

How to Talk About: **GUN POLICY**

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What You Need to Know in 60 Seconds

WHAT'S AT STAKE:

We all want to see fewer mass killings and less gun violence.

Bad Solution:

New federal gun control legislation would:

- Not change criminal behavior. It only creates a false sense of security.
- Make law-abiding citizens less safe, especially victims of domestic violence.
- Turn law-abiding citizens into instant felons for ordinary, safe behavior.
- Be cost prohibitive for the poorest families to protect themselves.

In short, gun control legislation does not focus on the root causes of human behavior, including violence, crime and untreated mental illness. At the heart of gun control initiatives is the hope that criminals will obey the law, but in fact they rarely do.

Instead, ordinary law-abiding gun owners would bear the burden of the proposed laws. For example: A woman who has recently left a violent relationship would be placed in a far more vulnerable position, reducing her ability to protect herself or her children.

A BETTER PATH FORWARD: ALLOW CHOICE IN SELF-DEFENSE

There is no one-size-fits-all solution for anyone's choice of how to keep him/herself and loved ones safe. Some people choose to own firearms:

- Concealed carry permit holders are the most law-abiding segment of society.
- The CDC reports 500,000 annual uses of firearms in defense of self or others.
- States and cities with the least restrictive laws on gun ownership are safer than those with the most restrictive laws on gun ownership.

Adding new restrictions on firearms will not change criminal behavior, but could make law-abiding people less safe:

- The law-abiding are already making good decisions about buying firearms. Keeping their choice in place keeps them as safe as they can be.
- Vulnerable people, including women in unsafe homes or neighborhoods, should not have to beg for permission to defend themselves.
- Law enforcement should not waste valuable time on those who otherwise comply with the law. Their focus should be on those who are actually committing crimes.

Misperceptions v. Facts

MISPERCEPTION: We need the Congressional Universal Background Check Bill, because there are no background checks done today when someone buys a gun.

FACT: A new law isn't necessary, because background checks are already required! According to the FBI, the National Instant Criminal Background check System (NICS), has been in place since 1998. *The Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act of 1993* mandated NICS, and the FBI's

Criminal Justice Information Services Division implemented the program. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), states that do not use NICS directly employ a similar state-based check. **(Sources: [FBI](#), [BATFE](#))**

MISPERCEPTION: If we have a more stringent background check program, fewer criminals will get guns.

FACT: Despite the best intentions of those supporting background checks, there is no proof that more stringent background checks reduce crime. In fact, according to a 2016 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics titled, *Source and Use of Firearms Involved in Crimes: Survey of Prison Inmates*, only 1.3% of prisoners obtained a gun from a retail

source and used it during their offense. In addition, a study published in the *Annals of Epidemiology* concluded that the California Comprehensive Background Check law, first implemented in 1991, was not associated with changes in firearm homicides or suicides. **(Sources: [Bureau of Justice Statistics](#), [Annals of Epidemiology](#))**

MISPERCEPTION: Gun Free Zones, or areas where guns are not allowed, are safer than areas where guns are allowed.

FACT: Although it sounds counterintuitive, 96% of mass shootings happen in areas where ordinary people are prohibited from carrying guns. Criminals often choose to carry out their crimes in areas

where they have the best chance of not being shot themselves. **(Source: [Crime Prevention Research Center](#))**

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MISPERCEPTION: There is no evidence of people using their guns defensively, to save themselves or others.

FACT: There are thousands of incidents every year where gun owners use their firearm to save themselves, family members, or even strangers. We don't hear much about these incidents because in many of them, nothing bad happened. The FBI conducted an in-depth study of active shooter incidents in 2016 and 2017. Out of the 50 such incidents detailed during the two-year period, the FBI reported: "In four

incidents, citizens possessing valid firearms permits successfully stopped the shooter." In a 2013 study, ordered by the CDC and conducted by the National Academies' Institute of Medicine and National Research Council reported that, "Defensive use of guns by crime victims is a common occurrence." Their study estimated that defensive use of firearms occurs at least 500,000 times per year. (Sources: [FBI](#), [CDC](#))

MISPERCEPTION: Not very many people have concealed carry permits, or carry their gun in public.

FACT: Over 17 million American adults have concealed carry permits. That is an increase of 273 percent since 2007. And the numbers of women and minorities

obtaining their concealed carry permits is increasing much faster than men and whites. (Source: [Social Science Research Network](#))

MISPERCEPTION: People who want the right to own guns aren't interested in gun safety, they just want their guns.

