

# Ohio Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Ohio has no laws specifically aimed at restricting access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much more 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.

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## State gun and domestic violence overview

*Ohio is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.*

- From 2002 to 2011, 10,855 people were killed with guns in Ohio. That is more than twice the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.<sup>1</sup>
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Ohio every seven hours: In 2011 alone, there were 1,227 gun deaths in the state.<sup>2</sup>

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

- According to the FBI, there were 383 domestic violence homicides in Ohio from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, almost one-half of the victims—49.1 percent—were killed with guns.<sup>3</sup>

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

- Of the 1,008 female homicide victims in Ohio from 2003 to 2012, 294 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.<sup>4</sup>
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 624 women in Ohio from 2002 to 2011.<sup>5</sup>

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## Overview of Ohio laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

*Ohio has no laws to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.*

- Ohio does not ban gun possession by people who have been convicted of domestic violence misdemeanors or stalking misdemeanors.
- Ohio does not ban gun possession by persons subject to domestic violence protective orders.
- Ohio does not require a background check for all gun buyers, including those at gun shows or over the Internet.

**From 2002 to 2011, 10,855 people were killed with guns in Ohio. That is more than twice the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.**



**From 2003 to 2012, 53.1 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Ohio were killed with a gun.**



- Ohio has no law requiring the surrender of firearms from persons who have become prohibited from possessing them.
- Ohio law does not extend domestic violence protective orders to dating partners, whether cohabitating or non-cohabitating.<sup>6</sup>

## Support for doing more to protect women from abusers and stalkers in Ohio

*Most Ohioans strongly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people.*

- In a March 2013 poll conducted by Quinnipiac University, 90 percent of Ohio voters, including 86 percent of gun-owning households, support requiring background checks on all gun sales.<sup>7</sup>

## Case study

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

- In 2010, Robert McLaughlin began harassing and stalking Stacey Sutera, a woman he had known for a number of years but who did not share his romantic feelings. McLaughlin keyed her car and put nails in her tires, created websites and sent emails intended to tarnish Sutera's reputation, and sent business cards to various locations containing Sutera's name and contact information and stating that she was available to perform sex acts. Sutera sought help from the police, and McLaughlin pleaded guilty to menacing by stalking and other charges and was sentenced to six months in jail in December 2010. In November 2011, McLaughlin was convicted of additional charges relating to his stalking of Sutera, sentenced to probation, and ordered by the court to have no contact with Sutera. On February 8, 2012, McLaughlin shot and killed Sutera as she walked to her car outside her home. McLaughlin later killed himself.<sup>8</sup>

## Where does Ohio 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?

**A majority of Ohioans support background checks on all gun sales.**



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## 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)."
6. See Ohio Rev. Code Ann. 2919.25(F)(1).
7. Quinnipiac University, "Ohio Voters Turn Thumbs Down On Gov's Tax Plan, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds; 90 Percent Support Gun Show Background Checks," Press release, March 1, 2013, available at <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/news-and-events/quinnipiac-university-poll/ohio/release-detail?ReleaseID=1858>.
8. Kevin Freeman, "Suspect in Teacher's Murder was Convicted Stalker," Fox 8 Cleveland, February 8, 2012, available at <http://fox8.com/2012/02/08/report-woman-found-dead-in-parking-lot-apb-issued-for-painesville-man/>.