



# America Under the Gun

A 50-State Analysis of Gun Violence  
and Its Link to Weak State Gun Laws

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Arkadi Gerney, Chelsea Parsons, and Charles Posner    April 2013



Center for American Progress



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# Introduction and summary

In the aftermath of mass shootings and other gun-related tragedies, there is often a surge of interest on the part of community leaders, social-science researchers, and elected officials to root out the causes of gun violence in an effort to prevent such tragedies from occurring again. Any study into the causes of gun violence is necessarily complicated, however, as there are innumerable factors that contribute to the nature and prevalence of gun-related violence in any community.

Despite this complex web of factors that influence the rate of gun violence, this report finds a clear link between high levels of gun violence and weak state gun laws. Across the key indicators of gun violence that we analyzed, the 10 states with the weakest gun laws collectively have an aggregate level of gun violence that is more than twice as high—104 percent higher, in fact—than the 10 states with the strongest gun laws.

The data analyzed in this report relate to the following 10 indicators of gun violence:

1. Overall firearm deaths in 2010
2. Overall firearm deaths from 2001 through 2010
3. Firearm homicides in 2010
4. Firearm suicides in 2010
5. Firearm homicides among women from 2001 through 2010
6. Firearm deaths among children ages 0 to 17, from 2001 through 2010
7. Law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm from 2002 through 2011
8. Aggravated assaults with a firearm in 2011
9. Crime-gun export rates in 2009
10. Percentage of crime guns with a short “time to crime” in 2009

Using these data, we rank each state according to the rate of each indicator of gun violence and create an overall ranking of the states across all 10 indicators, resulting in an overall state ranking for the prevalence of gun violence. Finally, we compare this overall state gun-violence ranking with a Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence ranking of states based on the strength of their gun laws.

Our analysis determined that the following are the 10 states, by rank, that suffer the highest levels of gun violence:

1. Louisiana
2. Alaska
3. Alabama
4. Arizona
5. Mississippi
6. South Carolina
7. New Mexico
8. Missouri
9. Arkansas
10. Georgia

The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence analysis shows that eight of these states are among the 25 states with the weakest gun laws.

While the strength of a state's gun laws is just one factor in the prevalence of gun-related violence in the state and cannot alone account for gun violence, there is a clear link between weak gun laws and high levels of gun violence across the United States.



# 10 indicators of gun violence

In this report we analyze data originating from the National Center for Injury Prevention at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or CDC, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, or FBI, and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, or ATF, regarding the following 10 indicators of gun violence:

1. Overall firearm deaths in 2010
2. Overall firearm deaths from 2001 through 2010
3. Firearm homicides in 2010
4. Firearm suicides in 2010
5. Firearm homicides among women from 2001 through 2010
6. Firearm deaths among children ages 0 to 17, from 2001 through 2010
7. Law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm from 2002 through 2011
8. Aggravated assaults with a firearm in 2011
9. Crime-gun export rates in 2009
10. Percentage of crime guns with a short “time to crime” in 2009

In the pages that follow, we look at each of these measures of gun violence.

Looking across all 10 indicators, we are able to rank the states based on their overall levels of gun violence. In order to determine an aggregate ranking across these 10 outcomes, we calculated the mean ranking of each state across the 10 measures. For states that did not have data for one or more measures, we calculated the mean of only those measures in which they appeared. Our analysis revealed that Louisiana suffers the highest levels of gun violence in the country.



**TABLE 1**  
**Aggregate state rankings for gun-violence outcomes**

Rank	State	Average rank across 10 measures of gun violence	Rank	State	Average rank across 10 measures of gun violence
1	Louisiana	5.0	26	Idaho	25.6
2	Alaska	5.2	27	Pennsylvania	25.7
3	Alabama	8.6	28	Maryland	25.9
4	Arizona	10.0	29	Delaware	26.7
5	Mississippi	10.2	30	South Dakota	28.0
6	South Carolina	11.1	31	Ohio	29.0
7	New Mexico	11.4	32	Oregon	30.3
8	Missouri	13.3	33	Utah	30.6
9	Arkansas	13.4	34	Washington	31.5
10	Georgia	13.9	35	North Dakota	32.1
11	Tennessee	14.1	36	Illinois	32.2
12	Nevada	14.6	37	Vermont	32.2
13	Montana	15.6	38	Wisconsin	32.4
14	Oklahoma	17.4	39	New Hampshire	32.4
15	North Carolina	17.8	40	California	32.9
16	West Virginia	19.0	41	Nebraska	33.3
17	Wyoming	19.6	42	Maine	38.9
18	Florida	19.6	43	Minnesota	39.4
19	Virginia	21.1	44	Rhode Island	40.3
20	Indiana	21.6	45	Iowa	40.9
21	Kentucky	23.0	46	New York	42.1
22	Kansas	23.1	47	New Jersey	42.2
23	Texas	23.9	48	Connecticut	43.1
24	Colorado	25.3	49	Massachusetts	44.7
25	Michigan	25.5	50	Hawaii	45.4

Source: Center for American Progress analysis based on data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Mayors Against Illegal Guns.

States in **red** indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in **green** indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Overall firearm deaths in 2010

As part of its mission to evaluate the prevalence and causes of violence and injury in the United States, the CDC collects extensive data regarding deaths in the United States. These data are broken down into numerous categories, including the cause of death—in particular, any weapon or instrument used in the death—and whether the death was accidental or intentional.

The table below details each state's overall rate of deaths by firearm in 2010. These data include intentional and accidental shootings, as well as suicides. In 2010 Alaska, Louisiana, and Montana topped this list, each with more than 16 firearm deaths for every 100,000 residents. In contrast, the three states with the lowest rate of firearm deaths—Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Hawaii—each had fewer than five firearm deaths for every 100,000 people.

**TABLE 2**  
**Overall firearm deaths, 2010<sup>1</sup>**

National average: 10.26 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
4	<b>Alabama</b>	782	<b>16.36</b>	3	<b>Montana</b>	164	<b>16.58</b>
1	<b>Alaska</b>	144	<b>20.28</b>	40	Nebraska	152	<b>8.32</b>
11	Arizona	931	<b>14.57</b>	9	<b>Nevada</b>	395	<b>14.63</b>
12	Arkansas	419	<b>14.37</b>	37	New Hampshire	118	<b>8.96</b>
42	<b>California</b>	2,935	<b>7.88</b>	47	<b>New Jersey</b>	456	<b>5.19</b>
24	Colorado	555	<b>11.04</b>	10	<b>New Mexico</b>	301	<b>14.62</b>
45	<b>Connecticut</b>	209	<b>5.85</b>	46	<b>New York</b>	1,011	<b>5.22</b>
32	Delaware	88	<b>9.8</b>	21	North Carolina	1,123	<b>11.78</b>
19	Florida	2,268	<b>12.06</b>	33	North Dakota	65	<b>9.66</b>
18	Georgia	1,223	<b>12.62</b>	31	Ohio	1,148	<b>9.95</b>
50	<b>Hawaii</b>	45	<b>3.31</b>	13	Oklahoma	538	<b>14.34</b>
17	Idaho	198	<b>12.63</b>	20	Oregon	458	<b>11.95</b>
41	<b>Illinois</b>	1,064	<b>8.29</b>	30	Pennsylvania	1,307	<b>10.29</b>
26	Indiana	709	<b>10.93</b>	48	<b>Rhode Island</b>	49	<b>4.66</b>
43	<b>Iowa</b>	213	<b>6.99</b>	15	South Carolina	648	<b>14.01</b>
29	Kansas	300	<b>10.51</b>	35	South Dakota	75	<b>9.21</b>
16	Kentucky	555	<b>12.79</b>	8	<b>Tennessee</b>	932	<b>14.69</b>
2	<b>Louisiana</b>	864	<b>19.06</b>	28	Texas	2,714	<b>10.79</b>
39	Maine	113	<b>8.51</b>	22	Utah	314	<b>11.36</b>
34	Maryland	538	<b>9.32</b>	23	Vermont	70	<b>11.19</b>
49	<b>Massachusetts</b>	270	<b>4.12</b>	25	Virginia	875	<b>10.94</b>
27	Michigan	1,076	<b>10.89</b>	36	Washington	609	<b>9.06</b>
44	<b>Minnesota</b>	365	<b>6.88</b>	7	<b>West Virginia</b>	273	<b>14.73</b>
6	<b>Mississippi</b>	475	<b>16.01</b>	38	Wisconsin	501	<b>8.81</b>
14	Missouri	846	<b>14.13</b>	5	<b>Wyoming</b>	92	<b>16.32</b>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

States in **red** indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in **green** indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Overall firearm deaths from 2001 through 2010

CDC data show that from 2001 through 2010, the rate of gun deaths remained consistently high in a number of states. From 2001 through 2010, eight states stayed among the 10 states with the highest number of firearm deaths, suggesting that the problem of firearm deaths in these states is a chronic one. Likewise, eight states share the distinction of staying among the 10 states with the lowest rates of gun deaths across the same 10-year period.

**TABLE 3**  
**Overall firearm deaths, 2001–2010<sup>2</sup>**

National average: 10.33 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
4	<b>Alabama</b>	7,665	<b>16.62</b>	7	<b>Montana</b>	1,469	<b>15.5</b>
2	<b>Alaska</b>	1,196	<b>17.84</b>	41	<b>Nebraska</b>	1,385	<b>7.83</b>
8	<b>Arizona</b>	9,117	<b>15.48</b>	5	<b>Nevada</b>	3,895	<b>15.92</b>
9	<b>Arkansas</b>	4,291	<b>15.32</b>	42	<b>New Hampshire</b>	873	<b>6.73</b>
33	California	32,678	<b>9.1</b>	46	<b>New Jersey</b>	4,365	<b>5.04</b>
23	Colorado	5,269	<b>11.19</b>	11	New Mexico	2,932	<b>15.07</b>
47	<b>Connecticut</b>	1,755	<b>5</b>	45	<b>New York</b>	9,985	<b>5.2</b>
32	Delaware	782	<b>9.2</b>	18	North Carolina	11,102	<b>12.54</b>
20	Florida	20,651	<b>11.61</b>	38	North Dakota	560	<b>8.61</b>
17	Georgia	11,591	<b>12.8</b>	31	Ohio	10,657	<b>9.29</b>
50	<b>Hawaii</b>	391	<b>3.02</b>	14	Oklahoma	4,863	<b>13.55</b>
19	Idaho	1,810	<b>12.51</b>	26	Oregon	3,945	<b>10.8</b>
37	Illinois	10,974	<b>8.68</b>	28	Pennsylvania	12,941	<b>10.36</b>
22	Indiana	7,071	<b>11.21</b>	48	<b>Rhode Island</b>	449	<b>4.23</b>
44	<b>Iowa</b>	1,976	<b>6.63</b>	13	South Carolina	5,991	<b>13.82</b>
29	Kansas	2,861	<b>10.34</b>	33	South Dakota	712	<b>9.1</b>
15	Kentucky	5,561	<b>13.23</b>	10	<b>Tennessee</b>	9,182	<b>15.19</b>
1	<b>Louisiana</b>	8,460	<b>18.9</b>	27	Texas	24,901	<b>10.75</b>
40	Maine	1,054	<b>8.01</b>	30	Utah	2,407	<b>9.59</b>
21	Maryland	6,328	<b>11.32</b>	36	Vermont	556	<b>8.96</b>
49	<b>Massachusetts</b>	2,179	<b>3.38</b>	24	Virginia	8,262	<b>10.86</b>
25	Michigan	10,825	<b>10.83</b>	35	Washington	5,692	<b>8.98</b>
43	<b>Minnesota</b>	3,431	<b>6.67</b>	12	West Virginia	2,584	<b>14.15</b>
3	<b>Mississippi</b>	4,937	<b>16.98</b>	39	Wisconsin	4,589	<b>8.26</b>
16	Missouri	7,525	<b>12.94</b>	6	<b>Wyoming</b>	818	<b>15.59</b>

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

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## Firearm homicides in 2010

Every day in the United States, 33 people on average are murdered with a gun. This amounts to roughly one gun murder every 44 minutes.<sup>3</sup> According to CDC data, there were more than 11,000 firearm homicides in the United States in 2010—comprising 68 percent of all homicides that year—with a hugely uneven distribution across the states.