FACT: Gun ownership is a fact of life in the United States. Just as teaching children to swim reduces accidental drowning, teaching gun safety can help reduce firearms accidents. Gun owners—through both national organizations and smaller, local groups—offer safety courses all over the country. Large

gun rights organizations, such as the National Rifle Association and the National Shooting Sports Foundation offer free gun safety programs. These programs promote childhood safety, safe gun storage, and suicide prevention. Smaller, local organizations, such as Kids

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SAFE Foundation, and Camp Compass Academy teach firearms safety and accident prevention in their communities. Among the largest national gun-control organizations, none teaches any gun

safety courses. (Sources: [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#), [National Rifle Association](#), [Kids SAFE Foundation](#), [Camp Compass Academy](#))

MISPERCEPTION: The AR-15 “Assault-Rifle” is a weapon of war and has no place on our streets.

FACT: Despite the intentions of those who try to demonize the AR-15 and similar rifles, an AR-15 is simply a semi-automatic, common sporting rifle. The ‘AR’ in AR-15 actually stands for ArmaLite—the company that originally designed the rifle—and not ‘assault rifle.’ In fact, ArmaLite designed the AR-15 in 1956, so the rifle is not even a new phenomenon. An AR-15 is also not an automatic weapon. Automatic weapons, or machine guns, have been heavily regulated by the National Firearms Act since 1934, including mandatory registration. In fact, very few civilians own them. An automatic weapon

refers to a firearm that fires multiple rounds with one pull of the trigger. Semi-automatic refers to a firearm that fires one round with one pull of the trigger.

The AR-15 is not used by the US military. A similar looking rifle, the M-16, is used by the military. Although it is similar in appearance, the M-16 is a select-fire rifle. Select fire refers to a firearm that can be selected to either fire one round with one pull of the trigger, or multiple rounds with one pull of the trigger.

(Sources: [ArmaLite](#), [National Shooting Sports Foundation](#), [ATF](#))

MISPERCEPTION: Banning “assault weapons” will save lives.

FACT: Typically, by “assault weapon,” people mean semi-automatic guns that can accept detachable magazines or possess other features, but the definition varies, which makes the term problematic.

Although this is a common refrain from gun control supporters, there is no evidence that bans of so-called “assault weapons” reduces crime. Numerous

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studies, using FBI data, have concluded that the Clinton-era “assault weapons” ban had no effect on crime. Criminals intent on committing a crime using one

of these rifles will obtain the rifle illegally, whether or not a ban is in place. **(Source: Quinnipiac University Study)**

MISPERCEPTION: Reducing the size of gun magazines will save lives.

FACT: Similar to bans on so-called “assault weapons,” there is no evidence that bans of standard size ammunition magazines reduce crime. Numerous studies point to the fact that criminals

don't follow the reduced capacity magazine laws, and the ability to simply use more of the smaller magazines. **(Source: William and Mary Study)**

MISPERCEPTION: School shootings are at an all-time high.

FACT: Recent research by Axios claimed school shootings are at an all-time high. The research employed a database developed by the Center for Homeland Defense and Security (CHDS). This database included incidents that didn't involve students or staff, didn't take place inside a school, and didn't necessarily happen when school was in session. The CHDS database included in its school shooting statistics: An overnight suicide in a school parking lot, a drug deal shooting at midnight on a Saturday in a school

parking lot, and a man shooting a bb gun at a school window over Thanksgiving break. In addition, National Public Radio debunked a 2018 Department of Education “study,” where the Department said there were 240 school shootings in the 2015-2016 school year. NPR called to confirm each of the 240 reported incidents, and discovered that 161 of those schools said no shootings had occurred. **(Sources: Axios, Center for Homeland Defense and Security, National Public Radio)**

GUN POLICY: WHAT'S AT STAKE

Allow choice in self-defense



Concealed carry permit holders are the most law-abiding segment of society.



The CDC reports 500,000 annual uses of firearms in defense of self or others.



States and cities with the least restrictive laws on gun ownership are safer than those with the most restrictive laws on gun ownership.



People should be free to choose how to keep themselves and their loved ones safe. People should be free to own firearms!

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GUN POLICY: WHAT'S AT STAKE

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Make law-abiding citizens less safe, especially victims of domestic violence.



Turn law-abiding citizens into instant felons for ordinary, safe behavior.



Be cost prohibitive for the poorest families to protect themselves.



In short, gun control legislation does not focus on the root causes of human behavior, including violence, crime and untreated mental illness. At the heart of gun control initiatives is the hope that criminals will obey the law, but in fact they rarely do. Instead, ordinary law-abiding gun owners would bear the burden of the proposed laws.

