

Wyoming Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Wyoming has virtually no laws to restrict access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much more can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Wyoming is home to a significant amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 844 people were killed with guns in Wyoming.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Wyoming every four days: In 2011 alone, there were 96 gun deaths in the state.²

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

- According to the FBI, there were 26 domestic violence homicides in Wyoming from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—53.8 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 42 female homicide victims in Wyoming from 2003 to 2012, 18 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 17 women in Wyoming from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Wyoming laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

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

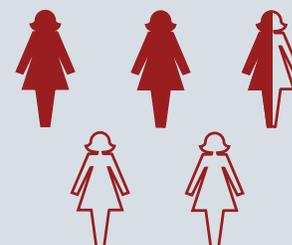
- In 2014, Wyoming passed a law making domestic assault and battery distinct crimes.⁶
- Wyoming's domestic violence laws include people in dating relationships.⁷

Wyoming can do much more to protect its citizens from domestic violence..

- Wyoming does not prohibit domestic violence or stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing guns.
- Wyoming does not require the surrender of firearms or ammunition by domestic abusers who have become prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under federal law.
- Wyoming law does not explicitly authorize or require the removal of firearms or ammunition at the scene of a domestic violence incident.

From 2002 to 2011,
844 people
were killed with guns in
Wyoming.

From 2003 to 2012, 50 percent
of female domestic violence
homicide victims in Wyoming
were killed with a gun.



- Wyoming does not require private sellers to conduct background checks on any gun sale, including those taking place over the Internet or at gun shows.

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

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

- In a July 2013 poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 55 percent of Wyoming voters supported background checks for all gun sales.⁸

Case study

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

- Thomas Miller had previously assaulted and threatened to shoot his wife, Natalie, before he fatally shot her as she ran from their house in Casper, Wyoming. On the evening of March 26, 2013, Miller had been out drinking at a bar before he returned home, where Natalie's mother was watching their two children. Natalie and Thomas started fighting, and as Natalie attempted to leave the room, Thomas went to the back of the house where he kept several firearms. Natalie ran out of the house as she called 911 and was shot on their neighbor's porch.⁹

Where does Wyoming 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 Wyoming voters support background checks on all gun sales.

55%

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. 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. Wyo. Stat. Ann. §§ 6-2-510, 511.
7. Wyo. Stat. Ann. § 35-21-102(a)(iv)(H).
8. Public Policy Polling, "Bipartisan Background Check Support Even in Wyoming," Press release, July 24, 2013, available at http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP_Release_WY_724.pdf.
9. Megan Cassidy, "Accused killer of Natalie Miller says he can't remember shooting," Casper Star Tribune, April 4, 2013, available at http://trib.com/news/local/casper/casper-police-accused-killer-of-natalie-miller-says-he-can/article_5aa45f52-5788-555e-a379-c8417297b54c.html; Joshua Wolfson and Megan Cassidy, "Police uncover domestic-violence allegations against Casper suspect in wife's killing," Casper Star Tribune, September 13, 2013, available at http://trib.com/news/local/casper/police-uncover-domestic-violence-allegations-against-casper-suspect-in-wife/article_4db272a8-8d9e-5f69-abd2-84da40badd3f.html.