Louisiana ranks first in firearm homicides in the country in 2010, with 9.53 gun murders annually for every 100,000 people—more than two-and-a-half times the national average. This is a staggering number considering that 12 states have a rate of less than two homicides annually for every 100,000 people. Indeed, even the state ranked second on this list—Mississippi, with 6.91 gun homicides annually for every 100,000 people—doesn't come close to Louisiana's rate.



**TABLE 4**  
**Firearm homicides, 2010<sup>4</sup>**

National average: 3.59 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
3	Alabama	283	5.92	36	Montana	17	1.72
14	Alaska	30	4.22	32	Nebraska	41	2.24
13	Arizona	271	4.24	25	Nevada	90	3.33
10	Arkansas	132	4.53		New Hampshire	-	-
20	California	1,342	3.6	26	New Jersey	260	2.96
33	Colorado	97	1.93	18	New Mexico	76	3.69
28	Connecticut	98	2.74	29	New York	527	2.72
6	Delaware	45	5.01	16	North Carolina	376	3.94
15	Florida	767	4.08		North Dakota	-	-
9	Georgia	443	4.57	23	Ohio	396	3.43
	Hawaii	-	-	21	Oklahoma	131	3.49
44	Idaho	12	0.77	39	Oregon	60	1.57
11	Illinois	577	4.5	16	Pennsylvania	501	3.94
22	Indiana	223	3.44	38	Rhode Island	17	1.62
41	Iowa	34	1.12	7	South Carolina	229	4.95
31	Kansas	68	2.38		South Dakota	-	-
27	Kentucky	125	2.88	8	Tennessee	293	4.62
1	Louisiana	432	9.53	19	Texas	913	3.63
42	Maine	13	0.98	42	Utah	27	0.98
5	Maryland	306	5.3		Vermont	-	-
34	Massachusetts	126	1.92	24	Virginia	271	3.39
12	Michigan	440	4.45	37	Washington	114	1.7
40	Minnesota	65	1.23	30	West Virginia	47	2.54
2	Mississippi	205	6.91	35	Wisconsin	106	1.86
4	Missouri	335	5.59		Wyoming	-	-

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

(-) The CDC suppresses state-level counts and rates based on fewer than 10 deaths.

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## Firearm suicides in 2010

Research shows that access to firearms increases the risk of someone committing suicide.<sup>5</sup> A study by the Harvard School of Public Health using data from 2001 found that, because of the lethality of guns, 85 percent of suicide attempts with a firearm are fatal, whereas many other means of attempting suicide have only a 5 percent fatality rate.<sup>6</sup> Public-health research into firearm suicides has found a direct correlation between high levels of firearm ownership and the number of gun suicides, finding that states with high levels of gun ownership have suicide rates nearly twice as high as those in states with low levels of gun ownership.<sup>7</sup>

The table below ranks states based on their rate of suicide by firearm, according to CDC data. Alaska, Wyoming, and Montana rank highest, with between 14 and 15 firearm suicides annually for every 100,000 people. New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts have the lowest numbers, with roughly two firearm suicides annually for every 100,000 people.

**TABLE 5**  
**Firearm suicides, 2010<sup>8</sup>**

National average: 6.28 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000
13	Alabama	454	9.5	3	Montana	141	14.25
1	Alaska	107	15.07	39	Nebraska	106	5.8
12	Arizona	620	9.7	6	Nevada	289	10.7
16	Arkansas	266	9.12	24	New Hampshire	102	7.75
42	California	1,492	4	49	New Jersey	187	2.13
18	Colorado	427	8.49	10	New Mexico	204	9.91
45	Connecticut	110	3.08	48	New York	459	2.37
41	Delaware	43	4.79	26	North Carolina	707	7.41
25	Florida	1,454	7.73	21	North Dakota	56	8.33
26	Georgia	718	7.41	35	Ohio	724	6.28
47	Hawaii	37	2.72	8	Oklahoma	376	10.02
4	Idaho	182	11.61	11	Oregon	376	9.81
44	Illinois	442	3.44	37	Pennsylvania	762	6
31	Indiana	455	7.02	46	Rhode Island	30	2.85
38	Iowa	177	5.81	20	South Carolina	392	8.48
28	Kansas	210	7.36	23	South Dakota	65	7.98
14	Kentucky	404	9.31	15	Tennessee	585	9.22
18	Louisiana	385	8.49	33	Texas	1,702	6.77
30	Maine	95	7.15	9	Utah	275	9.95
43	Maryland	222	3.85	7	Vermont	66	10.55
50	Massachusetts	138	2.11	29	Virginia	576	7.2
36	Michigan	601	6.08	32	Washington	464	6.9
40	Minnesota	280	5.28	5	West Virginia	210	11.33
17	Mississippi	256	8.63	34	Wisconsin	378	6.65
22	Missouri	489	8.17	2	Wyoming	83	14.73

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

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## Firearm homicides among women from 2001 through 2010

While not all homicides among women in the United States are the result of domestic violence, women are more than three-and-a-half times as likely to be killed by an intimate partner as men.<sup>9</sup> In 2005, 40 percent of female homicide victims nationwide were killed by a current or former intimate partner, and guns were used in more than half of those murders.<sup>10</sup>

The lethality of domestic-violence incidents—and therefore the risk to women—increases exponentially when a firearm is present in the home. Having a gun in the home increases the risk of homicide by an intimate partner by eight times more than in households without guns. What’s more, this risk of homicide increases 20 times when there is a history of domestic violence in the family.<sup>11</sup>

According to CDC data, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama have the highest rates of firearm homicides among women, with more than two female firearm homicides occurring annually for every 100,000 women from 2001 through 2010. In contrast, 22 states reported less than one female firearm homicide annually for every 100,000 women.

**TABLE 6**  
**Firearm homicides among women, 2001–2010<sup>12</sup>**

National average: 1.21 per 100,000 women

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000 women	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000 women
3	Alabama	569	2.39	24	Montana	55	1.16
12	Alaska	52	1.61	36	Nebraska	65	0.73
9	Arizona	493	1.67	6	Nevada	214	1.77
7	Arkansas	252	1.76	46	New Hampshire	32	0.49
27	California	1901	1.05	38	New Jersey	280	0.63
25	Colorado	258	1.1	13	New Mexico	150	1.52
44	Connecticut	100	0.55	40	New York	573	0.58
30	Delaware	43	0.98	10	North Carolina	740	1.63
17	Florida	1331	1.46	43	North Dakota	18	0.56
5	Georgia	823	1.78	28	Ohio	608	1.03
48	Hawaii	26	0.4	15	Oklahoma	272	1.5
33	Idaho	54	0.75	32	Oregon	144	0.78
29	Illinois	641	0.99	26	Pennsylvania	680	1.06
18	Indiana	454	1.42	49	Rhode Island	22	0.4
45	Iowa	83	0.55	4	South Carolina	444	1.99
22	Kansas	166	1.19	47	South Dakota	18	0.46
20	Kentucky	302	1.41	8	Tennessee	529	1.71
1	Louisiana	630	2.74	16	Texas	1730	1.48
39	Maine	41	0.61	34	Utah	94	0.75
23	Maryland	342	1.18	41	Vermont	18	0.57
50	Massachusetts	107	0.32	19	Virginia	549	1.42
21	Michigan	645	1.27	35	Washington	237	0.74
42	Minnesota	145	0.56	11	West Virginia	152	1.63
2	Mississippi	375	2.5	31	Wisconsin	224	0.8
14	Missouri	450	1.51	37	Wyoming	17	0.66

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

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## Firearm deaths among children ages 0 to 17, from 2001 through 2010

Guns pose a significant risk of injury and death to children in the United States. In 2010 more than 1,900 children under the age of 18 were killed by firearms. Homicide and suicide are the second- and third-leading causes of death among teenagers ages 15 to 19, and firearms were used in 85 percent of teen homicides and 40 percent of teen suicides in 2010.<sup>13</sup> The United States also has the highest rate of firearm-related deaths of children among high-income countries: The firearm-suicide rate for children ages 5 to 14 is eight times higher than in other high-income countries, and the rate for accidental firearm deaths among these children is 10 times higher than in other high-income countries.<sup>14</sup>

CDC data show that Alaska and Louisiana had the highest number of children killed by guns from 2001 through 2010, with a rate of 5.9 child firearm deaths and 4 child firearm deaths for every 100,000 children, respectively. In comparison, 26 states had a rate of less than two child firearm deaths for every 100,000 children over this same period.

**TABLE 7**  
**Firearm deaths among children, ages 0–17, 2001–2010<sup>15</sup>**

National average: 1.95 per 100,000 children

Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000 children	Rank	State	Deaths	Rate per 100,000 children
8	Alabama	312	2.78	3	Montana	74	3.31
1	Alaska	109	5.85	23	Nebraska	93	2.06
9	Arizona	411	2.68	17	Nevada	139	2.26
10	Arkansas	185	2.67	49	New Hampshire	11	0.36
20	California	2055	2.2	45	New Jersey	196	0.93
34	Colorado	197	1.68	4	New Mexico	158	3.12
47	Connecticut	64	0.76	42	New York	517	1.15
35	Delaware	33	1.63	24	North Carolina	424	1.97
32	Florida	694	1.77	21	North Dakota	33	2.2
22	Georgia	493	2.08	36	Ohio	457	1.63
	Hawaii	-	-	12	Oklahoma	226	2.52
15	Idaho	93	2.32	40	Oregon	109	1.27
14	Illinois	766	2.4	31	Pennsylvania	522	1.83
28	Indiana	297	1.86	44	Rhode Island	24	1.01
41	Iowa	88	1.22	18	South Carolina	237	2.26
30	Kansas	130	1.83	11	South Dakota	52	2.61
33	Kentucky	170	1.69	16	Tennessee	331	2.27
2	Louisiana	461	4.02	29	Texas	1176	1.84
46	Maine	25	0.86	39	Utah	108	1.37
13	Maryland	343	2.5	43	Vermont	14	1.02
48	Massachusetts	108	0.74	25	Virginia	351	1.94
19	Michigan	555	2.23	37	Washington	224	1.45
38	Minnesota	176	1.37	27	West Virginia	73	1.87
5	Mississippi	233	3.06	26	Wisconsin	256	1.89
6	Missouri	414	2.9	7	Wyoming	37	2.89

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).

