

THE TRUTH ABOUT AMERICA'S GUN PROBLEM

Policy Brief by Liz Baron

BACKGROUND

America has a gun problem. Our nation's history of gun violence is unparalleled throughout the world. Americans own nearly half (48%) of the estimated 650 million civilian owned guns in the world and a majority (66%) of US gun owners own multiple firearms, with nearly three-fourths of gun owners saying they couldn't imagine not owning one (Grabow, 2018). And everyday, 96 Americans are killed with guns every day (Campbell et al, 2003). The correlation cannot be ignored. The time to take action against gun violence of all forms is now.

SCHOOL SAFETY

It was reported by John Cox from the Washington Post that "more than 219,000 students have experienced gun violence at school since Columbine" (2018). Subsequently, America's gun control problem has only gotten worse since 1999. It was found that in 2018 alone, "at least 143 children, educators, and other people have been killed in assaults, and another 288 have been injured [in America]" (Cox). With each passing year, the number of school shootings within the nation rises.



Via Campbell et al, 2003

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Research by Campbell (et al) reported that the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely that a woman will be killed (2018). In addition, analysis by Campbell from 2009 to 2016 "show that in 54 percent of mass shootings, the shooters killed intimate partners or other family members" (2018). Although the lesser known gun control issue of domestic violence is not in the headlines nearly as much as school shootings, they are deadly for the very same reasons.



Via Campbell et al, 2003

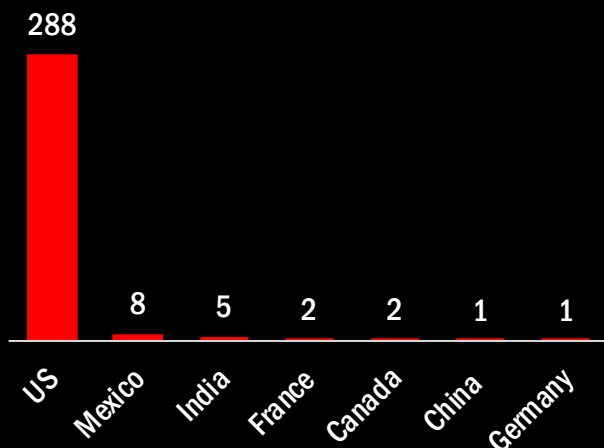
WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Gun control in America is a national issue: virtually every citizen in the country is effected. The focus of this policy brief is on school children of all ages that are constantly in fear of being victims of the next school shooting. The focus is also on victims and future victims of domestic violence cases involving guns. Why should you care? Gun violence in America has become normalized in the media, even though it is far from normal behavior. Each year, hundreds of citizens are harmed both intentionally and unintentionally by gun violence of all forms (Gould, 2018).

SAFER SCHOOLS, HEALTHIER KIDS?

The Safer Schools, Healthier Kids Act aims to lower the number of gun related deaths that occur in domestic abuse situations and in schools. Through ERPOs, There will be a quicker and more streamline process of legally taking firearms away from those who threaten their own and other people's lives through the use of weapons. This act also aims to appropriate funds that would help keep children physically and emotionally safe in schools. Funds will be appropriated to expand the use of the anonymous tip line maintained by the center for safer schools and for public safety improvements. Additional instructional support personnel, such as psychologists, counselors, nurses, and social workers will also be made available in schools, with addition of more school resource officers present. Each aspect of the policy works to equip students with the proper resources that allows them to be present and engaged in the classroom. ERPOs would enforce protection against those who file the order, relieving many victims of domestic violence of worry.

SCHOOL SHOOTINGS SINCE 2009



Via Grabow, 2018

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

Many lives can be saved with the passing of the Safer Schools, Healthier Kids Act. Gun violence is an issue with devastating impacts, but it is an issue that has a solution. If you care about school children having safe and effective environments that facilitate learning, and if you want to let people in domestic violence situations know that their voices are heard, do your part in the fight against nonsensical gun violence, and support the passing of this policy.

WHAT IS AN ERPO?

Extreme Risk Protection Orders – or ERPOs – are very similar to restraining orders. They act as a restraining order against those who threaten someone's life with the use of firearms. Once an ERPO is filed, legal action is taken against the person causing harm or distress with their firearms, and after review of the case and evaluations of both the petitioner and the respondent, the firearms in question are then confiscated.

WHAT ARE THE COSTS?

“The lifetime economic cost to the U.S. population is \$3.6 trillion. This economic cost estimate includes almost 32 million women and 12 million men who are victims of intimate partner violence during their lives.” (Smith et al, 2018) Instead of focusing on the costs that the policy would cause, the focus should be on the costs that would be alleviated through this policy change. By reducing the number of gun related deaths in domestic violence cases, the economic burden will decrease as well. With the money that is saved, the costs of implementing the policy change can be matched, if not surpassed.

Work Cited

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