were killed and 18,610 survived.³
- There are currently about 270 million privately owned firearms in the United States.



- U.S. homicide rates are 6.9 times higher than rates in 22 other populous high-income countries combined. The firearm homicide rate in the U.S. is 19.5 times higher.
- In the U.S., a mass killing—defined as having 4 victims, not including the killer—occurs once every 2 weeks. Recent ones include: Columbine, Virginia Tech, the Gabby Giffords shooting, the Aurora Theater shooting, Sandy Hook, and Santa Monica.

The High Cost:

- Gun violence impacts society in countless ways: medical costs, costs of the criminal justice system, security precautions such as metal detectors, and reductions in quality of life because of fear of gun violence. These impacts are estimated to cost U.S. citizens *\$100 billion* annually.
- \$12 billion per year is paid just by government health programs, court proceedings and insurance costs for gun shot wounds and deaths in the United States.

Vested Interests:

- \$14 million: Amount of money the National Rifle Association spent during the 2012 election in an attempt to defeat President Obama, according to The New York Times
- 17-to-1 Ratio of gun-rights lobbyist spending to gun control lobbyist spending in 2011, according to opensecrets.org and an analysis by Republic Report. Gun rights groups spent \$4,212,996; gun control groups spent \$240,000.

Loopholes and Loose Laws:

- There are 58,344 federally licensed gun dealers in the U.S.—more than all American Post Offices, McDonalds, and Starbucks combined. There are 120 gun dealers in just Delaware.
- *Nine out of 10 Americans agree that we should have universal background checks, including three out of four NRA members.*
- Since the Brady Law was initially passed, about *2 million people* have been blocked from purchasing a gun, due to a background check. *About half of those were felons.*

- However, guns *can* be sold in the United States without a background check to screen out criminals or the mentally ill. Over 40% of gun acquisitions occur in the secondary market—such as at gun shows, or through private sellers—which equates to no background check at a federally licensed dealer.

Guns, Gender, and Youth:

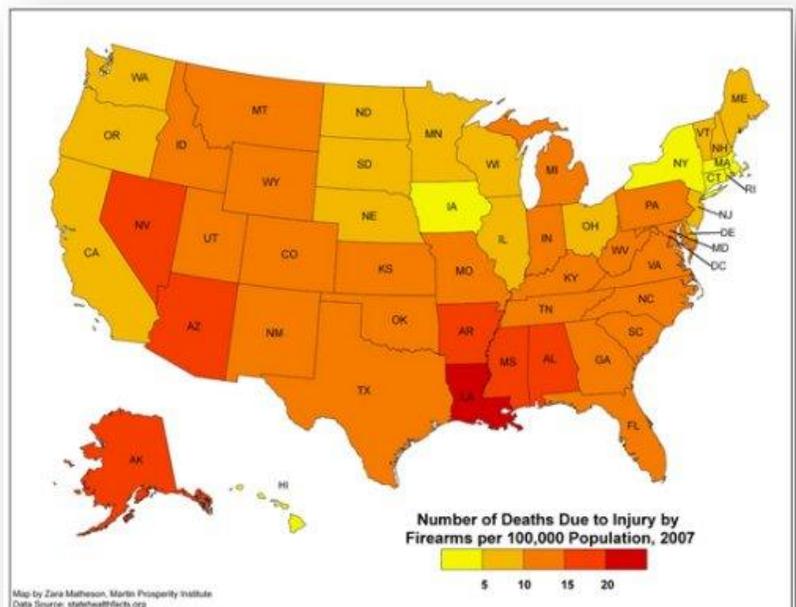
- U.S. women’s firearm death rate is 12 times higher than the combined rate of 22 other populous, high-income countries.
- The presence of a gun in domestic violence situations increases the risk of homicide for women by **500%**.
- **54%** of women killed by guns are killed by *intimate partners or family members*, and **57%** of mass shootings involve domestic violence.⁵
- In states that require a background check for a handgun sale, 38% fewer women are shot to death by intimate partners.
- Nearly one in four American teens has witnessed a shooting.⁶
- In 2007, more pre-school-aged children (85) were killed by guns than police officers were killed in the line of duty.⁶
- 48% of 2013 gun-related deaths have been younger people, (aged 30 or under).⁷

Popular Myths Debunked:

- “*Guns don’t kill people, people kill people!*” As we are often reminded, guns do not kill people but clearly people who kill others are most likely to do so with a gun. There are five times as many deaths from gun assaults as from knife assaults.
- “*Guns are needed for the sake of self-protection!*” Though pro-arms groups like the NRA promote gun ownership for self-protection, a firearm in the household is more likely to be used on a family member than an intruder.
- In addition, every time a gun injures or kills in self-defense, one is used:
 - **11 times** for a completed or attempted suicide
 - **7 times** in a criminal assault or homicide
 - **4 times** in an unintentional shooting death or injury

World-Wide Weapons:

- An international arms trade treaty recently passed through the UN, an unprecedented victory for the safe regulation of weapons trade around the globe. *The U.S. did not sign it.*



- Gun Homicides (average annually):
 - Less than 50: Japan
 - Less than 150: Germany, Italy, France, etc.
 - Less than 200: Canada
 - **More than 10,000: USA**
- In 2010, roughly 70% of U.S. homicides were by gun whereas in Britain, including Northern Ireland, only 9% were by gun.
- The U.S. is ranked #1 in the world for civilian gun ownership, with 88.8 guns per 100 people. (By contrast, the rate in Japan is 0.6)⁸

Major problems and trends with gun violence today:

- Mass shootings have been on the rise since 1999 (Columbine, Virginia Tech, Tuscon Arizona, the Aurora theater shooting, Sandy Hook, Santa Monica etc.)
- There are many loopholes in gun regulation that enable felons, substance abusers, and the mentally-ill to acquire firearms without undergoing a background check.
- Gun control policy is largely left to individual states, meaning that the strictness of gun-regulation and distribution can vary drastically across state borders.
- Racial discrimination: although African Americans are less than 13% of the U.S. population, they made up 57% of the gun-related deaths in 2010. By comparison, white Americans make up about 72% of the U.S. population, but were only 41% of the victims in 2010. Young black men die of gun homicide at a rate eight times that of young white men.⁴
- Although most people killed in gun violence are people of color (for example, African-Americans make up 33 percent of the Chicago population, but about 70 percent of the murder victims), recent gun violence massacres are predominately white-on-white (for example, Sandy Hook, Columbine, 2011 Gabby Giffords/Tucson shooting, Aurora theater shooting, etc.).



“Fear is a prominent part of any speech by the NRA. They use it as a marketing tool. It's no surprise that gun sales spiked after the elections in 2008 and 2012. People were afraid. But we have to ask ourselves if those fears are rational and based in fact, or if they are being driven by a need much more mercenary -- corporate greed. Like the gun culture, the fear culture in this country rakes in big profits. Without fear, gun manufacturers wouldn't be enjoying their most profitable years ever.”⁹

Underlying Enablers of Gun Violence:

- Powerful lobby groups like the NRA that block stricter gun-safety legislation
- A culture of fear that creates an imaginary need for protection against some unknown threat.
- Sensationalist media that makes celebrities out of mass-shooters
- Institutionalized poverty which pushes members of poorest classes into criminal activity
- Mass incarceration and the school-to-prison pipeline

Solutions?

- Universal background checks: legislation that requires states to conduct a background check on all gun purchases *and* closes the loopholes that allow people to purchase guns at gun shows, online, or through private sellers.
- De-stigmatizing mental health: it is thoroughly unfair to blame gun violence on the mentally ill, but mentally-ill persons coupled with substance abuse doubles the risk factor for gun violence. Thus, it is important for us to take away the stigma on mental illness, to educate ourselves on the subject, and to provide resources and care for those with mental health problems.
- Challenging the culture of fear: although America has more guns and looser restrictions than most other developed nations, states such as Canada and Israel have similar rates of gun-ownership with nowhere near the level of gun violence. It is difficult to pinpoint the cause of this oddity, but one factor may be the US's "culture of fear" that is seen in our media. When the news is dominated by sensationalist reports of violence, it skews the public's perception of what is a probable threat to the masses.

Further Details:

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- [NYTimes: Nicholas Kristof on Gun Violence](#)
- [How Walmart Helped Make Newtown Shooter's AR-15 the Most Popular Assault Weapon in America](#)
- [CNN: Gun violence is a national security issue, Peter Bergen, CNN National Security Analyst:](#)
- [Time Magazine: 3 Approaches to Curbing Gun Violence — Using Economics](#)
- [Time Magazine: Gun Economy Facts](#)
- [Wired Magazine: 5 Steps That Will Curb Gun Violence \(And 5 Ways They Will Fail\)](#)
- [Neighborhood Partners to End Gun Violence](#)
- [The Money Behind the Newtown Massacre](#)
- [Gun Violence Must Stop. Here's What We Can Do to Prevent More Deaths](#)
- [The Nation's Gun Policies Are All Over the Map—So How Do We Control Gun Violence—in most states, it's easier to buy a gun than it is to get a driver's license](#)
- [NYTimes: Who Pays for the Right to Bear Arms? \(Race and gun violence\)](#)
- [NYTimes: More Guns = More Killing \(guns in Latin America\)](#)
- [Refuge Media Project: "We Already Have a Way to Cut Gun Deaths"](#)
- [ABC Religion & Ethics: "America is paying a high price for indolence and pandering to the gun lobby"](#)
- [Opelousas \(LA\) Daily World: "Never Again: Grassroots Organizing Key to Gun Control"](#)
- [The Washington Post: "The Debacle of Gun Control"](#)
- [American Anthropological Association: Statement on Gun Violence](#)
- [DelawareOnline: Guns, by Design, are Weapons of Mass Destruction](#)
- [Video Tape of Proceedings of the Gun Violence Meeting at Westminster Presbyterian Jan. 3, 2013](#)
- [Map of School Shootings in the US Over Time](#)
- [Huffington Post: "Columbine High School Had Armed Guard During Massacre In 1999"](#)
- [Demand a Plan \(Mayors Against Illegal Guns\)](#)
- [NYTimes: "New Jersey's Useful One-Gun-a-Month Law"](#)
- [NYTimes: "Buy-Backs and a Creative use of the turned in guns"](#)
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- ["New Song" by John Flynn on Gun Violence Issue](#)
- [CSWire: "California Teachers Divest from Gun Companies"](#)
- [NYTimes: "New Jersey's Useful One-Gun-a-Month Law"](#)
- [Pew Research Center Survey on Gun Control Debate](#)
- [NYTimes: "To Reduce Suicide Rates, New Focus Turns to Guns"](#)
- [CNN: "One Way to Fight Guns"](#)
- [NYTimes: "Make Gun Companies Pay Blood Money"](#)
- [NYTimes: "Let Shooting Victims Sue"](#)

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- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/news/datablog/interactive/2012/jul/22/gun-ownership-homicides-map>

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- [3] <http://www.bradycampaign.org/sites/default/files/GunDeathandInjuryStatSheet3YearAverageFINAL.pdf>
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