(-) The CDC suppresses state-level counts and rates based on fewer than 10 deaths.

States in **red** indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in **green** indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm from 2002 through 2011

There are more than 900,000 sworn law-enforcement agents in the United States,<sup>16</sup> each of whom exposes themselves to the daily perils associated with protecting public safety. Police officers face considerable risks in performing their duties: Over the past decade more than 500 officers have been killed in the line of duty as a result of assaults.<sup>17</sup> Guns in the hands of dangerous individuals and criminals pose a significant threat to police officers. Of the 72 officers killed in 2011, for example, 63 were killed with firearms, including 46 officers who were wearing body armor when they were killed.<sup>18</sup> And over the past 10 years, 92 percent of officer deaths resulting from an assault on the officer involved firearms.<sup>19</sup>

The table below ranks states based on the number of police officers killed by a firearm from 2002 through 2011 using data collected by the FBI. South Dakota and Louisiana had the highest rates of gun deaths of law-enforcement agents, and the 10 states with the highest rates combined have a rate of law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm that is more than double the 50-state average.



TABLE 8

Law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm, 2002–2011<sup>20</sup>

National average: 0.02 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Killings	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Killings	Rate per 100,000
4	Alabama	19	0.41	6	Montana	3	0.31
3	Alaska	3	0.44	44	Nebraska	1	0.06
7	Arizona	18	0.30	41	Nevada	2	0.08
10	Arkansas	7	0.25	22	New Hampshire	2	0.15
31	California	43	0.12	42	New Jersey	6	0.07
27	Colorado	7	0.15	9	New Mexico	5	0.25
47	Connecticut	1	0.03	38	New York	18	0.09
32	Delaware	1	0.12	14	North Carolina	17	0.19
20	Florida	30	0.17	24	North Dakota	1	0.15
12	Georgia	20	0.22	29	Ohio	16	0.14
23	Hawaii	2	0.15	34	Oklahoma	4	0.11
43	Idaho	1	0.07	40	Oregon	3	0.08
30	Illinois	16	0.13	13	Pennsylvania	25	0.20
19	Indiana	11	0.17	37	Rhode Island	1	0.09
46	Iowa	1	0.03	5	South Carolina	16	0.36
18	Kansas	5	0.18	1	South Dakota	5	0.63
36	Kentucky	4	0.09	17	Tennessee	11	0.18
2	Louisiana	24	0.53	26	Texas	35	0.15
48	Maine	0	0.00	21	Utah	4	0.16
28	Maryland	8	0.14	48	Vermont	0	0.00
45	Massachusetts	3	0.05	11	Virginia	19	0.25
25	Michigan	15	0.15	16	Washington	12	0.19
33	Minnesota	6	0.12	35	West Virginia	2	0.11
8	Mississippi	8	0.27	39	Wisconsin	5	0.09
15	Missouri	11	0.19	48	Wyoming	0	0.00

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Uniform Crime Reports," available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s./2011/>.

States in red indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in green indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Aggravated assaults with a firearm in 2011

Firearm violence in the United States extends beyond murders and other deaths to other forms of violent crime as well. In 2011, 21 percent of aggravated assaults—defined as “an unlawful attack by one person upon another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury”<sup>21</sup>—involved the use of a firearm.

As the table below demonstrates, there is a huge disparity across states in the number of aggravated assaults committed with guns. According to FBI data, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Arkansas had the highest rates of firearm-related aggravated assaults in 2011, with a rate of more than 100 gun assaults for every 100,000 people. In contrast, 21 states had a rate of less than 30 aggravated assaults with a gun for every 100,000 people.

**TABLE 9**  
**Aggravated assaults with a firearm, 2011<sup>22</sup>**

National average: 51.13 per 100,000 people

Rank	State	Firearms	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Firearms	Rate per 100,000
23	Alabama	1,607	40.50	29	Montana	269	29.03
9	Alaska	575	80.47	26	Nebraska	568	33.84
16	Arizona	3,603	57.36	17	Nevada	1,301	53.30
3	Arkansas	2,518	100.56	45	New Hampshire	171	15.14
21	California	17,055	45.39	32	New Jersey	2,360	26.94
20	Colorado	2,217	45.72	6	New Mexico	1,755	87.26
42	Connecticut	697	20.06	41	New York	2,168	20.06
8	Delaware	738	81.36	12	North Carolina	5,843	67.44
11	Florida	13,153	69.03	47	North Dakota	31	4.79
13	Georgia	5,517	58.64	25	Ohio	3,688	37.97
	Hawaii	-	-	15	Oklahoma	2,089	58.07
34	Idaho	350	23.43	44	Oregon	671	17.55
	Illinois	-	-	24	Pennsylvania	4,675	39.44
28	Indiana	1,662	29.91	43	Rhode Island	156	17.86
36	Iowa	589	21.95	2	South Carolina	5,272	127.88
10	Kansas	2,016	76.87	39	South Dakota	151	20.60
33	Kentucky	1,067	25.14	1	Tennessee	8,555	137.58
4	Louisiana	3,938	99.51	14	Texas	13,998	58.28
48	Maine	60	4.52	38	Utah	573	21.32
22	Maryland	2,382	41.18	46	Vermont	67	12.60
27	Massachusetts	2,003	33.19	37	Virginia	1,722	21.35
7	Michigan	7,679	86.41	30	Washington	1,798	28.44
35	Minnesota	1,177	22.52	18	West Virginia	780	52.04
19	Mississippi	956	51.69	31	Wisconsin	1,495	27.40
5	Missouri	5,290	88.90	40	Wyoming	112	20.44

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Uniform Crime Reports," available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/>.

(-) Incomplete data were received in 2011 from these states and therefore were omitted.

States in **red** indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in **green** indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Crime-gun export rates in 2009

When guns are recovered at a crime scene, local law enforcement can reach out to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives, or ATF, for assistance in tracing the guns to determine the first point of sale and the first purchaser. In conducting such traces, ATF can identify the state in which the gun was first sold and thereby determine whether the gun crossed state lines before being used in a crime. In 2009, 30 percent of guns traced by ATF had crossed state lines before being recovered at a crime scene.<sup>23</sup>

The movement of crime guns across state lines undermines local attempts to curb gun violence and protect public safety. A study conducted by Mayors Against Illegal Guns analyzing ATF tracing data found that in 2009, 10 states supplied nearly half of the crime guns that had crossed state lines.<sup>24</sup> Controlling for population, the top 10 states for crime-gun exports had an export rate of almost double the national average and more than three times the average rate of the 10 states with the lowest export rates.<sup>25</sup>

**TABLE 10**  
**Crime-gun export rate, 2009<sup>26</sup>**

National average: 14.1 per 100,000

Rank	State	Crime guns exported	Rate per 100,000	Rank	State	Crime guns exported	Rate per 100,000
5	Alabama	1,561	33.2	14	Montana	236	24.2
4	Alaska	233	33.4	40	Nebraska	157	8.7
13	Arizona	1,637	24.8	9	Nevada	808	30.6
11	Arkansas	769	26.6	24	New Hampshire	242	18.3
46	California	1,772	4.8	48	New Jersey	242	2.8
32	Colorado	690	13.7	17	New Mexico	437	21.7
41	Connecticut	243	6.9	49	New York	517	2.6
23	Delaware	164	18.5	20	North Carolina	1,775	18.9
29	Florida	2,640	14.2	35	North Dakota	71	11.0
10	Georgia	2,781	28.3	27	Ohio	1,806	15.6
50	Hawaii	30	2.3	19	Oklahoma	699	19.0
18	Idaho	298	19.3	25	Oregon	645	16.9
43	Illinois	844	6.5	30	Pennsylvania	1,777	14.1
8	Indiana	2,011	31.3	44	Rhode Island	66	6.3
38	Iowa	288	9.6	6	South Carolina	1,504	33.0
21	Kansas	531	18.8	28	South Dakota	120	14.8
3	Kentucky	1,504	34.9	22	Tennessee	1,171	18.6
15	Louisiana	1,065	23.7	39	Texas	2,240	9.0
25	Maine	223	16.9	31	Utah	384	13.8
33	Maryland	681	11.9	16	Vermont	142	22.8
47	Massachusetts	239	3.6	7	Virginia	2,557	32.4
41	Michigan	684	6.9	33	Washington	794	11.9
45	Minnesota	319	6.1	2	West Virginia	852	46.8
1	Mississippi	1,485	50.3	36	Wisconsin	569	10.0
36	Missouri	598	10.0	12	Wyoming	141	25.9

Source: Mayors Against Illegal Guns, "Trace the Guns 2010," available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/> (last accessed February 2013). States in red indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in green indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.

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## Percentage of crime guns with a short 'time to crime' in 2009

In addition to assisting local law enforcement in investigating gun-related crimes by tracing firearms recovered at crime scenes, ATF also investigates illegal gun-trafficking networks as part of its mission to protect the public from gun violence. One key factor in considering whether a crime gun had been trafficked is the amount of time that elapsed between the original sale of the firearm by a licensed dealer and its recovery at a crime scene—a measure known as “time to crime.” While time to crime is not the only factor considered when investigating if a crime gun has been trafficked, ATF considers a time to crime of less than two years to be a “strong indicator” of illegal trafficking.<sup>27</sup>

The table below details the portion of crime guns originating in each state with a time to crime of less than two years. An analysis of ATF tracing data conducted by Mayors Against Illegal Guns revealed that there is a significant discrepancy among the states regarding the number of crime guns originating in the state with a short time to crime. In 17 states, the proportion of short time-to-crime guns was higher than the national average of 22.6 percent.

TABLE 11

Percentage of crime guns with a short “time-to-crime,” 2009<sup>28</sup>

National average: 22.6%

Rank	State	Time-to-crime	Rank	State	Time-to-crime
19	Alabama	22.6%	31	Montana	19.3%
5	Alaska	28.0%	12	Nebraska	26.6%
2	Arizona	30.0%	11	Nevada	26.8%
46	Arkansas	13.3%	3	New Hampshire	29.3%
47	California	12.0%	49	New Jersey	8.2%
17	Colorado	22.9%	16	New Mexico	23.4%
45	Connecticut	14.7%	43	New York	15.2%
28	Delaware	20.6%	17	North Carolina	22.9%
8	Florida	27.3%	27	North Dakota	20.8%
7	Georgia	27.6%	25	Ohio	21.3%
50	Hawaii	5.6%	23	Oklahoma	21.9%
29	Idaho	19.8%	26	Oregon	21.1%
41	Illinois	17.1%	22	Pennsylvania	22.2%
14	Indiana	24.4%	6	Rhode Island	27.7%
37	Iowa	18.0%	21	South Carolina	22.4%
13	Kansas	24.7%	35	South Dakota	18.9%
33	Kentucky	19.1%	36	Tennessee	18.6%
4	Louisiana	28.1%	8	Texas	27.3%
32	Maine	19.2%	40	Utah	17.3%
37	Maryland	18.0%	30	Vermont	19.6%
48	Massachusetts	9.8%	10	Virginia	27.2%
42	Michigan	15.5%	24	Washington	21.5%
34	Minnesota	19.0%	43	West Virginia	15.2%
39	Mississippi	17.4%	15	Wisconsin	23.8%
1	Missouri	40.2%	19	Wyoming	22.6%

Source: Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “Trace the Guns 2010,” available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/> (last accessed February 2013).

