



Know the Facts: Debunking the Claims made by Pro-Gun Rights Advocates

FALSE CLAIM: Gun ownership increases personal safety in the home.

Fact: Evidence shows that the presence of a gun in the home increases rates of homicide¹, suicide² and accidental death.³

Fact: Approximately 43% of homes with guns have at least one unlocked firearm, including 13% with children under the age of 18.⁴ With access to firearms in the home, youth have increased risk to accidental injury and/or death.

Fact: In the US, 7 gun-related deaths for people ages 1-19 occur each day. This translates to twice as many deaths resulting from cancer, 5 times as many as heart disease and 15 times as many as infections.⁵

FALSE CLAIM: Guns don't kill people; people kill people. (The same number of people would be killed even without easy access to guns.)

Fact: US firearm homicide rates are 19.5 times higher than other high-income countries, driving our overall homicide rate that is 6.9 times higher.⁶

Fact: 68% of all homicides were committed with guns in 2011.⁷

Fact: The US firearm death rate is close to 2.5 times that of the second-most developed country (10.2 per 100,000).⁸

FALSE CLAIM: Gun violence is a mental health problem.

Fact: People with mental illness are 11% more likely than those without mental illness to be victims of gun-related violence⁹ and four times more likely to be killed by police officers in justifiable homicides.¹⁰

Fact: It is estimated that less than 5% of violent crimes are directly linked to a form of mental illness.⁹

Fact: Individuals with mental illness receiving adequate treatment from health professionals are less likely to commit violent acts.¹⁰ It is critically important to increase access to mental health services.

FALSE CLAIM: Increased gun legislation will not reduce gun violence.

Fact: Studies show that there are fewer gun-related deaths per capita in states with stricter gun control provisions.¹¹

Fact: Homicide rates are highest among people between the ages of 18-20.¹² Broadening restrictions for purchasing and possessing firearms under the age of 21 has the potential to reduce gun-related violence.

FALSE CLAIM: Assault weapons bans do not work.

Fact: The previous law allowed for the sale of "copy cat" weapons, "grandfathered" weapons and import of assault weapons that accepted large capacity magazines (LCM).¹³

Fact: It is estimated that banning LCMs could result in 100 fewer homicides, 500 fewer wounded by gunshot and thousands fewer experiencing psychological trauma due to mass shootings annually.¹⁴

Fact: After the assault weapons ban was lifted, 37% of police departments surveyed indicated an increase in the use of assault weapons by criminals.¹⁵

FALSE CLAIM: Increased background checks won't help decrease gun violence.

Fact: A study of 53 US cities by Johns Hopkins shows states that require background checks have 48% lower intrastate gun trafficking rates.¹⁶

Fact: In states requiring background checks, 38% fewer women are shot and killed by their intimate partners.¹⁷

Fact: According to a CBS News/Yew York Times poll in January 2013, 92% of Americans favor universal background checks for all potential gun buyers.¹⁸

FALSE CLAIM: The only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.

Fact: Mass shootings occurred at schools despite the presence of an armed sheriff's deputy on the Columbine campus and an on-campus security team at Virginia Tech.¹⁹

Fact: The number of gun-related fatalities and injuries are highly correlated with the presence of more guns. There is a fivefold increase in suicide and threefold increase in homicide when guns are present in the home.²⁰

Doctors for America is a national movement of doctors and medical student in all 50 states who are working together to improve the health of the nation and to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, high-quality health care.

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