

Alabama Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Alabama has no laws specifically aimed at restricting access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons, including convicted domestic violence misdemeanants, stalkers, and subjects of domestic violence protective orders.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Alabama is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 7,713 people were killed with guns in Alabama. That is more than the total number of U.S. combat deaths in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Alabama every 11 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 785 gun deaths in the state.²

Domestic violence fatalities are prevalent in Alabama, and they are frequently a result of gun crime.

- According to the FBI, there were 267 intimate partner homicides in Alabama from 2003 to 2012, which includes both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—65.5 percent—were killed with guns.³

Women are far more at risk to be victims of fatal domestic violence, and guns play a significant role in that violence.

- Of the 551 female homicide victims in Alabama from 2003 to 2012, 177 were the result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 561 women in Alabama from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Alabama laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

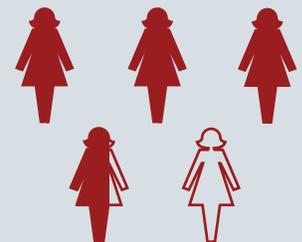
Alabama law has significant loopholes that can let some abusers have easy access to guns.

- Alabama does not require the surrender of firearms owned by persons who have become prohibited from possessing firearms under federal domestic violence laws.
- State law does not prohibit people convicted of stalking misdemeanors from purchasing or possessing firearms.

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From 2003 to 2012, 74 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Alabama were killed with a gun.



- Alabama does not require background checks for all gun buyers, including those shopping at gun shows or over the Internet.
- Alabama has no law prohibiting domestic violence misdemeanants or subjects of domestic violence protective orders from purchasing or possessing firearms, unlike federal law.

Case study

We need universal background checks and other important measures to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous abusers.

- Brian Epps shot and killed his pregnant wife, Rashon Epps, the day before her 30th birthday on June 28, 2014 in Hoover, Alabama. Brian previously served time in jail for shooting his father in 2005 and pleaded guilty to multiple robbery counts in 2006. Friends of the victim reported that Brian had been abusive and that Rashon was trying to leave the marriage. The evening that Rashon was shot, neighbors reported hearing arguments coming from their apartment; Rashon called the police at 12:32 a.m., but by the time police arrived, she was already dead.⁷

Where does Alabama stand on laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers?



Misdemeanant domestic abusers prohibited?



Individuals subject to a domestic violence protective order prohibited?



Stalkers prohibited?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

Endnotes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed August 2014); U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Casualty Status (2014), available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>.
2. Ibid.
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003–2012).
4. Ibid.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed August 2014).
6. Carol Robinson, "Hoover man charged with fatally shooting pregnant wife in head captured in Bessemer," AL.com, July 1, 2014, available at http://www.al.com/news/birmingham/index.ssf/2014/07/hoover_man_charged_with_shooti.html; Fox 6 WBRC, "Hoover police searching for man charged with killing his pregnant wife," June 28, 2014, available at <http://www.myfoxal.com/story/25895412/hoover-police-searching-for-a-man-charged-with-killing-his-pregnant-wife>.