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Gun Policy Misperceptions

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FACT: Despite the best intentions of those supporting background checks, there is no proof that more stringent background checks reduce crime. In fact, according to a 2016 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics titled, Source and Use of Firearms Involved in Crimes: Survey of Prison Inmates, only 1.3% of prisoners obtained a gun from a retail source and used it during their offense. In addition, a study published in the Annals of Epidemiology concluded that the California Comprehensive Background Check law, first implemented in 1991, was not associated with changes in firearm homicides or suicides. (Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Annals of Epidemiology)

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the situation

UNDERSTANDING GUN POLICY

- Everyone wants to be safe — whether at home, work, or when they travel.
- Most people want the choice of how to protect themselves and stay safe. That may or may not involve owning a gun.
- Some people think that only the government should have guns, and that in turn, the government should protect us.
- Sometimes the police can't get there in time to stop a crime.
- That's why 500,000 armed civilians use their firearms defensively each year. Increasing numbers of women and minorities are owning guns, too.
- New proposed gun control laws will make it harder for these citizens to protect themselves, and sadly, they won't keep us safer because they won't change criminal behavior.

visit IWF.ORG for more information on gun policy

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Download these graphics to include with ANY Twitter, Facebook or Instagram posts.

Quiz #1:

Background Checks

1 What percentage of criminals who use a gun in the commission of a crime, obtained that gun from a retail source?

- A. 1.3%
- B. 6.7%
- C. 10%
- D. 12.2%

2 How long has there been a Federal system for background checks?

- A. There isn't a Federal Background check system
- B. 5 years
- C. 10 years
- D. More than 20 years

3 True or False? According to a 2019 study in the Annals of Epidemiology, California's implementation of the "Comprehensive Background Check" reduced firearm homicides and suicides in the 10 years following the implementation of the law.

- A. True
- B. False

Answers

Q1 ANSWER: A.

According to a 2016 study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics titled, *Source and Use of Firearms Involved in Crimes: Survey of Prison Inmates*, only 1.3% of prisoners obtained a gun from a retail source and used it during their offense.

Q2 ANSWER: D.

According to the FBI, the National Instant Criminal Background check System (NICS), has been in place since 1998. The "Brady Handgun Violence Protection Act" of 1993 mandated NICS, and the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services Division implemented the program. According to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), states that do not use NICS directly employ a similar **state-based check**.

Q3 ANSWER: B.

The **study** concluded that the California Comprehensive Background Check law, first implemented in 1991, was not associated with changes in firearm homicides or suicides. Another law passed at the same time, which prohibited those convicted of violent misdemeanors from buying or possessing a firearm, also had no impact on firearm homicides and suicides.

Quiz #2:

Lawful Gun Ownership

1 Are there instances when ordinary armed citizens stop mass shootings?

- A. No, there is no evidence of armed citizens stopping mass shootings.
- B. Yes, there is evidence of armed citizens stopping mass shootings.

2 True or False? Gun free zones are safer than areas where citizens are allowed to carry guns.

- A. True
- B. False

Answers

Q1 ANSWER: B. The FBI looked conducted an in-depth study of active shooter incidents in 2016 and 2017. Out of the 50 such incidents detailed during the two-year period, the FBI reported: "In four incidents, citizens possessing valid firearms permits successfully stopped the shooter."

Furthermore, in a 2013 study, ordered by the CDC and conducted by the National Academies' Institute of Medicine and National Research Council reported that, "Defensive use of guns by crime victims is a common occurrence." Their study estimated that defensive use of firearms occurs at least 500,000 times per year.

Q2 ANSWER: B. Although it sounds counterintuitive, **96% of mass shootings** happen in areas where ordinary people are prohibited from carrying guns. Whether K-12

3 What is the most law-abiding segment of society?

- A. Law enforcement
- B. Non law enforcement, who are also not gun owners
- C. Non law enforcement, who are gun owners
- D. Non law enforcement who are gun owners, and are also concealed carry permit holders

4 True or False? Concealed carry permits are growing faster for women and minorities than for men or whites.

- A. True
- B. False

campuses like Columbine, Sandy Hook, and Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High, or the Century 16 movie theater in Aurora, Colorado, or the San Bernardino Office that was the site of the 2015 killing of 14 workers, all of those locations prohibited any civilian concealed carry of firearms.

Q3 ANSWER: D. According to the Crime Prevention Research Center, concealed carry permit holders are **the most law-abiding segment of American society**.

Q4 ANSWER: A. According to **a 2018 report** by the Social Science Research Network, between 2012 and 2018, the share of women with permits grew 111% faster than for men, and the share of blacks with permits grew 20% faster than for whites. Permits for Asians grew 29% faster than for whites.