

Reducing Gun Violence:

What Works, and

What Can Be Done Now

PROVIDE SWIFT, CERTAIN, PROPORTIONAL CONSEQUENCES to deter illegal gun possession ♦ Keep guns out of the hands of people **LEGALLY PROHIBITED** from owning them ♦ **SECURE GUNS** in the home ♦ Remove guns from homes where they **POSE AN EXTREME RISK** ♦ Implement **EVIDENCE-BASED** policing strategies ♦ Target the small number of offenders **RESPONSIBLE FOR MOST GUN VIOLENCE** ♦ Collect **BALLISTICS EVIDENCE** in all shootings ♦ Run all ballistics evidence through NIBIN ♦ Utilize **CRIME GUN INTELLIGENCE CENTERS** ♦ Limit availability of **HIGH-POWERED FIREARMS** ♦ Limit capacity of **AMMUNITION MAGAZINES** ♦ Stop guns from entering the **BLACK MARKET** ♦ **ASSESS THREATS** to prevent mass shootings ♦ Expand gun violence **RESEARCH**



CRITICAL ISSUES IN POLICING SERIES

Reducing Gun Violence:

*What Works, and
What Can Be Done Now*

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POLICE EXECUTIVE
RESEARCH FORUM

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Acknowledgments

THE SCOPE OF GUN VIOLENCE IN THE UNITED States is so extreme, it is difficult even to comprehend it.

But here is one perspective to consider:

- **2017 was the record year for fatalities in mass shootings, with 117 deaths**, including 58 fatalities at just one tragedy, the slaughter at the country music concert in Las Vegas on October 1.¹
- But on average, **every day in 2017 there were 105 gun fatalities** in “everyday” homicides and suicides.²

So in terms of gun fatalities, every day in America is almost as bad as the worst year we have ever had with mass shooting deaths.

I am grateful to all of the PERF members and other experts who helped PERF to study this critical issue of gun violence and police strategies for reducing it.

Our first step in this project was to send an email to all PERF members who serve as police chiefs, sheriffs, and other heads of agencies. We asked them to share their views with us, especially regarding the types of laws, policies or programs that they believe would have the greatest impact in reducing fatalities. This questionnaire served as the basis for much of the work described in this report. I’m thankful to all our members who took the time to complete our survey and share their expertise with us.

I’m also grateful to the 175 police chiefs, sheriffs, federal agency executives, other law enforcement leaders, and subject matter experts who gathered in

Washington, DC on June 7, 2018 to explore issues of gun violence. Much of this report reflects the thinking of the people who participated in our conference.

Special thanks go to the five police executives who made presentations at our conference on gun violence in their cities: New Orleans Police Superintendent Michael Harrison, Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson, D.C. Metropolitan Police Chief Peter Newsham, New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill, and Baltimore Police Commissioner Gary Tuggle.

While each of these cities faces unique challenges with respect to gun violence, many of them had elements in common, such as criminal offenders’ easy access to firearms, and a lack of consistent consequences for many gun offenses.

Because PERF wanted to look at gun violence in its totality, we had to go outside our typical range of law enforcement experts to explore the terrible role that firearms have in facilitating suicides. More than half of all suicides are committed with guns, and suicides account for about half of all gun deaths in the United States. Dr. Jerry Reed, Senior Vice President at the Educational Development Center (EDC), provided valuable insights into the nature of firearm suicides and what law enforcement can do to intervene in some cases. He was assisted by Dr. Heidi Kar, a violence prevention expert at EDC.

On the topic of domestic violence and guns, Dr. Andrea Cimino of the Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing presented the latest research and promising approaches to reduce deaths.

And Dr. Lina Alathari, Chief of the National

1. “Mass Casualty Shootings.” U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrv2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVrw_MassCasualty_508_QC.pdf

2. “CDC Wonder: Underlying Cause of Death, 1999-2017 Results. Firearm deaths by intent, 1999-2017.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/saved/D76/D48F344>

Threat Assessment Center at the U.S. Secret Service, reviewed the latest data on active shooter incidents and mass attacks, and how threat assessments and training can help law enforcement agencies intervene before an attack occurs.

