

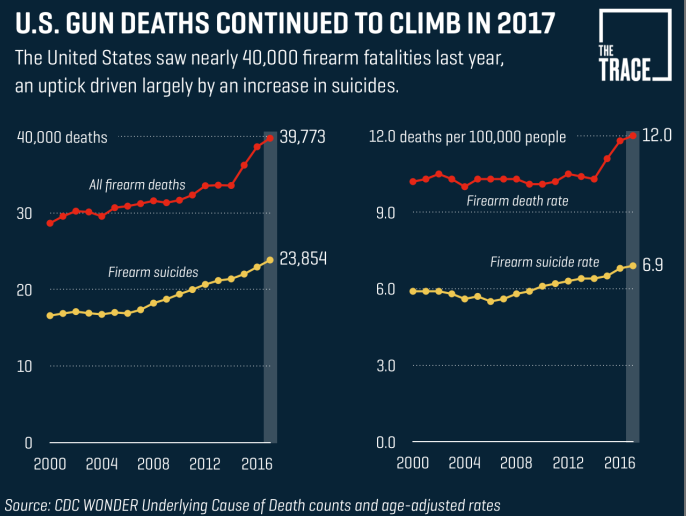
GUN VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED STATES

Brief By: Mason Butner

PLCY 220 @ The University Of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

THE PROBLEM

Gun Violence in the United States has become a public health issue, warranting an intervention by the federal government. In order to halt the trend of increasing firearm deaths, the U.S. should adopt a universal background system, that includes both pre-purchase and post-purchase checks for mental illness and violent tendencies, specifically domestic violence.



GUN VIOLENCE QUICK FACTS

-Gun violence in the United States, including suicides, resulted in the death of 39,773 people in 2017, making it the 10th largest cause of death in the United States. (DHHS, 2017)

-The firearm death rate in 2017 was 12 per 100,000 people, the highest rate in 20 years. (DHHS, 2017)

-In 2016, the United States had the second highest gun death total in the world, and the second highest rate of suicide by firearm. (Santhanam, 2018)

57%

Percentage of private gun transactions which are performed without a background check in states where background checks are not required by law. (Wintemute, 2007).

>50%

More than half of all domestic violence homicides are perpetrated with a gun. (Zezima et al, 2018).

10%

Percentage of firearm homicides that are committed by people with diagnosed mental illness, with higher numbers of people that go undiagnosed. (Matejkowski et al, 2008).

1 IN 3

Domestic violence murderers were known perpetrators of domestic violence. (Zezima et al, 2018).

"In order to halt the trend of increasing firearm deaths, the U.S. should adopt a universal background system, that includes both pre-purchase and post-purchase checks for mental illness and violent tendencies, specifically domestic violence."

CASE STUDY: SWITZERLAND



Switzerland is a valuable comparison for the U.S. in terms of gun violence because Switzerland has one of the highest gun ownership rates in the world, yet has a significantly lower level of gun violence. (Kir, 2013)

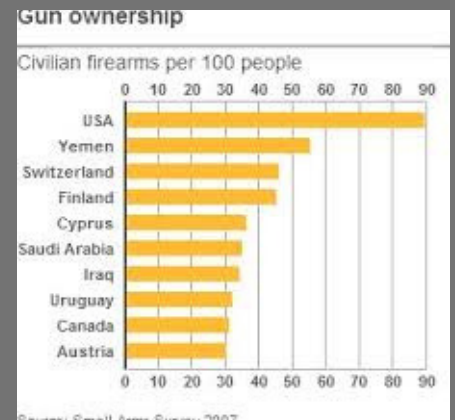
ASPECTS OF SWISS GUN LAWS RECOMMENDED FOR U.S. USE

-Swiss cantons use their discretion in awarding gun permits to their citizens, ensuring that they are not identified as a threat to themselves or anyone in the community. (Calamur, 2018)

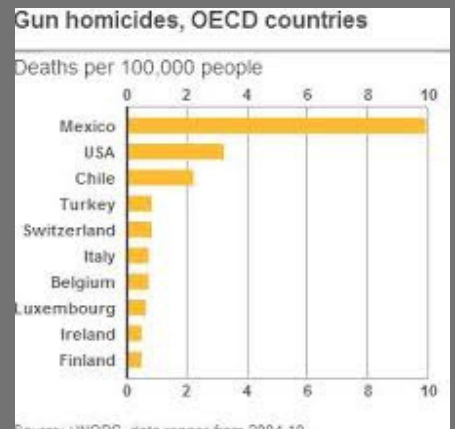
-The U.S. should follow suit by allowing states to deny permits for weapons if the individual fails a mental and/or criminal background check.

-"Swiss authorities have a list of about 2,000 individuals they suspect of being willing to commit shootings. All of them are frequently approached by authorities, along with psychologists, and are forced to hand over their weapons immediately or are barred from purchasing new ones." (Calamur, 2018).

-The U.S. should pursue a similar policy by performing inspections on households that own firearms, setting up certain triggers for inspections, including instances of domestic violence, mental illness, self-harm, and other behaviors that may lead to gun violence.



(Kir, 2013)



(Kir, 2013)

RECOMMENDATION

The United States federal government should adopt a universal system of pre-purchase and post-purchase welfare checks, that include both criminal and mental illness screenings, to prevent gun violence from those groups that are especially prone to committing said violence.

RESOURCES

Calamur, Krishnadev. "The Swiss Have Liberal Gun Laws, Too." The Atlantic, Atlantic Media Company, 17 Feb. 2018, www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2018/02/swiss-guns/553448/.

Kir, Emma Jane. "Switzerland Guns: Living with Firearms the Swiss Way." BBC News, BBC, 11 Feb. 2013, www.bbc.com/news/magazine-21379912.

Matejkowski, J.C., S.W. Cullen, and P.L. Solomon. "Characteristics of Persons with Severe Mental Illness Who Have Been Incarcerated for Murder." *Journal of the American Academy of Psychiatry and the Law* 36, 2008.

Santhanam, Laura. "There's a New Global Ranking of Gun Deaths. Here's Where the U.S. Stands." PBS, Public Broadcasting Service, 28 Aug. 2018, www.pbs.org/newshour/health/theres-a-new-global-ranking-of-gun-deaths-heres-where-the-u-s-stands.

United States, Congress, "WONDER DATABASE." WONDER DATABASE, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Public Health Service, 2017.

Wintemute, G. J. "Gun Shows across a Multistate American Gun Market: Observational Evidence of the Effects of Regulatory Policies." *Injury Prevention* 13, no. 3, 2007.

Yablon, Alex. "Gun Death Rate Hit 20-Year High In 2017, CDC Data Shows." The Trace, www.thetrace.org/rounds/gun-death-rate-2017-increase-cdc-suicide/.

Zezipa, Katie. "How Domestic Violence Leads to Murder." The Washington Post, WP Company, 9 Dec. 2018, www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2018/investigations/domestic-violence-murders/?utm_term=.8f51dc61de45.