

The Use of Red Flag Laws in Preventing Gun Deaths in America

The Problem:

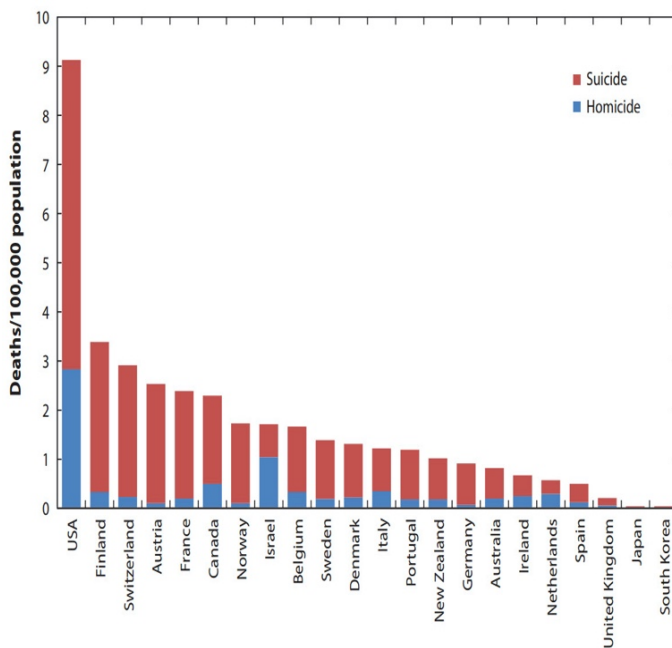
The primary issue at hand is that thousands of Americans lose their lives or loved ones due to gun violence. Over 100,000 Americans are killed or injured each year as a result of firearms (Resnick et al. 2017). From 2014 to 2017, gun deaths in America have increased by 16% (Gifford Law Center 2020). Gun laws in America are weak and often contain loopholes. Americans are 25 times more likely to die from gun violence than residents of France, Canada, Germany, Australia, the UK, and Japan (Gifford law Center 2020). In order to address the issue of gun violence, Red Flag laws are needed to prevent guns from getting in the wrong hands.

The Steady Rise Of U.S. Gun Deaths

Number of U.S. gun deaths due to firearms (1999-2017)*



* Deaths classified as unintentional, suicide, homicide, undetermined and legal intervention/operations of war.
 Source: Centers For Disease Control and Prevention



Mortality rates for firearm suicide and homicide for selected members of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Data available at the GunPolicy.org website, <http://www.gunpolicy.org>

What are Red Flag laws?

Red Flag laws allow for an individual to request an extreme risk protection order that would remove firearms from another person who poses a danger of causing harm to someone by having access to a firearm (Stevens 2018). If someone sees suspicious behavior and knows that the person has access to a firearm, they can report to their local or state government. These laws help get ahead of a potential disaster by getting guns out of people's hands before they commit a suicide or homicide with a firearm. Red Flag laws are a preventive measure that every state can pass to ensure that guns are kept out of the wrong hands.

Myths about Red Flag Laws:

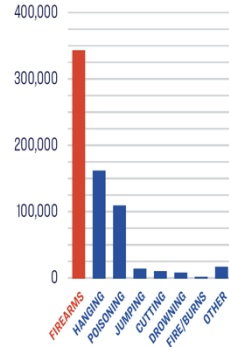
Myth: Red Flag Laws infringe on 2nd Amendment rights.

Truth: Red Flag laws do not in any way infringe on people's right to bear arms, but rather serve as a protective measure that allows people to alert the government if someone has a gun who shouldn't.

Myth: Red Flag Laws have not been shown to be effective in any way.

Truth: Several studies have shown that states that have Red Flag laws have seen a decrease in suicide rates. One study done by Duke psychiatry professor Jeffrey Swanson found that for every 10 guns seized using Red Flag laws, one suicide is prevented.

NUMBER OF SUICIDE DEATHS 2000-2017



51%
OF SUICIDES
IN AMERICA
INVOLVE A
FIREARM

Source: CDC WISQARS

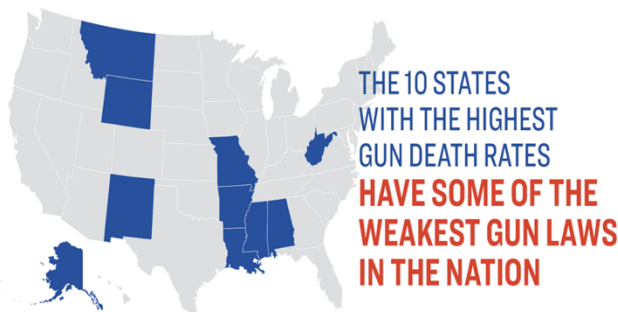
GIFFORDS



100 AMERICANS
ARE KILLED WITH GUNS
EVERY DAY

Source: CDC WISQARS, 2010-2017

GIFFORDS

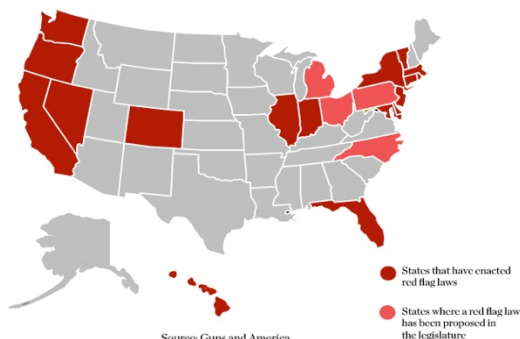


See if your lawmakers are doing enough to save lives at gunlawscorecard.org

GIFFORDS

Red Flag Laws

Red flag laws permit police or family members to petition a state court to order the temporary removal of firearms from a person who may present a danger to others or themselves



Source: Guns and America

Solutions:

In order to address the gun violence epidemic in the US, Red Flag laws are needed to keep guns out of the wrong hands. Several states have already adopted Red Flag laws, and the results speak for themselves. Indiana's 2005 Red Flag law was associated with a 7.5% decrease in firearm suicides (Stevens 2019). Researchers from the Violence Prevention program at UC Davis found that California's Red Flag law was effective in preventing dangerous individuals who had firearms from harming themselves or others. The most important thing to do is to call or write your local representatives and urge them to pass a Red Flag law in your state.

Works Cited

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