PERF is also grateful to Deputy Director Tom Brandon of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives for his support of this project. Director Brandon participated in the entire conference, offering his unique insights and answering questions from others. Before the meeting, he and his leadership team spent an afternoon with PERF staff and myself at ATF headquarters, reviewing current data on gun sales, seizures, and thefts, and discussing the strategies ATF is employing (such as the National Integrated Ballistic Information System and the Crime Gun Intelligence Centers) to help local police in combating gun violence.

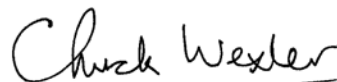
This report is the 36th publication in PERF's *Critical Issues in Policing* series, which is made possible by the generous support of the Motorola Solutions Foundation. For the past two decades, Motorola has supported PERF in our examination of the most pressing issues facing the police leaders. The Foundation's longstanding support of the *Critical Issues* project is further evidence of Motorola's commitment to the women and men of law enforcement and the communities they serve.

PERF is thankful to Greg Brown, Motorola Solutions Chairman and CEO; Jack Molloy, Senior Vice President for Sales, North America; Jim Mears, Senior Vice President; Gino Bonanotte, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer; Cathy Seidel, Corporate Vice President, Government Relations; Tracy Kimbo, Director of Government Marketing; and from the Motorola Solutions Foundation, Director Matt Blakely, Senior Program Director Sirisha Sualy, and Program Officer Wesley Anne Barden.

Finally, thanks go to PERF's staff members who organized this project, conference, and report. Kevin Morison, PERF's Chief Operations Officer, leads the *Critical Issues in Policing* initiative. He did another masterful job of planning this project and ensuring that all of the pieces came together. Four PERF staff members had responsibility for conducting background research and drafting sections of the report: Sean Goodison, Deputy Director of Applied Research and Management; Research Associates Matt Harman and Sarah Mostyn; and Project Assistant Nora Coyne. Sean also made a presentation at the conference on the latest research on gun violence. Sarah and Nora oversaw meeting planning and logistics, assisted by PERF Intern Kyle Groves. Meeting registration and participant communications were handled by Membership Coordinator Balinda Cockrell and Assistant Communications Director James McGinty. James also designed and executed audio-visuals and graphics at the meeting.

Communications Director Craig Fischer authored major parts of the report, edited the entire document, and oversaw production. Greg Dohler captured the day in the photographs in this report, and Dave Williams designed and laid out the publication. As always, Executive Assistant Soline Simenauer provided valuable support to the team, and Tom Wilson, PERF's Director of Applied Research and Management, helped guide the project.

As we emphasize in this report, the United States does not have a single gun violence problem. We have multiple gun violence problems that won't be solved with one or two legislative fixes or tactical responses. Addressing gun violence requires a wide range of actions. The *Action Plan* laid out in this report represents the thinking of PERF and its members on what steps need to be taken now.



Chuck Wexler
Executive Director
Police Executive Research Forum
Washington, D.C.

Executive Summary:

Gun Violence Is 4 Different Problems, with Different Causes and Solutions

ON WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2018, SHORTLY after 2 p.m., the deadliest mass shooting at a high school in U.S. history began, at the Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. In a period of approximately six minutes, 17 students and school staff members were killed, and another 17 were injured.

Understandably, the Parkland shooting dominated the news for months, pushing other news about gun violence off the front pages. But mass shootings are only one aspect of the gun violence problem in America.

To get a sense of the broader picture, let's look at a few of the other gun violence incidents that occurred in the days before the Parkland shooting:

- **Suicide of 23-year-old woman:** One day before the Parkland school shooting, on February 13, 23-year-old Samantha Harer of Channahon, Illinois died from a single gunshot wound to her head. The death was investigated and ruled a suicide.³
- **Barricaded gunman in Detroit killed after shooting six people:** On Monday, February 12, a barricaded gunman in Detroit fatally shot three women and injured three police officers with gunfire before fatally shooting himself.⁴

- **Ohio officers killed responding to domestic violence call:** On Saturday, February 10, two police officers from Westerville, Ohio were fatally shot after responding to a domestic violence call.⁵

The incidents cited above are a random sample of gun violence incidents. The only thing they have in common is that they occurred within a few days of each other. But they illustrate a main point of this report: that “the gun violence problem” in the United States is actually several different problems, with different causes, different perpetrators, different victims, and different solutions.