States in red indicate the ten states with the highest rates of gun violence. States in green indicate the ten states with the lowest rates of gun violence.





# The link between high levels of gun violence and weak state gun laws

Many factors influence rates of gun violence in any community. One such factor is the relative strength or weakness of the laws enacted in the state to prevent gun-related crimes. In the pages that follow, we compare the aggregate ranking of states based on rates of gun violence and the degree to which states have enacted laws intended to protect the public from this type of violence. As discussed below, this comparison reveals a significant correlation between weaker state gun laws and higher rates of gun violence.

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## A patchwork of state gun laws

While federal law governs some aspects of firearm regulation—particularly licensing and oversight of gun dealers and the disqualification of certain categories of individuals from firearm ownership—much of the decision making regarding gun laws and policies is left to the states. As a result, states take a wide range of approaches to gun regulation, from comprehensive legal frameworks addressing numerous aspects of gun sales, gun carrying, and criminal misuse of firearms to minimal statutory schemes that impose few restrictions on guns.

Each of the 50 states has taken a different approach to regulating firearms—and each has experienced differing results. The following are among the types of laws enacted by some states:

- Regulations regarding the qualifications for permits to carry concealed weapons
- Regulation of gun sales by unlicensed private sellers
- Creating additional categories of dangerous individuals disqualified from gun ownership
- Banning or limiting certain types of guns and ammunition
- Criminalizing known methods of gun trafficking and straw purchasing, which is when a person buys a gun for someone who can't legally purchase one themselves

In November 2012 the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence released an extensive analysis examining the relative strength and weakness of each state's gun laws.<sup>29</sup> It considered 29 policy approaches to addressing gun violence, and states received points for having strong laws designed to prevent gun violence such as requiring background checks for all gun sales, banning assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, and requiring an applicant to demonstrate the need for a concealed weapon before being issued a permit to carry one. States lost points for laws that impede law enforcement or protect the interests of gun manufacturers such as laws providing legal immunity to gun sellers and bans on doctors providing information regarding the risks of firearms to patients. Using this methodology, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence ranked the states based on the strength of their gun laws.

**The 10 states rated as having the weakest gun laws, by rank, are as follows:**

1. South Dakota
2. Arizona
3. Mississippi
4. Vermont
5. Louisiana
6. Montana
7. Wyoming
8. Kentucky
9. Kansas
10. Oklahoma

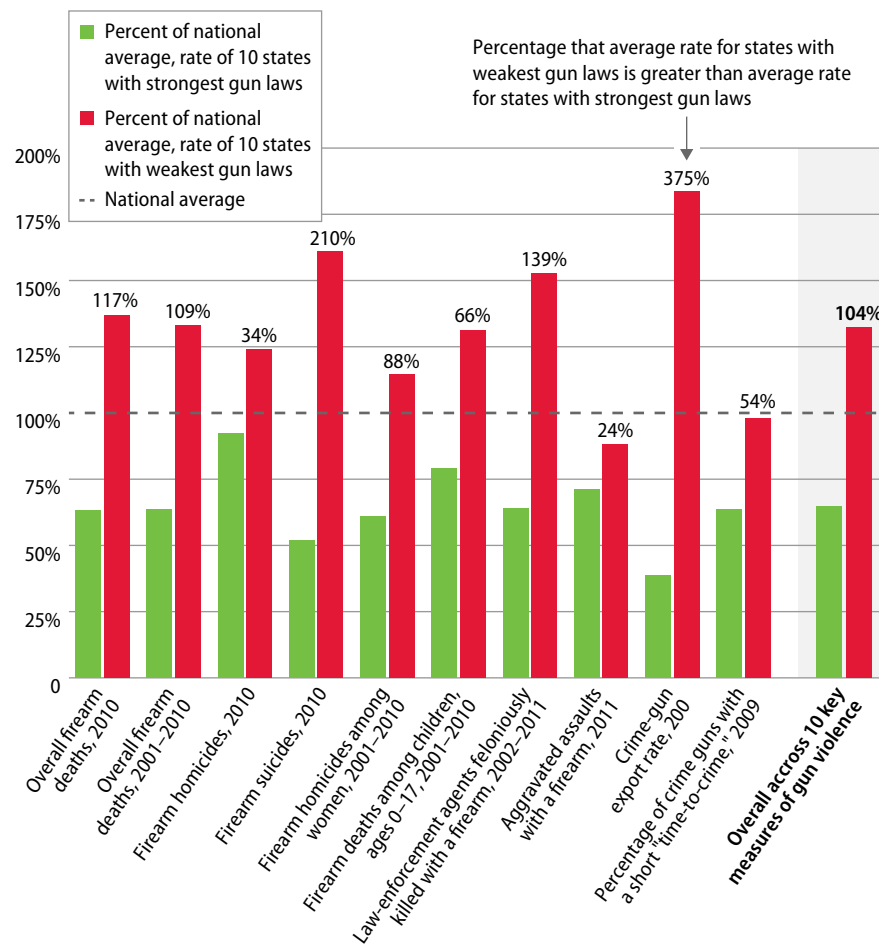
**The 10 states ranked as having the strongest gun laws, by rank, are as follows:**

1. California
2. New Jersey
3. Massachusetts
4. Connecticut
5. Hawaii
6. New York
7. Maryland
8. Illinois
9. Rhode Island
10. Michigan

## Weak laws, bad outcomes

While many factors influence the rate of gun-related violence in any state, comparison of these rankings with the aggregate ranking of states based on gun-violence outcomes reveals a significant correlation between weak state gun laws and increased gun violence in a state. Across the key gun-violence indicators that we analyzed, the 10 states with the weakest gun laws collectively have a level of gun violence that is more than twice as high as the 10 states with the strongest gun laws.

**FIGURE 2**  
**Comparison of average rates of gun-violence outcomes in states with strong and weak gun laws**



Source: Center for American Progress analysis based on data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

Of the 10 states with the weakest gun laws in the country, eight are among the 25 states with the highest rates of gun violence in the country. Of the 10 states with the strongest gun laws, however, nine are among the 25 states with the lowest levels of gun violence, including 6 out of the 10 with the very lowest levels.

**TABLE 12**  
**Overall state rankings of gun-violence outcomes**

Rank	State	Average rank across 10 measures of gun violence	Rank	State	Average rank across 10 measures of gun violence
1	Louisiana	5.0	26	Idaho	25.6
2	Alaska	5.2	27	Pennsylvania	25.7
3	Alabama	8.6	28	Maryland	25.9
4	Arizona	10.0	29	Delaware	26.7
5	Mississippi	10.2	30	South Dakota	28.0
6	South Carolina	11.1	31	Ohio	29.0
7	New Mexico	11.4	32	Oregon	30.3
8	Missouri	13.3	33	Utah	30.6
9	Arkansas	13.4	34	Washington	31.5
10	Georgia	13.9	35	North Dakota	32.1
11	Tennessee	14.1	36	Illinois	32.2
12	Nevada	14.6	37	Vermont	32.2
13	Montana	15.6	38	Wisconsin	32.4
14	Oklahoma	17.4	39	New Hampshire	32.4
15	North Carolina	17.8	40	California	32.9
16	West Virginia	19.0	41	Nebraska	33.3
17	Wyoming	19.6	42	Maine	38.9
18	Florida	19.6	43	Minnesota	39.4
19	Virginia	21.1	44	Rhode Island	40.3
20	Indiana	21.6	45	Iowa	40.9
21	Kentucky	23.0	46	New York	42.1
22	Kansas	23.1	47	New Jersey	42.2
23	Texas	23.9	48	Connecticut	43.1
24	Colorado	25.3	49	Massachusetts	44.7
25	Michigan	25.5	50	Hawaii	45.4

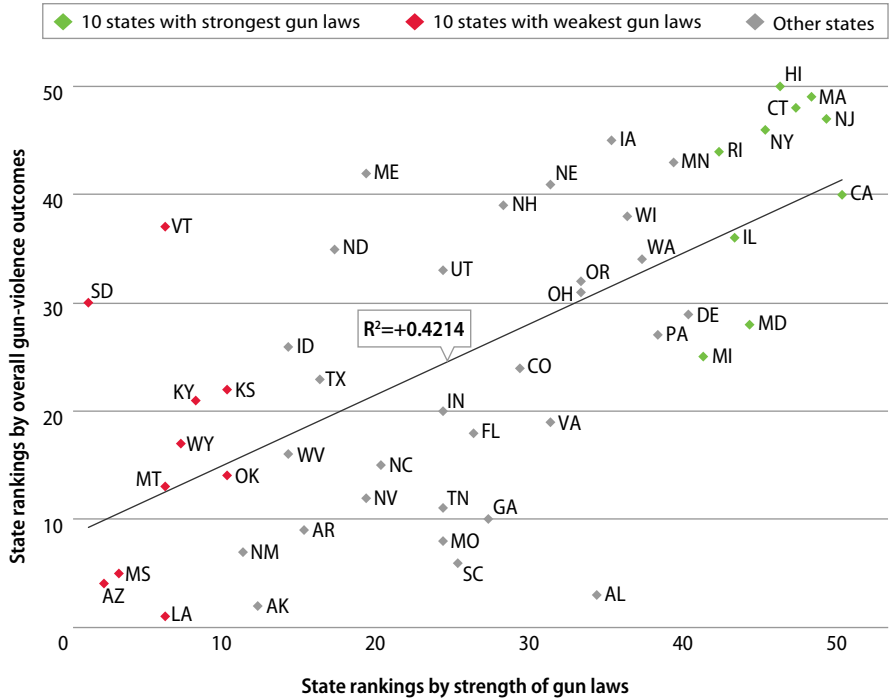
Source: Center for American Progress analysis based on data from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.

States in red indicate the ten states with the weakest gun laws according to LCPGV.

States in green indicate the ten states with the strongest gun laws according to LCPGV.

Finally, by plotting the performance of states across the two variables—strength of gun laws versus gun-violence outcomes—we find a clear correlation between the strength of a state’s gun laws and lower rates of gun violence. The statistical relationship is visually apparent (see Figure 3 below), suggested quantitatively by our model’s coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), which measures the proportion of variation in the dependent variable—gun outcomes—that is statistically explained by variation in the independent variable—strength of gun laws. As Figure 3 below shows, our model produces an  $R^2$  of 0.42, implying a significant correlation between a state’s gun laws and its prevalence of gun violence and suggesting that as a state’s gun laws improve in strength, the state is more likely to have lower rates of gun violence.

