



Disarm All Domestic Abusers

March 22, 2018

Guns in the hands of domestic abusers pose a significant risk to women.

- From 2004 to 2015, 6,313 women were murdered by an intimate partner using a gun.¹
- The presence of a gun in a household that has experienced domestic violence increases the risk that a woman will be murdered by 500 percent.²
- Abusers also frequently use guns as tools of intimidation, even without pulling the trigger. A recent study found that nearly 4.5 million women in the United States have been threatened with a gun by an abuser.³

While federal law prohibits some domestic abusers from buying and possessing guns, there are significant gaps in the law that leave victims of abuse vulnerable to lethal violence.⁴

The following abusers remain free to buy and possess guns under federal law:

- Individuals convicted of domestic abuse or subject to a restraining order for abusing a dating partner—as opposed to a current spouse, former spouse, co-parent of a child in common, or current or former live-in intimate partner
 - Intimate partner violence increasingly occurs in the context of dating, as opposed to in marital relationships. In 2015, 51 percent of intimate partner homicides of women were committed by a dating partner rather than a spouse.⁵
- Individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking against an intimate partner
 - Stalking is a frequent element of domestic abuse: According to data from the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, nearly 62 percent of female stalking victims were stalked by a current or former intimate partner, while 26 percent were stalked by an acquaintance and 15 percent by a stranger.⁶
- Individuals subject to a temporary restraining order
 - The period immediately following the issuance of a temporary restraining order is often one of the most dangerous times for women in abusive relationships.⁷

Endnotes

- 1 CAP analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2004–2015).
- 2 J.C. Campbell and others, "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93 (7) (2003): 1089–97.
- 3 Maura Ewing, "An Estimated 4.5 Million Women Have Been Bullied with Guns by Abusive Partners," *The Trace*, October 5, 2016, available at <https://www.thetrace.org/2016/10/nonfatal-gun-use-domestic-violence/>.
- 4 Winnie Stachelberg and others, "Preventing Domestic Abusers and Stalkers from Accessing Guns" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/courts/reports/2013/05/09/60705/preventing-domestic-abusers-and-stalkers-from-accessing-guns/>.
- 5 CAP analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2015).
- 6 National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, "The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey, 2010–2012 State Report" (Washington: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2017), available at <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/NISVS-StateReportBook.pdf>. Another 7 percent of stalking victims were stalked by a family member and 2 percent by an authority figure.
- 7 J.C. Campbell and others, "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From a Multisite Case Control Study"; Battered Women's Justice Project, "Enforcing Domestic Violence Firearm Prohibitions Technical Assistant Project Foundations," available at <http://www.bwjp.org/our-work/projects/firearms-project/firearms-project-updates.html> (last accessed March 2018).