More specifically, PERF members and researchers tell us that the gun violence problem should be seen as four different types of gun violence:

1. **Suicides** committed with guns;
2. **“Everyday” criminal homicides and nonfatal shootings** (including drug-related and gang-related violence, killings committed as part of a robbery or other crime, interpersonal disputes, and other homicides);
3. **Domestic violence involving firearms;** and
4. **Mass shootings.**

3. Samantha Harer’s Gunshot Death Classified as Suicide by Channahon.” Joliet Patch. Dec. 28, 2018. <https://patch.com/illinois/joliet/samantha-harers-gunshot-death-classified-suicide-channahon>

4. “Barricaded gunman in Detroit kills self; 3 women dead, 3 cops injured.” *Detroit Free Press*, Feb. 12, 2018. <https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/detroit/2018/02/12/barricaded-gunman-detroit-kills-self-3-women-dead-3-cops-injured/329980002/>

5. “True American heroes: Two Ohio officers killed responding to hung-up 911 call.” *Cincinnati Enquirer*, Feb. 10, 2018. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2018/02/10/police-two-officers-have-been-fatally-shot-home-columbus-suburb-westerville-suspect-custody-associat/326444002/>

Four Categories of Gun Violence in 2017, by Key Characteristics

	1. Suicides by Firearm	2. Criminal Homicides by Firearm	3. Domestic Violence Homicides by Firearm	4. Mass Shooting Fatalities
Fatalities per year	23,854 ⁶	14,542 ⁷	Estimated 1,000 – 2,000	117 ⁸
Most Common Victims	White males, 50+ years old	Black males, 18-34 years old	Females	Random
Type of Gun Commonly Used	Legal handguns	Illegally possessed handguns	Handguns that were originally purchased legally, but may be illegally owned due to criminal convictions	Mostly handguns, but a larger proportion of rifles than in other categories of shootings

Because each type of gun violence has different causes, victims, types of guns that are typically used, and other characteristics, the solutions will be different.

This report is organized around those four categories of gun violence. The report examines what we know about each category of gun violence, and it explores promising approaches that can be taken to prevent and reduce each type of gun violence.

Another key finding is that reducing violence is not simply a matter for police to solve, or Congress, or the court system, or any one group of people. There are roles for everyone to take.

Following is a summary of what PERF learned in researching gun violence and convening a national meeting of police chiefs and other experts in Washington in June 2018. Findings are presented for each of the four types of gun violence, in order of the numbers of deaths in each category. More detailed information in each category is provided in subsequent chapters of this report.

Gun Violence Category # 1: Suicides with Firearms

By far, suicides account for the largest number of deaths committed with firearms each year: 23,854 in 2017. *And this number has been increasing every year since 2006, when there were 16,883 suicide deaths by firearm.*⁹

Here are the key facts that can lead to reductions in suicides by firearm, according to national expert Dr. Jerry Reed:

- **Most people do NOT attempt suicide repeatedly until they die.** In fact, 90 percent of people who survive a suicide attempt do not go on to die by suicide later.
- **However, because firearms are so lethal, they cause most deaths by suicide.** Approximately 90 percent of suicide attempts involving a gun end in death. By contrast, only 10 percent of suicides attempted by all other means, such as poisoning, result in death.
- **Suicides are often impulsive.** In 71 percent of suicide attempts, the person makes the suicide attempt within an hour of deciding to end their life. In 24 percent of cases, the action is committed

6. “CDC Wonder: Underlying Cause of Death, 1999-2017 Results. Firearm deaths by intent, 1999-2017.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/saved/D76/D48F344>

7. Ibid.

8. “Mass Casualty Shootings.” U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrvw2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVrw_MassCasualty_508_QC.pdf

9. CDC Wonder: Underlying Cause of Death, 1999-2017 Results. Firearm deaths by intent, 1999-2017.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://wonder.cdc.gov/controller/saved/D76/D48F344>

less than five minutes after the decision. Sadly, young people are especially likely to attempt suicide impulsively.

- Therefore, the most **promising solutions for reducing suicides** involve:

(1) putting time and distance between suicidal thoughts and actions (for example, with laws requiring a waiting period to purchase a gun), and

(2) removing guns from the homes of persons who are depressed, under stress, and potentially suicidal. Experts on suicide reported that surprisingly, if you directly ask a person whether he or she is thinking of suicide, many people will be honest and tell you that yes, they have been thinking of suicide. So everyone has a role to play in having candid discussions with anyone they know who might be suicidal, and saying, “Why don’t you let me hold on to your firearm, or let me take your gun down to the local police station and see if they’ll store it while you’re going through what you’re going through?”