**FIGURE 3**  
**Correlation between state gun laws and gun-violence outcomes**



While this analysis demonstrates a correlation between weak laws and bad gun-violence outcomes, a correlation does not necessarily imply causation. And of course, a state's gun laws are but one of many factors that influence the rate of gun violence in a state. Factors such as gun trafficking across state lines, overall crime patterns, and other socioeconomic issues in a state all play a role in gun-violence rates.<sup>30</sup>

The correlation between the relative strength or weakness of a state's gun laws and the rate of various indicators of gun violence in the state, however, should not be overlooked. This report—as others before it<sup>31</sup>—demonstrates a strong link between state gun laws and gun violence. As we continue the conversation about how to address gun violence in our communities, we must consider the role that state gun laws play in preventing this type of violence.

## Case studies

### Strengthening gun laws reduces gun violence

This report focuses on the link between outcomes and laws. There is also some longitudinal research that suggests that changes in gun laws may cause changes in gun violence. Again, while no one factor alone can account for rates of gun violence in any particular state, the experiences of Missouri and Colorado provide powerful evidence that strengthening—or weakening—a state’s gun laws may have a significant impact on public safety.

#### *Missouri*

While federal law requires a background check before a licensed gun dealer can sell a gun, it currently does not require background checks for private sales between individuals. For a number of years, the state of Missouri filled this gap in federal law by requiring background checks for all gun sales, including private sales. In 2007, however, Missouri rolled back its laws by eliminating the requirement that an individual obtain a purchase permit for all handgun purchases, the effect of which was to permit gun sales between private parties without a background check.<sup>32</sup>

This change in the law appears to have had an almost-immediate negative impact on gun violence in the state. An analysis by Mayors Against Illegal Guns shows that in the three years following the repeal of the private-sale background-check requirement, the gun-murder rate in Missouri rose by nearly 25 percent, from an average of 4.6 gun murders for every 100,000 residents each year between 1999 and 2007 to an average of 5.7 gun murders for every 100,000 residents each year from 2008 to 2010.<sup>33</sup>

Weakening the background-check law also made it easier for criminals to buy guns in the state. This resulted in an increase in the number of guns bought in the state that were recovered at crime scenes—from 55 percent of crime guns prior to the repeal to 70 percent of crime guns recovered after the repeal—and a doubling of the number of guns recovered at a crime scene within two years of their original purchase.<sup>34</sup>

Johns Hopkins University researchers studying these data and the effects of the repeal have preliminarily concluded that this change in the law was a primary cause of the increase in gun murders and trafficking indicators.<sup>35</sup>

#### *Colorado*

Following the tragic mass shooting at Columbine High School in 1999, Colorado voters overwhelmingly approved a ballot measure to close the “gun-show loophole” by requiring background checks for firearm sales at gun shows.<sup>36</sup> This legislative measure proved to be an effective means of reducing the prevalence of illegal gun trafficking in Colorado. Following this change in the law, the rate at which crime guns were exported from Colorado dropped dramatically—Colorado’s rank as a crime-gun-export state fell from 17th to 32nd after the requirement for increased background checks went into effect.<sup>37</sup>





# Conclusion

While many factors contribute to the rates of gun violence in any state, our research clearly demonstrates a significant correlation between the strength of a state's gun laws and the prevalence of gun violence in the state. Across the key indicators of gun violence that we analyzed, the 10 states with the weakest gun laws collectively have a level of gun violence that is more than twice as high—104 percent higher—than the 10 states with the strongest gun laws.

There are a number of legislative measures that states—or the federal government—could enact to curb gun violence. While no one law or policy is a panacea for gun violence in any community, the following reforms can have a significant impact on reducing gun crime and increasing public safety:

- **Regulate the secondary market for guns.** While federal law requires background checks for all gun sales by federal firearms licensees, there is currently no federal requirement that background checks be conducted for sales between private parties. This loophole in federal law allows criminals to gain easy access to guns by way of gun shows and other private sales. The experience of Colorado, discussed above, demonstrates that requiring background checks for all gun sales can have a meaningful impact on illegal gun trafficking in a state. The federal government—or, alternatively, states—should enact legislation requiring background checks for all gun sales.
- **Prohibit dangerous people from possessing guns.** Federal law prohibits certain individuals deemed dangerous to public safety from owning firearms, including felons, the mentally ill, and perpetrators of domestic violence who have been convicted of a misdemeanor or who are subject to a restraining order. But there are other categories of dangerous individuals who remain able to buy guns under federal law such as individuals convicted of misdemeanor-level stalking and other violent misdemeanor crimes. Twenty-three states and the District of Columbia have enacted legislation prohibiting some misdemeanants from buying or possessing firearms,<sup>38</sup> and there is evidence that such laws can reduce rates of gun violence.<sup>39</sup>

- **Impose strong penalties on straw purchasers, gun traffickers, and persons illegally carrying guns.** Congress is currently considering strengthening federal laws penalizing straw purchasers and gun traffickers,<sup>40</sup> and a number of states have already acted to impose tough penalties for these crimes.<sup>41</sup> States should adopt such laws to ensure that people who illegally provide guns to criminals face tough penalties and certain prosecution.
- **Restrict access to particularly dangerous weapons.** Although the federal ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines expired in 2004, many states have acted to restrict these weapons and magazines at the state level. Studies show that such laws can effectively reduce criminal access to and the use of guns and accessories that are especially lethal.<sup>42</sup>

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## About the authors

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# Methodology

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## Selecting the 10 measures

The 10 measures of gun violence used in this report have been selected to reflect a broad picture of gun violence in America, with an emphasis on fatal gun violence. All rates were adjusted for population. We started with the three key overall measures of fatal gun violence: total gun deaths, gun homicides, and gun suicides. Total gun deaths over the most recent 10-year period (2001 to 2010) were also included to account for a multiyear trend among the states, as well as to lend further weight to what we felt was the broadest and most important measure of gun violence: overall gun deaths.

To complement these measures, three other measures with a focus on particular groups were included to provide a more detailed story behind fatal gun deaths: homicides among women, which is a key indicator of domestic violence; deaths among children ages 0 to 17, to underscore the greatest gun tragedies of all; and law-enforcement agents feloniously killed with a firearm, a measure of how gun violence puts at risk those who have sworn to protect the public. Because of limited single-year totals for these three measures—particularly for states with small populations—we instead used 10-year averages from the most recent 10-year period to more accurately account for each state’s outcomes.

We also included two measures that are key indicators of illegal gun trafficking: a state’s crime-gun export rate, or the rate at which guns purchased in a state are then used and recovered in crimes in other states; and time to crime, which shows the percentage of crime guns used in crimes less than two years after their original purchase. The final measure among our 10 measures was aggravated assaults with a firearm, the most serious nonfatal gun-violence measure that provides state-level data.

The rankings of the strength of state gun laws are drawn from a report by the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. Their 2012 report uses a 210-point scale based on dozens of categories of gun regulations to determine the strength of a

state's gun laws. More details on the report's methodology can be found at [www.smartgunlaws.org](http://www.smartgunlaws.org). It should be noted that this ranking of states by the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence is not the only way to measure the strength of gun laws. Other organizations have produced similar rankings<sup>43</sup> or singled out several gun-related laws for review.<sup>44</sup> In the view of the authors of this report, however, the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence ranking was among the most comprehensive and well researched, and it relied on the most up-to-date sources.

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### Aggregating the measures

In order to determine an aggregate ranking across the 10 outcomes, we calculated the mean ranking of each state across the 10 measures. For states that did not have data for one or more of the measures, we calculated the mean of only those measures in which they appeared. Under this approach, each of the 10 measures counts equally in the outcome of the aggregated ranking.

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### Correlation is not causation

While this report has demonstrated a correlation between the relative strength or weakness of a state's gun-related laws and the prevalence of various types of gun violence in the state, this alone does not prove a direct causal link between these two factors. As discussed above, numerous factors influence the rates of any type of violence or crime in a state, including gun violence. This report does not conclude that weak gun laws alone cause gun violence or that strong gun laws alone prevent gun violence but rather that the association suggests a potential causal relationship.

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### Other methodological considerations

With respect to crime-gun trace data, it should be noted that, while analysis of trace data is a useful way of gauging interstate trafficking of crime guns, it has some limitations. First, crime-gun trace data does not account for all crime guns, as not all crime guns are recovered by law enforcement and not all crime guns that are recovered are traced. Second, for a variety of reasons, not all crime-gun traces are successful. In 2009 ATF was unable to identify the source state in 39 percent of all trace attempts.<sup>45</sup> Despite these limitations on crime-gun trace data, it remains a valuable source of information regarding interstate trafficking of guns.

Another factor that influences rates of gun violence in a state is the law-enforcement practices in the state and local communities. Vigorous and consistent enforcement of state laws designed to prevent gun violence is crucial to such laws being effective. This report does not attempt to measure how effectively or ineffectively gun laws are enforced or to evaluate enforcement of such laws in any of the rankings discussed herein.

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## Endnotes

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FACT SHEET

# Alaska Gun Violence

*On key measures, Alaska has been hit harder by gun violence than any other state in the country.*

- As of 2010, Alaska had the worst gun death rate in the nation—20.3 deaths per 100,000 people, almost twice the national norm of 10.3 deaths per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- Alaska had more suicides per capita from guns than any other state in 2010, and almost two-and-a-half times the national average.<sup>2</sup>

*Among women and children, Alaska's rates of fatal gun violence remain extraordinarily high.*

- From 2001 through 2010 Alaska had the highest gun homicide rate among children ages 0–17 of any state in the country, at three times greater than the national average.<sup>3</sup>
- The gun homicide rate among women in Alaska from 2001 through 2010 was 12th worst in the country.<sup>4</sup>

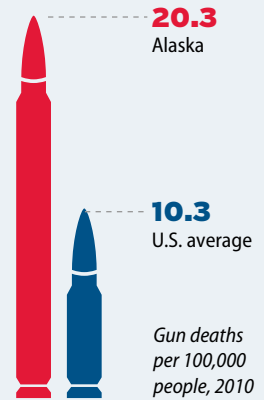
*Those putting themselves in harm's way to protect Alaskans from criminal gun violence are at a higher risk to become victims of it.*

- Law-enforcement officers were feloniously killed by guns at a rate higher than all but two other states between 2002 and 2011.<sup>5</sup>

*Alaska's gun-safety ratings are among the very worst in the nation.*

- Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence put Alaska dead last 2011 state scorecard of gun laws and gave the state 0 out of a possible 100 points for sensible gun-violence prevention measures.<sup>6</sup>
- The Daily Beast listed Alaska as the third “deadliest gun state” in America in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>7</sup>
- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Louisiana an “F” ranking it 39th out of the 50 states.<sup>8</sup>

Alaska's gun-death rate is almost twice the national norm



From 2001 through 2010 Alaska had the highest gun-death rate among children aged 0-17 of any state in the country



Alaska was ranked dead last and received 0 out of 100 on their 2011 state scorecard from the Brady Campaign



In 2009 Alaska exported crime guns at a rate more than two times the national average



Exports per 100,000 inhabitants

*Alaska's distance from other states does not stop it from contributing to illegal gun trafficking and crime in other states.*

- In 2009 Alaska had the fourth-highest rate of guns sold inside the state that went on to be used in crimes in other states—more than double the national average. These “crime-gun exports” are a key marker of illegal gun trafficking.<sup>9</sup>

