



GUNS AND VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

- ❑ **Bottom Line:** America's porous gun laws put women's lives at risk. In fact, this country is the most dangerous country in the developed world for women when it comes to gun violence. While federal law prohibits convicted domestic abusers and abusers subject to domestic violence restraining orders from owning guns, gaps in federal law still make it too easy for dangerous abusers to access guns.
- ❑ **Our country's weak gun laws increase the risk that victims of domestic abuse will end up dead.**
 - American women are **11 times** more likely to be murdered with a gun than women in any other developed country, making this country the most dangerous for women in the developed world when it comes to gun violence.¹
 - More than half of women murdered with guns in 2011—at least **53 percent**—were killed by intimate partners or family members.²
 - The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the odds a woman will be murdered by **500 percent**.³
 - A majority of mass shootings are tied to domestic abuse. Everytown's analysis of mass shootings from 2009 to 2014 shows that in **57 percent** of mass shootings, the shooters killed intimate partners or other family members.⁴
- ❑ **Federal law includes provisions that keep guns out of the hands abusers who are convicted of domestic violence crimes and who are subject to domestic violence restraining orders.**⁵
 - Since its inception in 1998, the federal criminal background check system has blocked more than 300,000 gun sales to domestic abusers.⁶
 - In fact, one in six prohibited gun buyers stopped by a federal background check is a prohibited domestic abuser.⁷
- ❑ **But two critical gaps in federal law allow too many abusers to buy and use guns — and put women's lives at risk.**
 - **Federal prohibitions on gun ownership by domestic abusers do not keep guns out of the hands of abusive dating partners or convicted stalkers.**
 - More women in the U.S. are killed by dating partners than by spouses.⁸ Everytown's research also shows that in 25% of mass shootings in which the perpetrator targeted an intimate partner, the victim was likely a dating partner rather than a spouse or other covered relationship.⁹
 - Stalking is also a predictor of intimate partner homicide: one study found that nearly 9 in 10 attempted murders of women were preceded by at least one incident of stalking in the year before the attack.¹⁰
 - Congress should close these loopholes and ensure that convicted stalkers and abusive dating partners are prohibited from gun ownership just like other dangerous abusers.



Legislation to do so—the Senator Klobuchar’s (D-MN) Protecting Domestic Violence and Stalking Victims Act of 2013 (S.1290)—has already been introduced.

- **Federal law allows domestic abusers to easily evade gun prohibitions by purchasing guns from unlicensed, private sellers.**
 - Federal law only requires background checks for gun sales at licensed dealers. While 16 states require checks on all handgun sales, in all other states prohibited abusers can easily avoid background checks by buying guns from unlicensed sellers—including strangers they meet online.
 - Closing this loophole saves lives: in the states that require background checks on all handgun sales, 38% fewer women are shot to death by intimate partners.¹¹
 - There is currently a bipartisan House Bill and a bipartisan Senate Bill that will require comprehensive background checks on gun sales. Congress should pass this important, life-saving legislation.
 - H.R. 1565 sponsored by Congressman Peter King (R-NY) and Congressman Mike Thompson (D-CA).
 - S.Amdt. 715 to S.649 sponsored by Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) and Senator Pat Toomey (R-PA).

¹ D. Hemenway and E.G. Richardson, Homicide, Suicide, and Unintentional Firearm Fatality: Comparing the United States with Other High-Income Countries, 2003, 70 *Journal of Trauma* 238-42 (2011).

² U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Report, 2011. According to FBI data, there were 1,221 gun murders in which a woman was the lead victim. Of these, 649 were killed by an intimate partner or immediate family member — 53% of the total. This data likely undercounts the phenomenon because in many other cases law enforcement cannot confirm whether a shooter and victim were intimately involved.

³ J.C. Campbell, S.W. Webster, J.Koziol-McLain, et al., Risk factors for femicide within physically abuse intimate relationships: results from a multi-state case control study, 93 *Amer. J. of Public Health* 1089-97 (2003).

⁴ Everytown for Gun Safety, Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings (July 2014).

⁵ See 18 U.S.C. §§ 922(d)(8), (d)(9), (g)(8), (g)(9).

⁶ Between the inception of the NICS system in 1998 and April 30, 2014, 154,584 gun sales were federally denied due to misdemeanor crime of domestic violence convictions or restraining or protection orders for domestic violence. U.S. Department of Justice, FBI, NICS Denials: Reasons Why the NICS Section Denies, Nov. 1, 1998 – Apr. 30, 2014, at <http://1.usa.gov/1k9zURj>. Between 1998 and 2010, state and local agencies issued a total of 945,915 denials, and it is estimated they have issued 225,000 denials in the three years since data was last released. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Feb. 2013, Background Checks for Firearms Transfers, 2010–Statistical Tables, Feb. 2013, at <http://1.usa.gov/Z8vYsa>. For agencies that reported reasons for these denials, 13.2% were denials for domestic violence reasons — which would represent another 155,000 domestic violence denials. Thus, the background check system has likely issued more than 300,000 denials for domestic violence reasons.

⁷ U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, NICS Operations Reports, 1998-2013.

⁸ A. Cooper and E. L. Smith, U.S. Department of Justice, Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008 (Nov. 2011) at <http://1.usa.gov/1fpGibN>; Everytown for Gun Safety analysis of FBI Supplementary Homicide Reports, 2000-2012.

⁹ Everytown for Gun Safety, Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings (July 2014).

¹⁰ J. MacFarlane, J. Campbell et al., Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide, *Homicide Studies* No. 4, 300-16 (Nov. 1999).

¹¹ *Mayors Against Illegal Guns, Felon Seeks Firearm, No Strings Attached* 7 (Sept. 2013).