Gun Violence Category #2: “Everyday” Criminal Homicides

The second largest category of fatal gun violence is criminal homicides, with 14,542 fatalities by firearm in 2017.¹⁰ These killings, along with an estimated 88,679 *nonfatal* injuries from shootings in 2016 (the most recent year in which national data are available),¹¹ occur on a daily basis in cities and towns across the nation.

Homicide rates nationally are only about half of the rates of the early 1990s, but successes in reducing fatal shootings have been uneven across the country. Cities such as Chicago, Baltimore, and Philadelphia struggle with enormous numbers of guns on the street.

Chicago has no gun stores, but police recovered approximately 9,500 “crime guns” in 2018 – more than the comparable numbers for New York City and Los Angeles combined.¹² And while possession of an illegal firearm is technically a felony in Illinois, Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson told participants at PERF’s conference that in most cases, gun possession offenders in Chicago need to be caught at least three times before they are charged as a felon and face any significant consequences.

By contrast, in New York City, Police Commissioner James O’Neill said that his city is fortunate to have gun laws that make it possible to hold accountable people who carry firearms illegally. New York City laws include a requirement to obtain a license to own a handgun, or a city permit to own a rifle or shotgun.¹³ “If you get caught illegally possessing a gun in New York City, there’s a 57 percent chance that you’re going to go to jail or prison,” he said.

Commissioner O’Neill noted that shootings in New York City have plummeted 85 percent from 1993 to 2017, from 5,269 to 789 shootings.

Many cities lack any meaningful consequences for illegal gun possession: The comments by Commissioner O’Neill and Superintendent Johnson were bolstered by a survey of all PERF police chiefs and sheriffs in 2018. We asked all PERF chief executives to name the single law, regulation, or strategy that they believe would have the greatest impact in reducing deaths from gun violence.

One of the most frequent responses we received from police chiefs and sheriffs was that offenders must face certainty of punishment for violating gun possession laws. Under federal and state laws, convicted felons, domestic violence offenders, probationers and parolees, and other categories of people are prohibited from owning firearms. But police executives in many jurisdictions said that far too often, offenders can be arrested multiple times for gun possession without being sanctioned by the

10. Ibid.

11. “5 Leading Causes of Nonfatal Violence-Related Injury, United States, 2016.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/nfilead.html>

12. “Chicago Police on Track to Seize 9,500 Guns This Year, Most in 5 Years.” NBC Chicago, Dec. 24, 2018. <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Chicago-police-on-track-to-seize-9500-guns-this-year-most-in-5-years-503449781.html?amp=y>

13. “Gun Laws.” NYC.gov. <https://www1.nyc.gov/nyc-resources/service/3424/gun-laws>

justice system. This sends a counterproductive message that gun law violations are tolerated. Often, offenders are arrested multiple times for illegal gun possession with no consequences, but then they commit a fatal or nonfatal shooting and are subjected to severe consequences.

A much better approach, supported by many PERF chiefs, is to impose modest sanctions for gun possession on a first offense. The certainty of punishment is more important than the severity of punishment for these first offenders, in order to send a new message that illegal gun possession will not be allowed. Penalties can increase proportionally for subsequent offenses. The idea is not to increase incarceration, but to follow New York City's approach and keep guns off the streets.

Crime Gun Intelligence Centers: A major development in the investigation of gun violence is the spread of Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs), which are collaborations of federal and local law enforcement agencies that use forensic technologies to identify suspects in homicide and shooting cases.¹⁴

One of the key concepts of CGICs is that police should consistently collect all ballistic evidence (crime guns and shell casings), including casings recovered from scenes of nonfatal shootings, because the difference between a nonfatal shooting and a homicide is often merely a matter of poor marksmanship.

A shell casing found at the scene of a nonfatal shooting often can be evidence in a fatal shooting that already was committed, or a shooting that will be committed at another location in the future. **By helping detectives to connect a single perpetrator to multiple crime scenes, ballistic evidence can result in arrests in homicide cases and other gun crimes.**

Since 2013, CGICs have been established or are being developed in Denver, Milwaukee, Chicago,

Kansas City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Washington, DC, and many other locations.¹⁵

At PERF's conference, ATF Deputy Director Thomas Brandon said CGICs have become "a game changer," because ballistic evidence is no longer being used only to support prosecutions; it is being used to *generate investigative leads*.