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## Endnotes

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FACT SHEET

# Alabama Gun Violence

*Alabama has some of the worst rates of gun violence in the nation.*

- As of 2010 Alabama had the third-worst gun murder rate in the nation, 65 percent higher than the national average. Out of every 100,000 people, 5.9 people are murdered by guns.<sup>1</sup>
- Alabama experienced the fourth-most gun deaths per capita of the 50 states in 2010, with 16.4 gun deaths for every 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>
- According to FBI data from 2002 to 2011, only three states had a higher rate than Alabama of law enforcement officers gunned down feloniously.<sup>3</sup>

*Guns take the life of an Alabaman every 11 hours.*

- In 2010, 782 people were killed by guns in Alabama, or one every 11 hours.<sup>4</sup>
- In the most recent 10-year period, 7,665 people were killed by guns in Alabama. That is almost 50 percent more than all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.<sup>5</sup>

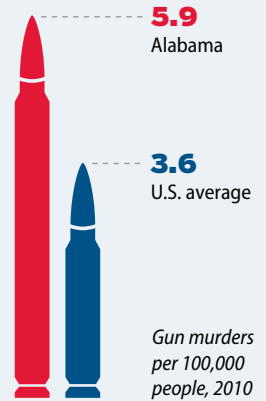
*Women and children are at an especially high risk due to Alabama's rampant gun violence.*

- In 2010 Alabama had the seventh-worst gun-death rate for children ages 0–18. During that year alone, 47 children were killed by guns in the state.<sup>6</sup>
- The gun murder rate for women in Alabama is fifth highest among all 50 states.<sup>7</sup>

*Alabama's gun safety ratings are weak.*

- The Daily Beast listed Arkansas as the seventh “deadliest gun state” in the United States in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>8</sup>
- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gives Alabama a gun safety rating of “D” for having enacted “few” gun-violence prevention laws.<sup>9</sup>

As of 2010 Alabama had the third-worst gun-murder rate in the nation, 65 percent higher than the national average



In Alabama a person is killed by a gun every 11 hours



In 2010, 47 children aged 0-18 were killed with guns in Alabama



In 2009 Alabama exported crime guns at a rate more than two times the national average



*Weak gun laws make Alabama among the worst states for illegal gun trafficking in the country.*

- Alabama has the fifth-highest rate of crime-gun exports—guns sold in Alabama that are later used in crimes in other states—in the country. In this key marker of illegal gun trafficking, as of 2009, the state is more than twice as bad as the national norm.<sup>10</sup>
- Alabama exported 1,561 guns in 2009, more than two-and-a-half times more than the number of guns it imported.<sup>11</sup>

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## Endnotes

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FACT SHEET

# Arkansas Gun Violence

*People are killed by guns in Arkansas at a rate far above the national average.*

- From 2001 through 2010 Arkansas had a gun death rate that was almost 50 percent higher than the national average, as well as the ninth-highest of any state in the country.<sup>1</sup>
- That amounts to 4,291 people killed by guns—almost 25 percent more than the number of U.S. combat deaths in the entire Iraq war.<sup>2</sup>

*Arkansas has some of the worst rates of gun crime in the nation.*

- As of 2010 Arkansas had the 10th-worst gun murder rate in the nation, 25 percent higher than the national average. Out of every 100,000 people, 4.5 people are murdered by guns.<sup>3</sup>
- Arkansas experienced the third-most aggravated assaults with a firearm per capita of the 50 states in 2011. On average, one of these crimes occurred in the state every three-and-a-half hours.<sup>4</sup>

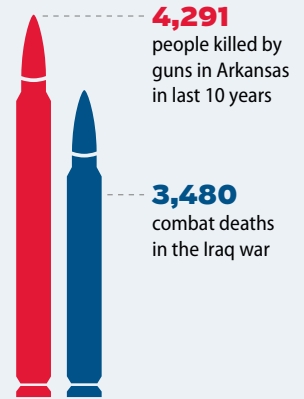
*Women are at an especially high risk due to Arkansas's rampant gun violence.*

- In 2010 Arkansas had the third-worst gun-murder rate for women among all 50 states.<sup>5</sup>
- The state ranks 19th-worst out of the 50 states in a key indicator of domestic violence: the rate of women killed by men in isolated crime.<sup>6</sup>

*Arkansas's gun safety ratings are among the worst in the nation.*

- The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence put Arkansas 39th on their 2011 state rankings, and gave the state 4 out of a possible 100 points for sensible gun-violence prevention measures.<sup>7</sup>
- The Daily Beast listed Arkansas as the fourth “deadliest gun state” in the United States in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>8</sup>

Nearly 25 percent more people were killed by guns in Arkansas from 2001 through 2010 than killed in combat in Iraq



In Arkansas an aggravated assault with a firearm occurs every three-and-a-half hours



Arkansas received 4 out of 100 on their 2011 state scorecard from the Brady Campaign



In 2009 Arkansas exported crime guns at a rate 89 percent higher than the national average



Exports per 100,000 inhabitants

*Weak laws make Arkansas a favorite state for gun traffickers to purchase guns.*

- In 2009 Arkansas’s “crime gun exports”—guns later recovered in crimes in other states that were originally sold in Arkansas—were exported from the state at a rate of 89 percent higher than the national average and 11th-highest among all 50 states.<sup>9</sup>

*Polls show Arkansas residents strongly support common-sense gun-violence prevention measures.*

- Arkansas residents overwhelmingly support universal background checks: 84 percent of residents want “every gun buyer to pass a background check.”<sup>10</sup>

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## Endnotes

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FACT SHEET

# Arizona Gun Violence

*Arizona's gun death rate is 40 percent higher than the national average.*

- Arizona is the 11th-worst state for gun deaths: There were 14.6 gun deaths for every 100,000 people in the state in 2010. That's 40 percent higher than the national average of 10.3 gun deaths for every 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>

*Somebody is murdered by a gun in Arizona almost every day.*

- In Arizona there were 271 gun homicides in 2010.<sup>2</sup>
- From 2001 through 2010, 3,303 people were murdered by guns in Arizona. That number is almost double all U.S. combat deaths in the Afghanistan war.<sup>3</sup>

*Women are more at risk of being killed by a gun in a domestic dispute in Arizona than almost anywhere else in the country.*

- Arizona had the eighth-highest rate of women killed by men, many of which were committed with a firearm.<sup>4</sup> It had the 13th-highest gun homicide rate for women in the country.<sup>5</sup>

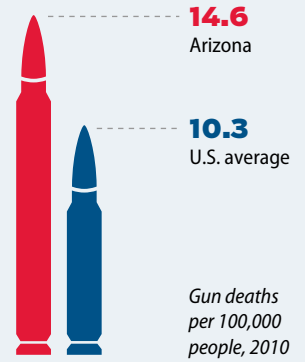
*Arizona has received abysmal gun safety ratings. Weak gun laws put Arizonans at risk.*

- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Arizona an "F," ranking it 49th out of 50 states.<sup>6</sup>
- The Daily Beast listed Arizona as the second "deadliest gun state" in the United States in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>7</sup>

*Weak laws make Arizona a favorite source state for gun traffickers.*

- Arizona had the 13th-highest rate of crime gun exports in 2009, a marker of illegal trafficking. Arizona supplied guns to out-of-state criminals at a rate of 75 percent above than the national average.<sup>8</sup>

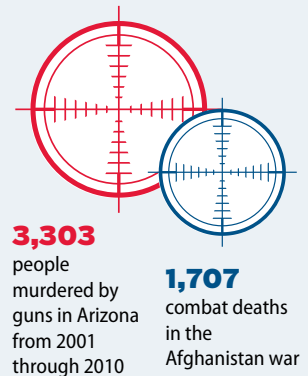
Arizona's gun-death rate is 40 percent higher than the U.S. average



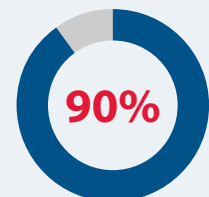
The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Arizona an "F," ranking it 49th out of 50 states



Almost twice as many people were murdered by guns from 2001 through 2010 in Arizona than killed in combat in Afghanistan



Arizonans overwhelmingly support universal background checks



*Polls show Arizonans strongly support common-sense gun-violence prevention measures.*

- Arizonans overwhelmingly support universal background checks: 90 percent of residents want “every gun buyer to pass a background check.”<sup>9</sup>

*Stories help dispel some common myths surrounding gun-violence prevention:*

- **Reality check:** “The only way to stop a *bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.*” In the Tucson shooting where Jared Loughner shot and killed six people, an armed civilian almost shot the bystander who tackled and disarmed Loughner.<sup>10</sup>
- **Background checks and up-to-date mental health databases are critical:** Gracie Verduzco had been involuntarily committed to mental hospitals three times by judges in Arizona and the District of Columbia for having threatened then-President Bill Clinton. Because records were not submitted, Verduzco was able to purchase a .38-caliber revolver at a gun shop that she used shoot and kill one victim and injure four others at a Tucson-area post office.<sup>11</sup>

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## Endnotes

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- 11 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “Fatal Gaps: How Missing Records In The Federal Background Check System Put Guns In The Hands Of Killers” (2011).

FACT SHEET

# Georgia Gun Violence

*Georgia has some of the worst rates of gun crime in the nation.*

- In 2011 Georgia had the third-highest rate of robberies with a firearm in the nation: 72.5 robberies per 100,000 people. That is almost double the national average of 37.2 robberies per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- Georgia had the 13th-highest rate of aggravated assaults with a firearm in 2011,<sup>2</sup> and its gun-murder rate is 27 percent above the national average.<sup>3</sup>

*The number of Georgia residents who have been victims of gun violence is staggering.*

- From 2001 through 2010, 11,591 people were killed by guns in Georgia. By comparison, that is more than two times the number of U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.<sup>4</sup>
- In 2010 there was a gun murder every 20 hours on average in the state.<sup>5</sup>

*Women and children are not immune to these high rates of gun violence.*

- In Georgia 77 children ages 0–18 were killed by guns in 2010 alone.<sup>6</sup>
- Women in Georgia are at an increased risk of domestic violence due to the prevalence of gun violence: In 2010 the state ranked 10th overall in the rate of women killed by men, many of which are committed with a firearm.<sup>7</sup>

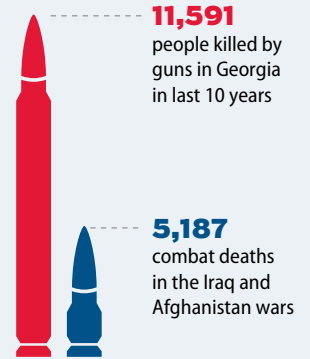
*Georgia has poor gun-safety measures.*

- The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence gave Georgia 8 out of a possible 100 points on its 2011 scorecard.<sup>8</sup>
- The Daily Beast listed Georgia as the 16th “deadliest gun state” in the country because of its combination of permissive gun laws and high rate of gun deaths.<sup>9</sup>

*Weak gun laws make Georgia a favorite state for gun traffickers to purchase guns.*

