

Maine Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Maine has weak restrictions on access to firearms by domestic abusers. Few abusers are barred from possessing firearms under state law; more can be done to prevent access to guns by convicted stalkers and domestic violence misdemeanants.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Maine is home to a significant amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 1,092 people were killed with guns in Maine.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Maine every three days: in 2011 alone, there were 136 deaths from gun violence in the state.²

Domestic violence fatalities are too common in Maine, and they are often linked to gun crime.

- According to the Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, from 2012 to 2013, there were 23 domestic homicides in Maine—46 percent of all homicides in the state.³
- Firearms were the most common weapon used in the 23 domestic violence homicides the panel reviewed for its 2014 report. Fifty-seven percent of the domestic violence homicide cases reviewed involved a firearm.⁴

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

- Between 2003 and 2012, 44 percent of female homicide victims in Maine were killed in an intimate partner violence incident, and 66 percent of all intimate-partner-related homicides of women in the state were committed with a gun.⁵
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 42 women in Maine from 2002 to 2011.⁶

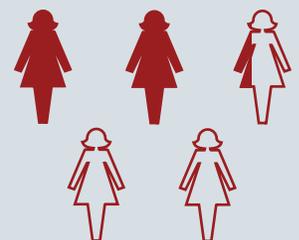
Overview of Maine laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

Maine law currently prevents some domestic abusers from possessing guns.

- In Maine, protective orders that prohibit guns may be available to people abused by family or household members or current or former dating partners.⁷
- State law requires a court issuing a protective order prohibiting guns to require the abuser to surrender guns already in his possession in certain circumstances.⁸

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Maine state law has many loopholes that can let some abusers still have easy access to guns.

- Maine does not require the surrender of firearms by all domestic abusers who have become prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law.
- Maine does not prohibit domestic violence misdemeanants from possessing guns, unlike federal law.
- Maine does not bar convicted misdemeanor stalkers from gun possession.
- Maine does not require a background checks for any gun buyers, including those at gun shows or over the Internet.

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

Mainers overwhelmingly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals and other dangerous people.

- In an April 2013 Pan Atlantic SMS Group poll, 88 percent of Mainers favored subjecting private gun sales and sales at gun shows to background checks.⁹

Case study

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

- In July 2012, Lawrence Beaute used a 9mm handgun to kill his girlfriend, Katherine Hunt, as she was attempting to break up with him. Beaute had been living with Hunt since 2011, when he moved to Maine from Florida. Beaute committed suicide after he fatally shot Hunt.¹⁰
- On November 30, 2013, Patrick Milliner used a Glock pistol he had purchased the night before to murder his ex-boyfriend, Matthew Rairdon at his apartment before killing himself.¹¹

Where does Maine 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 Mainers support background checks 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).
2. Ibid.
3. Maine Domestic Abuse Homicide Review Panel, "Building Bridges Toward Safety and Accountability" (2014), available at <http://www.maine.gov/ag/dynld/documents/10th%20Biennial%20Report%20-FINAL%204-23-14.pdf>.
4. Ibid.
5. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003–2012).
6. 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).
7. Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 15, § 393(1)(D); Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 19-A, §§ 4002, 4006, 4007.
8. Me. Rev. Stat. tit. 19-A, § 4007.
9. Tom Bell, "Poll finds support for guns—as well as limits—in Maine," Portland Press Herald, January 13, 2013, available at http://www.pressherald.com/2013/01/13/poll-finds-support-for-guns-as-well-as-limits-in-maine_2013-01-13/.
10. Dawn Gagnon, "No domestic violence calls before Hampden murder-suicide, police say," The Bangor Daily News, July 30, 2012, available at <http://bangordailynews.com/2012/07/30/news/bangor/no-domestic-violence-calls-before-hampden-murder-suicide-police-say/>.
11. Joe Lawlor, "Details emerge about victim in Westbrook murder-suicide," Portland Press Herald, December 2, 2013, available at http://www.pressherald.com/2013/12/02/details_emerge_about_victim_in_westbrook_murder-suicide_/.