Gun Violence Category #3: Domestic Violence Homicides

At the PERF conference, Dr. Andrea Cimino of Johns Hopkins University described research studies on risk factors for intimate partner violence. Dr. Cimino reported that even by conservative estimates, one in seven homicides of women involve an intimate partner.

Dr. Cimino also noted that domestic violence incidents pose a high risk to responding officers. In a particularly tragic case in 2016, Prince William County, VA Officer Ashley Guindon was fatally shot on her first day on the job as she responded to a domestic violence call. Two other officers were wounded, and the suspect's wife was also killed in that incident.¹⁶

Furthermore, Dr. Cimino said that research shows that, in more than half of mass shootings, the victims included a current or former partner or another member of the family.

Thus, Dr. Cimino concluded by saying: "The important take-away is that intimate partner violence is common, it can escalate to homicide, and it is a threat to us all, not just abused women."

Domestic Violence Protection Orders: A number of police agencies are working to prevent domestic violence cases from escalating to shootings and homicides by enforcing domestic violence protection orders.

These orders require perpetrators of domestic violence to surrender any firearms they own. But

14. See "The Crime Gun Intelligence Center Model: Case Studies of the Denver, Milwaukee, and Chicago Approaches to Investigating Gun Crime." Police Executive Research Forum (2017). <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/crimegunintelligencecenter.pdf>

15. See Justice Department news release, "Justice Department and ATF Name 22 Sites to Receive New National Integrated Ballistic Information Network Equipment." October 11, 2018. <https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/justice-department-and-atf-name-22-sites-receive-new-national-integrated-ballistic>

16. "Virginia police officer killed on her first day on the job; man charged." CNN, Feb. 29, 2016. <https://www.cnn.com/2016/02/28/us/prince-william-county-officer-shooting/index.html>

enforcement can be challenging for law enforcement agencies, requiring significant resources to seize firearms and otherwise enforce the orders, and to store the seized weapons.

The Seattle Police Department has a team of four detectives and a sergeant who receive all domestic violence protection orders, serve the orders, and recover firearms. If a domestic violence offender refuses to surrender his firearms, the process moves to the courts, where the perpetrator is charged with contempt of court.

In Portland, Oregon, the Police Bureau, the Portland District Attorney's Office, and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office in 2015 developed a multi-agency response to enforcing domestic violence protection orders.

In Boston, Police Commissioner William Evans reported that domestic violence protection orders are strictly enforced. "Any time we get a restraining order in a domestic violence incident, if the offender has any firearms at all, we take them out of the home, or the order will require the offender to surrender them forthwith," he said. "We can get an order 24/7 because we always have an emergency judge on call. And when anyone applies for a gun permit, if they have any indication of domestic violence in their background, we will never give them a gun permit."

Victim advocates in Denver: The Denver Police Department recently hired 16 new victim advocates. These civilian employees respond to all domestic violence calls, and their goal is to prevent situations from escalating to aggravated assault or homicide. "The victim advocates act as case managers for the victims, provide them with social services, and guide them through the criminal justice process," Police Chief Robert C. White said.

Lethality assessment instruments: A growing number of police departments are training officers to use lethality assessment instruments to assess the likelihood that a domestic violence offender might eventually kill his partner.

The instruments typically consist of a checklist of questions for an officer to ask a victim of domestic violence, such as "Has he ever used a weapon against you? Has he threatened to kill you or your children? Do you think he might try to kill you? Does he have access to a gun? Has he ever tried to choke you? Is he constantly jealous or does he control most of your daily activities? Is he unemployed? Has he ever tried to kill himself?"

Prosecutors report that lethality instrument results help them to accurately assess the danger a victim is facing and to bring appropriate charges against the offender in court.¹⁷

Gun Violence Category #4: Mass Shootings

Different organizations use different definitions of mass shootings. Mother Jones magazine, which maintains the most comprehensive database of mass shooting incidents, defines mass shootings as incidents in which four or more victims are killed by an attacker.

