

# Mississippi Domestic Violence and Guns

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Mississippi 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.

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## State gun and domestic violence overview

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

- From 2002 to 2011, 4,965 people were killed with guns in Mississippi. That is more than twice the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the war in Afghanistan.<sup>1</sup>
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Mississippi every 16 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 530 gun deaths in the state.<sup>2</sup>

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

- According to the FBI, there were 180 domestic violence homicides in Mississippi from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—61.1 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 363 female homicide victims in Mississippi from 2003 to 2012, 115 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.<sup>4</sup>
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 374 women in Mississippi from 2002 to 2011.<sup>5</sup>

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

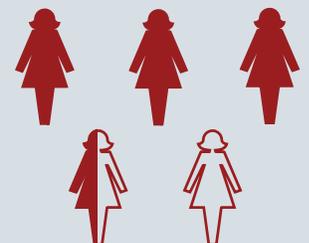
*Mississippi has no laws to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.*

- Unlike federal law, Mississippi law does not prohibit domestic violence misdemeanants or subjects of domestic violence protective orders from purchasing or possessing firearms. As a result, people convicted of abusing non-cohabitating dating partners and family members can legally own guns.
- Mississippi does not require the surrender of firearms owned by a person who has become prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law.

**From 2002 to 2011, 4,965 people were killed with guns in Mississippi. That is more than twice the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the war in Afghanistan.**



**From 2003 to 2012, 68.7 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Mississippi were killed with a gun.**



- Mississippi law does not bar stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing firearms.
- State law does not require a background check for all gun buyers, including those at gun shows or over the Internet.

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## Case study

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

- On September 17, 2007, the day Doris Shavers was murdered by her ex-boyfriend, in Jackson, Mississippi, police had already apprehended the shooter, Henry Phillips, for chasing a young boy down his street with a gun. Police temporarily confiscated both of Phillips' guns but returned one of them later in the day. Immediately following the return of his firearm, Phillips used it to murder Shavers. He then went outside and began shooting in the street until police apprehended him. Shavers' family sued the city of Jackson, claiming that the police could have prevented Shavers' death had they retained the firearms of a known dangerous person.<sup>6</sup>

## Where does Mississippi 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?

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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. Julie Straw, "Domestic Dispute Ends in Murder," MS News Now, September 18, 2007, available at <http://www.msnewsnow.com/story/7095140/domestic-dispute-ends-in-murder>.