



RABBI JONAH DOV PESNER, *Director*
ISABEL P. (LIZ) DUNST, *Chair, Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism*

Arthur and Sara Jo Kobacker Building
2027 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, at Kivie Kaplan Way, Washington, DC 20036

(202) 387-2800 @theRAC www.rac.org

Gun Violence Prevention Fact Sheet

Fast Facts

Average yearly gun-related deaths and injuries ⁱ				
2,647 youth die from gun violence	14,365 youth survive gun injuries	33,880 people die from gun violence	62% of gun related deaths are suicides	81,114 people survive gun injuries

- In 2017, about 60 percent of gun deaths were suicides, while about 37 percent were homicides, according analysis of CDC data. A small percentage of overall firearm deaths are the result of mass shootings and accidental firings.
- 644 million guns are owned by civilians worldwide. ⁱⁱ While the U.S. only has 5% of the world’s population, U.S. citizens own 42% of those guns, or about 270 million. ⁱⁱⁱ
- Guns in the home are 22 times more likely to be used to kill or injure a member of the household in a domestic homicide, suicide, or unintentional shooting than to be used in self-defense against a home intruder. ^{iv}
- According to the American Psychiatric Association, fewer than 1% of homicides committed with a firearm were committed by a person diagnosed with a mental illness. ^v

Loopholes

- **The private sale loophole** – Private gun sales, like those at gun shows or over the internet, are not subject to federal background checks. Since the federal background check requirement was adopted in 1994, over 3 million people—mainly convicted felons, domestic abusers, and violently mentally ill individuals—have been denied a firearm transfer or permit through transactions with licensed dealers that are subject to background checks. ^{vi} These people are able to purchase firearms online or at gun shows.
- **The boyfriend loophole** - Federal gun ownership restrictions do not apply to domestic abusers if the partners were never married, never lived together, or did not have children together.
- **The Charleston loophole** - As federal law stands, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has three business days to vet a gun buyer and provide a verdict, positive or negative, to the seller. If NICS takes longer than three days to approve the sale, the store owner is allowed to sell the gun, despite the fact that NICS has not affirmatively approved the sale. The loophole earned its name after the shooter in Charleston, South Carolina was permitted to purchase a firearm, despite possessing a disqualifying criminal record, because his background check took longer than three days to process.



The Religious Action Center pursues social justice and religious liberty by mobilizing the Reform Jewish community and serving as its advocate in Washington, D.C. The Center is led by the Commission on Social Action of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union for Reform Judaism (and its affiliates) and is supported by the congregations of the Union.



Jewish Values

- Leviticus 19:16 tells us, “do not stand idly by while your neighbor’s blood is shed.” We, as Reform Jews, cannot stand by and watch as thousands of people are directly impacted by gun violence year after year.
- The Talmud teaches us that “he who takes one life, it is as though he has destroyed the universe, and he who saves one life, it is as though he has saved the universe” (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5). Taking action to prevent gun violence will save countless innocent lives.

Policy Solutions

- **Ban the purchase and sale of assault weapons and high capacity ammunition magazines.** Incidents in which assault weapons or high capacity magazines are used result in 155% more people shot and 47% more people killed compared to other incidents. ^{vii}
- **Establish universal background checks, close the private sale loophole, and strengthen the National Instant Criminal Background Check System.** Advocate for policies that would close the private sale loophole and expand the existing background check system to cover all commercial firearm sales, including those at gun shows and over the internet. Further, advocate for legislation that would require all states and federal agencies to develop plans to upload and verify the criminal and mental health records necessary to bar unfit purchasers from buying a weapon.
- **Enact an extreme risk protection order law, which would temporarily prohibit an individual from purchasing or possessing firearms when deemed by a judge to pose a danger to self or others.** ERPOs, commonly called Red Flag Bills, would enable law enforcement and family members to intervene when they suspect a person may use a firearm for violent purposes.
- **Oppose expanded concealed carry reciprocity legislation, which would allow anyone with a concealed carry permit in one state to carry a concealed weapon in all states.** Advocate against concealed carry reciprocity in your state and on the federal level.
- **Repeal the Dickey Amendment and restore funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for research on gun violence.** Work to eliminate the prohibition on the Department of Health and Human Services using federal funds to advocate or promote “gun control,” which has resulted in a lack of reputable research on violence using firearms.
- **Close the Charleston loophole.** Advocate for bills that prohibit gun dealers from transferring a firearm at any time before first receiving confirmed background check approval, or extend the background check waiting period.
- **Oppose efforts to deregulate the purchase and sale of gun silencers.** Advocate against bills that would roll back regulations on the purchase and sale of gun silencers.
- **Close the boyfriend loophole, which allows convicted abusers and stalkers to buy and own firearms.** Those convicted of abuse and stalking should not be allowed to purchase firearms, regardless of their relationship with the victim.