- Georgia has one of the highest rates of crime-gun exports—guns sold in Georgia that are later used in crimes in other states—in the country. In this key marker of illegal gun trafficking, as of 2009, the state is more than twice as bad as the national norm.<sup>10</sup>

From 2001 through 2010 more than twice as many people were killed by guns in Georgia than killed in combat in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars



In 2010, 77 children aged 0-18 were killed with guns in Georgia

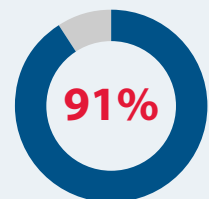


In 2009 Georgia exported crime guns at a rate more than two times the national average



Exports per 100,000 inhabitants

Georgians overwhelmingly support “mandatory background checks for all gun buyers”



*Georgians strongly support common-sense gun violence prevention measures.*

- Georgians overwhelming support universal background checks: In a February 2013 poll, more than 9 in 10 (91 percent) state residents support “mandatory background checks for all gun buyers.”<sup>11</sup>
- Almost three-quarters (74 percent) of those with a gun in their household support universal background checks.<sup>12</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Uniform Crime Reports,” available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/violent-crime/violent-crime> (last accessed March 2013).
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- 7 Violence Policy Center, “When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data,” available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf> (last accessed March 2013). (Data is the number of single victim/single offender homicides where a man killed a woman.)
- 8 Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, “Brady Campaign 2011 Scorecards: 2011 State Rankings,” available at <http://www.bradycampaign.org/stategunlaws/scorecard/GA/> (last accessed March 2013).
- 9 “20 Deadliest Gun States,” The Daily Beast, January 10, 2011, available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/01/11/20-deadliest-gun-states-from-mississippi-to-arizona.html>.
- 10 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “Trace the Guns 2010,” available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/#/states/GA/exports/> (last accessed March 2013).
- 11 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “New Poll Finds 91 Percent in Georgia Favor Mandatory Background Checks for All Gun Buyers,” Press release, March 5, 2013, available at [http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/3a/d/1393/GA\\_MAIG\\_Release\\_030513.pdf](http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/3a/d/1393/GA_MAIG_Release_030513.pdf) (last accessed March 2013).
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FACT SHEET

# Louisiana Gun Violence

*On key measures, Louisiana has been hit harder by gun violence than any other state in the country.*

- As of 2010, Louisiana had the worst gun-murder rate in the nation—9.5 murders per 100,000 people, more than two-and-a-half times higher than the national average of 3.6 murders per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- From 2001 through 2010 Louisiana had more deaths per capita from guns than any other state, and almost two times the national norm for that period.<sup>2</sup>

*The rates at which individuals are fatally injured by guns in the state are staggering.*

- More than one person is murdered with a gun in Louisiana every day. From 2001 through 2010, 4,519 people were murdered by guns in the state—more than 1,000 more than all U.S. combat deaths during the Iraq war.<sup>3</sup>
- Guns take the life of a Louisianan every 10 hours.<sup>4</sup>

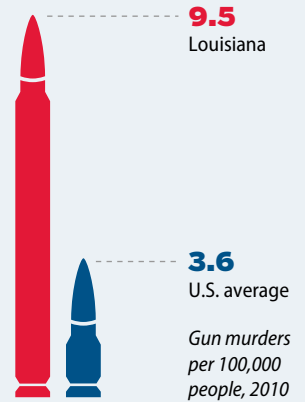
*Among women and children, Louisiana's extraordinarily high rates of gun murder remain.*

- Louisiana has the highest gun-homicide rate among children ages 0–19 of any state in the country, at two-and-a-half times greater than the national average. In 2010, 67 children in Louisiana were murdered with guns.<sup>5</sup>
- The gun-homicide rate among women in Louisiana is the second-worst rate in the country.<sup>6</sup> Women are at an increased risk of domestic violence, too: In 2010 Louisiana had the fourth-highest rate of women being killed by men, two-thirds of which occurred with a firearm.<sup>7</sup>

*Unsurprisingly, Louisiana's gun-safety ratings are among the worst in the nation.*

- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Arkansas an “F,” ranking it 45th out of 50 states.<sup>8</sup>
- The Daily Beast listed Louisiana as the fifth “deadliest gun state” in America in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>9</sup>

Louisiana's gun-murder rate is more than two-and-a-half times higher than the U.S. average



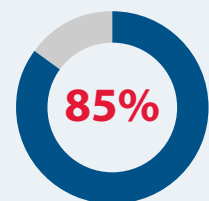
In Louisiana a person is killed by a gun every 10 hours



Louisiana has the highest gun-homicide rate among children aged 0-19 of any state



Louisianans overwhelmingly “want every gun buyer to pass a criminal background check”



*Louisiana not only has rampant gun violence within its borders, but it contributes to crime in other states as well.*

- In 2009 Louisiana had the 15th-highest rate of guns sold in the state that went on to be used in crimes in other states. These “crime-gun exports” are a key marker of illegal gun trafficking.<sup>10</sup>
- Louisiana exported crime guns to other states at a rate 68 percent higher than the national average, and exported more crime guns than it imported.<sup>11</sup>

*Polls show that Louisianans strongly favor common-sense gun-violence prevention measures.*

- Louisianans support universal background checks: 85 percent of residents “want every gun buyer to pass a criminal background check.”<sup>12</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fatal Injury Data,” available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 Ibid. (War casualties statistic is from the U.S. Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>. The number used is from the start of the war to March 1, 2013.)
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- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Violence Policy Center, “When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data,” available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf> (last accessed March 2013). (Data is the number of single victim/single offender homicides where a man killed a woman.)
- 8 Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, “Gun Laws Matter 2012: Understanding the Link Between Weak Laws and Gun Violence,” available at <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws-matter-2012-understanding-the-link-between-weak-laws-and-gun-violence/> (last accessed March 2013).
- 9 “20 Deadliest Gun States,” The Daily Beast, January 10, 2011, available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/01/11/20-deadliest-gun-states-from-mississippi-to-arizona.html> (last accessed March 2013).
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FACT SHEET

# Missouri Gun Violence

*Missouri has one of the worst rates of gun crime in the nation.*

- In 2010, Missouri had the fourth-highest rate of homicides with a firearm in the nation: 5.6 homicides per 100,000 people. That is 56 percent above the national average of 3.6 firearm homicides per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- Missouri had the fifth-highest rate of aggravated assaults with a firearm in 2011. With 5,290 cases that year alone, there was an aggravated assault with a firearm in the state every one-and-a-half hours.<sup>2</sup>

*The number of Missouri residents who have been victims of gun violence is staggering.*

- From 2001 through 2010, 7,525 people were killed by guns in Missouri. That is almost 50 percent more than the number of U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2010 there were 335 gun murders in the state, or one almost every day.<sup>4</sup>

*Such high rates of gun violence put women and children more at risk.*

- Missouri had the sixth-highest rate of gun deaths among children ages 0–18 in 2010. Tragically, 62 children were killed by guns in 2010 alone.<sup>5</sup>
- As of 2010, Missouri’s rate of females murdered by guns was eighth worst in the nation.<sup>6</sup>

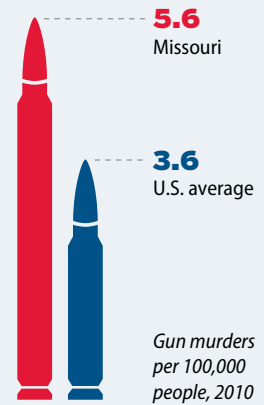
*Missouri has poor gun-safety measures.*

- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gives Missouri a gun safety rating of “F” for having enacted “few” gun-violence prevention laws.<sup>7</sup>
- The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence gave Missouri 4 out of a possible 100 points on its 2011 scorecard, and ranked the state 39th out of 50 for the strength of its gun laws.<sup>8</sup>

*Weak gun laws make Missouri a favorite state for gun traffickers to purchase guns.*

- In 2009 Missouri sold almost 600 guns that went on to be used in crimes in other states.<sup>9</sup>

As of 2010 Missouri had the fourth-worst gun-murder rate in the nation, 56 percent higher than the national average



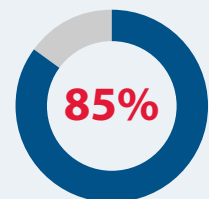
In Missouri a person is killed by a gun every 26 hours



In 2010, 62 children aged 0-18 were killed with guns in Missouri



Missourians overwhelmingly support “mandatory background checks for all gun buyers”



*Missourians strongly support common-sense gun-violence prevention measures.*

- Missourians overwhelmingly support universal background checks: In a February 2013 poll, 85 percent of state residents said they support “mandatory background checks for all gun buyers.”<sup>10</sup>

*Universal background checks matter.*

- Universal background checks keep guns out of the hands of criminals. A study by the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research found that after Missouri repealed its “permit-to-purchase” law in 2007—a law that required background checks for all gun sales—the homicide rate in the state increased by 25 percent in the following three-year period. This occurred as the national homicide rate decreased by 10 percent. What’s more, the study discovered an extraordinary increase in “young”—meaning recently purchased—guns used in the crimes, suggesting that the law’s repeal made it much easier for criminals to purchase new guns.<sup>11</sup>

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## Endnotes

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- 2 Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Uniform Crime Reports,” available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/violent-crime/violent-crime> (last accessed March 2013).
- 3 Centers for Disease Control. (War casualties statistic is from the U.S. Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>. The number used is from the start of the war to March 4, 2013.)
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- 5 Ibid.
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- 8 Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, “Brady Campaign 2011 Scorecards: 2011 State Rankings,” available at <http://www.bradycampaign.org/stategunlaws/scorecard/MO/> (last accessed March 2013).
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- 10 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “New Poll Finds 85 Percent in Missouri Favor Mandatory Background Checks for All Gun Buyers,” Press release, March 5, 2013, available at [http://iibcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/b3/b/1399/MO\\_MAIG\\_Release\\_030513.pdf](http://iibcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/b3/b/1399/MO_MAIG_Release_030513.pdf).
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FACT SHEET

# Mississippi Gun Violence

*Mississippi has one of the worst rates of gun violence in the nation.*

- As of 2010 Mississippi had the second-worst gun-murder rate in the nation, 92 percent higher than the national average. Out of every 100,000 people, 6.9 people in Mississippi are murdered by guns each year.<sup>1</sup>
- From 2001 through 2010 Mississippi experienced the third-most gun deaths per capita of the 50 states, with 17 annual gun deaths for every 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

*Guns take the life of a Mississippian every 18 hours.*

- In 2010, 475 people were killed by guns in Mississippi, or one roughly every 18 hours.<sup>3</sup>
- In the most recent 10-year period (from 2001 through 2010), 4,937 people were killed by guns in Mississippi. That is 42 percent more than all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq war.<sup>4</sup>

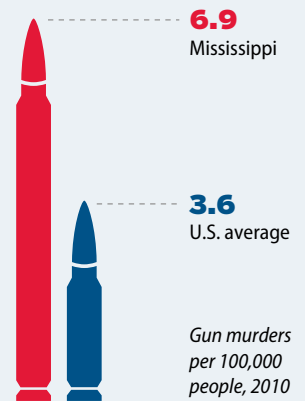
*Women and children are at an especially high risk due to Mississippi's rampant gun violence.*

