

Arkansas Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Arkansas has virtually no restrictions on firearms access by domestic abusers. Much more can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons in Arkansas.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Arkansas is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 4,341 people were killed with guns in Arkansas. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq War.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Arkansas every 19 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 462 gun deaths in the state.²

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

- According to the FBI, there were 154 domestic violence homicides in Arkansas from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—54.5 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.

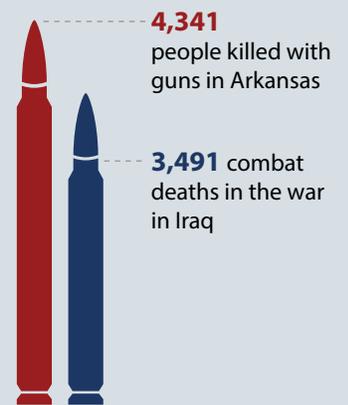
- Of the 358 female homicide victims in Arkansas from 2003 to 2012, 106 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 260 women in Arkansas from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Arkansas laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

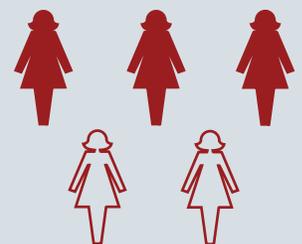
Arkansas has few laws to prevent domestic abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Arkansas requires courts to notify a person who has been convicted of a domestic violence misdemeanor that it is unlawful for the person to possess firearms or ammunition under federal law.⁶
- Arkansas requires that orders of protection contain notification that federal law prohibits anyone subject to an order of protection or convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence to possess firearms or ammunition.⁷

From 2002 to 2011, 4,341 people were killed with guns in Arkansas. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq war.



From 2003 to 2012, 59.4 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Arkansas were killed with a gun.



Arkansas can do more to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Arkansas does not prohibit individuals convicted of domestic violence or stalking misdemeanors from possessing firearms or ammunition.
- Arkansas does not prohibit individuals subject to domestic violence protective orders from possessing firearms or ammunition.
- Arkansas does not require the surrender of firearms or ammunition by domestic abusers who are prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under federal law.
- Arkansas does not explicitly authorize or require the removal of firearms or ammunition at the scene of a domestic violence incident.
- Arkansas does not require background checks prior to firearms sales by private sellers, including Internet sales and sales at gun shows.

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

Many Arkansas voters strongly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people.

- In a May 2013 poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 60 percent of Arkansas voters—including 67 percent of women—support expanded background checks.⁸

Case study

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

- Laura Acevez and Victor Acuna-Sanchez dated for a while, but their relationship was characterized by physical violence, threats, and verbal abuse. Acevez ended the relationship, but the harassment continued, causing Acevez to file criminal complaints and to obtain a temporary restraining order against Acuna-Sanchez in March 2012. Acevez and her mother advised law enforcement that Acuna-Sanchez owned guns, but no action was taken to confiscate them. He continued to harass Acevez and was arrested for violating the restraining order in early December 2012. In Eureka Springs, Arkansas, on December 31, 2012, Acuna-Sanchez fatally shot Acevez in the head as their infant son sat unharmed nearby. Acuna-Sanchez was later apprehended by police and was charged with murder.⁹

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



Stalkers prohibited?



Misdemeanant domestic abusers prohibited?



Individuals subject to a domestic violence protective order prohibited?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

A majority of Arkansans support expanded background checks.



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™."
6. Ark. Code Ann. § 5-26-313.
7. Ark. Code Ann. § 9-15-207(b)(3).
8. Public Policy Polling, "Red states strongly support background checks," Press release, May 29, 2013, available at <http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/main/2013/05/red-states-strongly-support-background-checks.html>.
9. Melissa Jeltsen, "Laura Acevez, Domestic Abuse Victim, Failed By Lax Gun Laws," The Huffington Post, February 5, 2013, available at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/02/05/domestic-abuse-guns_n_2625377.html; T.S. Strickland, "Berryville teen held in shooting death had history of violence against slain woman, court records show," Carroll County News, January 4, 2013, available at <http://www.carrollconews.com/story/1928031.html>; KSPR-33, "Acuna-Sanchez pleads not guilty to murder charge," February 7, 2013, available at http://articles.kspr.com/2013-02-07/capital-murder_36979015.