Notably, the Mother Jones database focuses on incidents in which most or all of the victims are targeted indiscriminately. It does *not* include shootings stemming from more conventionally motivated crimes, such as armed robbery or gang violence.¹⁸

Under this definition, the number of people killed or injured in mass shooting incidents has varied in recent years, with a large spike, particularly in

Mass Shooting Casualties	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Fatalities	71	35	18	46	71	117	80
Nonfatal Injuries	80	13	28	43	83	587	67

Source: Mother Jones database <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data>

17. See page 38 for an example of a lethality assessment instrument.

18. "A Guide to Mass Shootings in America." *Mother Jones*, Nov. 19, 2018. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/07/mass-shootings-map/>

nonfatal injuries, in 2017 due to the mass shooting at an outdoor concert venue in Las Vegas on October 1, 2107.^{19, 20}

At PERF's conference, Las Vegas Deputy Police Chief Shawn Andersen discussed the mass shooting from the Mandalay Bay Hotel:

We focus on the deaths of 58 people. Fifty-eight people were killed in 10 minutes. It's unbelievable, unfathomable. It's hard to believe that a single person can even do that. But there were also more than 800 people who were injured in this, including more than 350 with gunshot wounds or shrapnel.

Imagine in your communities, hundreds of people showing up with those types of devastating injuries in your hospitals at 11 o'clock at night. We would have had far more people dead if not for the unbelievable work in our hospitals and the work by first responders. We also had people helping each other, driving wounded victims to hospitals in pickup trucks and cars.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders: When PERF surveyed its member police chiefs and sheriffs and asked them to recommend policies or programs to reduce gun fatalities, one of the most frequent recommendations we received was to establish Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs).²¹

ERPOs are civil court orders, issued by a judge, that temporarily prohibit persons in crisis who are a threat to themselves or others from possessing or purchasing firearms or ammunition. Law enforcement agencies, and in some states family members, can petition the court to issue an ERPO if they are concerned about a person in mental health crisis who they believe poses a risk to himself or to others.

Extreme Risk Protection Orders have implications for mass shooting incidents, because some

shootings can be prevented if police or family members of the shooter are able to intervene and take firearms away from the potentially dangerous person.

Many states have enacted ERPO laws recently. Connecticut's program is the oldest, dating to 1999. A Duke University study found that 762 "risk warrants" were issued in Connecticut's program from 1999 to 2013, and police removed firearms in 99 percent of those cases.²² On average, police removed seven guns from each subject. **The researchers concluded that for every 10 to 20 risk-warrants issued in Connecticut's program, one life was saved.**

Risk assessments: At PERF's conference, Dr. Lina Alathari, Chief of the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), a branch of the U.S. Secret Service, described her agency's work to develop threat assessment models that local police agencies can use to consider risks in various places, such as government agencies, courts, college campuses, and elementary and high schools.²³

Police and sheriffs' department personnel, including school resource officers (SROs), have a key role in assessing risks posed by troubled students. NTAC has conducted 450 training sessions on preventing targeted school violence to more than 93,000 school administrators, teachers, school resource officers, and others.

Following the mass shootings in Parkland, FL and Santa Fe, TX, NTAC released a 32-page guide for school districts to create comprehensive plans to prevent targeted violence. The step-by-step plan includes guidance on key issues, including the following:²⁴

- Identifying students of concern
- Establishing a multidisciplinary threat assessment team that receives information about students

19. "US Mass Shootings, 1982-2018: Data From Mother Jones' Investigation." <http://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data>

20. Counts of nonfatal injuries vary, depending on whether definitions include only those injured by firearms or also include other injuries that occur in a mass shooting, such as injuries from falls, broken glass, etc.

21. For a wide range of background material about ERPOs, see "Extreme Risk Laws." Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. <https://efsgv.org/extreme-risk-laws/>

22. Swanson et al. "Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut's Risk-Based Gun Removal Law: Does it Prevent Suicides?" (2017). <https://lcp.law.duke.edu/article/implementation-and-effectiveness-of-connecticuts-risk-based-gun-removal-law-swanson-vol80-iss2/>

23. See "NTAC Research and Publications" for links to various threat assessment documents: <https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac/research/>

24. Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence. U.S. Dept. of Homeland Security, U.S. Secret Service. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf

or situations causing concern, assesses risks, and develops intervention strategies.

- Creating a central reporting mechanism so students can easily provide information when they have concerns, anonymously if they wish.
- Establish assessment procedures, including documentation of all cases.
- Evaluating any unusual, bizarre, threatening, or violent communications a student makes about grievances, possible targets, or warnings.
- Determining whether students who cause concerns have access to weapons.
- Assessing whether students of concern feel hopeless, desperate, or out of options.
- Evaluating whether a student is organized enough to plan or carry out an attack.
- Developing options for monitoring and helping youths at risk. In some cases, students are suspended or expelled, but removing a student from school does not eliminate the risk to the school community.
- Conducting training for all stakeholders, including school resource officers.