- In 2010 Mississippi had the worst rate of gun murders of women among all 50 states. The state was more than two-and-a-half times worse than the national average.<sup>5</sup>
- In 2010 Mississippi had the fifth-worst gun-death rate for children ages 0–18. During that year alone, 62 children were killed by guns in the state.<sup>6</sup>

*Unsurprisingly, Mississippi's gun-safety ratings are among the worst in the nation.*

- The Daily Beast listed Mississippi as the “deadliest gun state” in America in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and high rate of gun deaths.<sup>7</sup>
- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Mississippi an “F” rating for the strength of its gun laws, ranking it 48th out of 50 states.<sup>8</sup>

As of 2010 Mississippi had the second-worst gun-murder rate in the nation, 92 percent higher than the national average



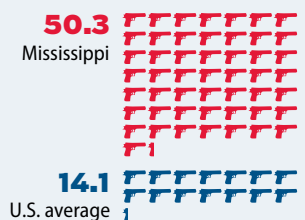
Mississippi has the worst rate of gun murders of women among all 50 states



The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Mississippi an “F” for the strength of its gun laws



In 2009 Mississippi had the highest crime-gun export rate in the country—more than three times the national average



Exports per 100,000 inhabitants

*With such weak gun laws, Mississippi is arguably the single-worst state in the country for illegal gun trafficking.*

- Mississippi has the highest rate of crime-gun exports—guns sold in Mississippi that are later used in crimes in other states—in the country. In this key marker of illegal gun trafficking, as of 2009, the state exports 50.3 guns annually per 100,000 inhabitants, an astounding three-and-a-half times more than the national average of 14.1 guns per 100,000 inhabitants.<sup>9</sup>
- Mississippi exported 1,485 guns in 2009, more than five times more than the number of guns it imported.<sup>10</sup>

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## Endnotes

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "Fatal Injury Data," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed March 2013).

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid. (War casualties statistic from the U.S. Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>. The number used is from the start of the war to March 1, 2013.)

5 Ibid.

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7 "20 Deadliest Gun States," The Daily Beast, January 10, 2011, available at <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2011/01/11/20-deadliest-gun-states-from-mississippi-to-arizona.html>.

8 Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Gun Laws Matter 2012: Understanding the Link Between Weak Laws and Gun Violence," available at <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws-matter-2012-understanding-the-link-between-weak-laws-and-gun-violence/> (last accessed March 2013).

9 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, "Trace the Guns 2010," available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/#/states/MS/exports/> (last accessed March 2013).

10 Ibid.

FACT SHEET

# New Mexico Gun Violence

*New Mexico's gun-death rate is 40 percent higher than the national average.*

- New Mexico is the 10th-worst state for gun deaths: There were 14.6 gun deaths for every 100,000 people in the state in 2010. That's 40 percent higher than the national average of 10.3 gun deaths for every 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- From 2001 through 2010, 2,932 people were killed by guns in New Mexico. That is more than 70 percent more than the number of U.S. combat deaths in the Afghanistan war.<sup>2</sup>

*Women and children are at a higher risk of becoming homicide victims in New Mexico than in almost all other states.*

- Women are at an increased risk of domestic violence: In 2010 New Mexico had the seventh-highest rate of women being killed by men—the majority of which occur with a firearm.<sup>3</sup>
- Children ages 0–19 are killed by guns at a rate almost 60 percent higher than the national average and are murdered by guns at almost 40 percent above the national average. In 2010 New Mexico ranked sixth and seventh in these measures, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

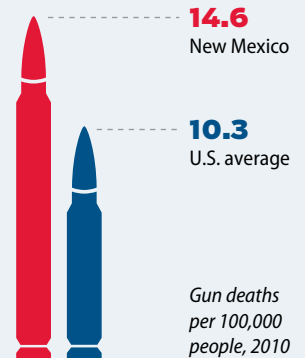
*New Mexico's gun-safety ratings are among the worst in the nation.*

- The Daily Beast listed New Mexico as the sixth “deadliest gun state” in the United States in 2011 because of its combination of permissive gun laws and a high rate of gun deaths.<sup>5</sup>
- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave New Mexico an “F” ranking it 40th out of 50 states for having enacted “few” gun-violence prevention laws.<sup>6</sup>

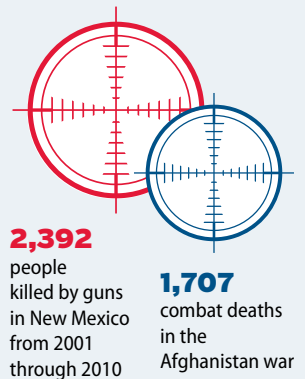
*Weak laws make New Mexico a favorite state for gun traffickers to purchase guns.*

- In 2009 New Mexico's “crime-gun exports”—guns later recovered in crimes in other states that were originally sold in New Mexico—were exported from the state at a rate of 54 percent above the national average. This is a key marker of gun trafficking.<sup>7</sup>

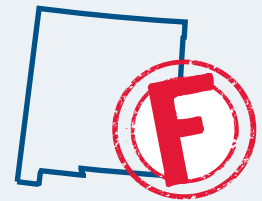
New Mexico's gun-death rate is 40 percent higher than the U.S. average



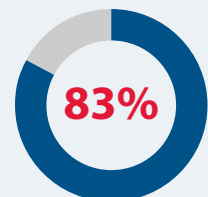
From 2001 through 2010 the number of people killed by guns in New Mexico was more than 70 percent higher than the number of U.S. combat deaths in Afghanistan



The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave New Mexico an “F” for the strength of its gun laws



New Mexicans overwhelmingly want “every gun buyer to pass a background check”



*Polls show New Mexico residents strongly support common-sense gun-violence prevention measures.*

- New Mexico residents overwhelmingly support universal background checks: 83 percent of residents want “every gun buyer to pass a background check.”<sup>8</sup>

*It’s important to close the gun-show loophole.*

- A study by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, or ATF, found that in one year 10,000 trafficked guns were involved in gun shows—about 30 percent of all criminal trafficking that year.<sup>9</sup>
- New Mexico’s neighboring state of Colorado, which passed a law to close the gun show loophole in 2000 after the Columbine High School shooting, dropped 10 places in the crime-gun export rate in just the first year after the law passed, from 17th to 27th in the country. It now sits even lower at 32nd overall for crime guns exported per capita.<sup>10</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fatal Injury Data,” available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).
- 2 Ibid. (War casualties statistic from the U.S. Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>. The number used is from the start of the war to March 1, 2013.)
- 3 Violence Policy Center, “When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data,” available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf> (last accessed February 2013). (Data is the number of single victim/single offender homicides where a man killed a woman.)
- 4 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
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- 7 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “Trace the Guns 2010,” available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/#/states/NM/exports/> (last accessed March 2013).
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- 10 “Close Federal Gun Loophole,” *The Denver Post*, April 20, 2010, available at [http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci\\_14916364](http://www.denverpost.com/opinion/ci_14916364).

FACT SHEET

# South Carolina Gun Violence

*South Carolina's rates of gun crime are some of the worst in the nation.*

- South Carolina is the seventh-deadliest state for gun homicide: There were 5 gun murders for every 100,000 people in the state in 2010, 39 percent higher than the national average of 3.6 gun murders per 100,000 people.<sup>1</sup>
- At two-and-a-half times worse than the national average, South Carolina has the second-worst rate of aggravated assaults with a firearm in the country.<sup>2</sup>

*The number of South Carolina residents who have been victims of gun violence is staggering.*

- From 2001 through 2010 there were 5,991 people killed by guns in South Carolina. That's 15 percent more than all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars combined.<sup>3</sup>
- As of 2010, somebody is killed with a gun every 14 hours in the state,<sup>4</sup> and an aggravated assault with a firearm occurs every hour and a half.<sup>5</sup>

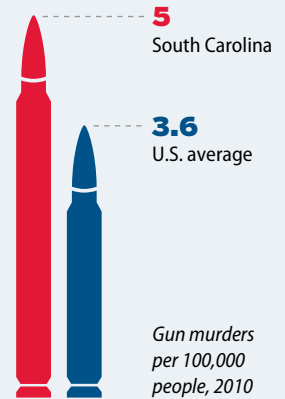
*Law-enforcement officers are more at risk in South Carolina than almost anywhere else.*

- The rate of law-enforcement officers feloniously killed with guns in the state is fourth worst in the nation. Between 2002 and 2011, 16 law-enforcement agents were murdered by guns.<sup>6</sup>

*Women are more in danger of fatal domestic violence because of the prevalence of gun violence.*

- In the most recent 10-year period (from 2001 through 2010), South Carolina ranked fourth worst in the nation on the rate of women murdered by guns, and 64 percent above the national norm.<sup>7</sup>
- On a narrower indicator of domestic violence, the rate of women murdered by men, South Carolina, as of 2010, ranks second worst. More than half of these crimes are committed with guns.<sup>8</sup>

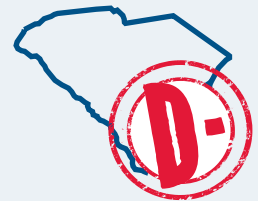
As of 2010 South Carolina had the seventh-worst gun-murder rate in the nation, 39 percent higher than the national average



In South Carolina a person is killed by a gun every 14 hours



The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave South Carolina a "D-"



In 2009 South Carolina exported crime guns at a rate more than two times the national average



Exports per 100,000 inhabitants

*South Carolina has poor gun-safety ratings.*

- The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gives South Carolina a “D-” for having enacted “few” gun-safety measures.<sup>9</sup>
- The Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence gives South Carolina 8 out of 100 possible points on their 2011 state rankings.<sup>10</sup>

*Weak laws make South Carolina a favorite state for illegal gun traffickers to purchase guns.*

- South Carolina has the sixth-highest rate in the country of crime gun exports—guns sold in South Carolina that are later used in crimes in other states. In this key marker of illegal gun trafficking, as of 2009, the state is more than twice as bad as the national norm.<sup>11</sup>

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## Endnotes

- 1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Fatal Injury Data,” available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed March 2013).
- 2 Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Uniform Crime Reports,” available at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011/violent-crime/violent-crime> (last accessed March 2013).
- 3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (War casualties statistic is from the U.S. Department of Defense, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>. The number used is from the start of the war to March 4, 2013.)
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 FBI, “Uniform Crime Reports.”
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- 8 Violence Policy Center, “When Men Murder Women: An Analysis of 2010 Homicide Data,” available at <http://www.vpc.org/studies/wmmw2012.pdf> (last accessed March 2013). (Data is the number of single victim/single offender homicides where a man killed a woman.)
- 9 Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, “Gun Laws Matter 2012: Understanding the Link Between Weak Laws and Gun Violence,” available at <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws-matter-2012-understanding-the-link-between-weak-laws-and-gun-violence/> (last accessed March 2013).
- 10 Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, “Brady Campaign 2011 Scorecards: 2011 State Rankings,” available at <http://www.bradycampaign.org/stategunlaws/scorecard/SC/> (last accessed February 2013).
- 11 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, “Trace the Guns 2010,” available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/#/states/SC/exports/> (last accessed March 2013).



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