What Can Be Done to Reduce Shootings

The next section of this report provides nine recommendations for actions to reduce gun violence.

Too often, there is a perception that only Congress and state legislatures can act to prevent shootings.

But in reality, there are things that can be done today to save lives.

For example, if every gun owner were to secure his or her firearms, that would prevent some of the nearly 24,000 suicides by firearm every year, especially among teenagers who often use firearms they obtain at home to harm themselves.

Securing and locking firearms in the home could also prevent some mass shootings, such as the killing of 20 young children and six staffers at the Sandy Hook Elementary School by a young man who obtained firearms while living in his mother's home.²⁵

Similarly, police chiefs at PERF's conference called for certainty of punishment for illegal possession of firearms, noting that shootings are often committed by people who have been arrested multiple times for illegal possession of guns, but who never faced any jail time as a result. This is one factor why cities such as Chicago, Baltimore, and New Orleans have much higher rates of gun violence than New York City, where illegal gun possession is treated with greater certainty of punishment.

So if police, prosecutors, judges, and community organizations decided that illegal carrying of firearms contributes to gun violence and should be sanctioned, more certain punishments could reduce shootings without the need for new laws.

25. "Newtown Shooter Adam Lanza's Mother Was an Avid Gun Collector." *New York*. Dec. 16, 2012. <http://nymag.com/intelligencer/2012/12/adam-lanzas-mother-was-an-avid-gun-collector.html?gtm=bottom>m=bottom>

An Action Plan: 9 Recommendations to Reduce Gun Violence

THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS REFLECT the thinking of leading law enforcement executives regarding principles and actions that would make a difference in reducing the numbers of deaths and injuries from gun violence. These recommendations are based on the following:

- PERF member police executives' responses to our inquiry in which we asked them to name the one law, policy, or program that they believe would have the greatest impact in reducing gun deaths;
- Follow-up interviews of police chiefs, sheriffs, and other subject matter experts;
- A review of research literature on gun violence; and
- Presentations and discussions by 175 leading police officials and other experts at PERF's national conference on gun violence in Washington, DC on June 7, 2018.

PERF's first major finding was that gun violence is actually a collection of four different problems: suicides; everyday "street crime" shootings; shootings related to domestic violence; and mass shootings.

So each of PERF's nine recommended actions includes a notation regarding which of the four "sub-problems" would be impacted by the recommendation.

Similarly, PERF found that solving gun violence problems is not the responsibility of one entity or one level of government. There are roles for police and sheriffs' agencies; prosecutors; judges; federal

and state legislatures and government agencies; other organizations; and the community at large.

Thus, each of PERF's nine recommendations includes a notation about who is responsible for implementing the recommendation.

Some of these recommendations can be implemented immediately by police departments, sheriffs' departments, or other organizations. Other recommendations require new federal, state, or local legislation or other actions outside the authority of police. Law enforcement leaders, speaking as experts on the nature and causes of gun deaths in their jurisdictions, should seek opportunities to share their expertise with their communities and legislators and advocate strategies to reduce gun violence.

RECOMMENDATION #1:

We can prevent future killings by imposing certainty of punishment for illegal possession of a firearm.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- Many gun criminals have extensive criminal histories, including for illegal gun possession, but do not face significant consequences until they commit a very serious crime.
- **Cities such as Chicago, Baltimore, and New Orleans struggle with gun violence because there are few consequences for possessing guns illegally.** For example, police in Chicago recovered approximately 9,500 "crime guns" in 2018 – more than the comparable numbers for New York City

and Los Angeles combined. But in most cases, gun possession offenders in Chicago need to be arrested at least three times before they face jail time or other significant consequences.

- **By contrast, New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill said that his city is fortunate to have gun laws that make it possible to hold accountable persons who carry firearms illegally.**
- Swift, certain, and proportional punishments can change behavior among some offenders and prevent future, more serious gun crimes.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- States should enact **swift, certain, and proportional punishments** for those charged with illegal possession of a firearm and other gun crimes.
 - **Penalties should be modest for first offenses, and should increase proportionally for each subsequent offense.** The purpose is not to incarcerate large numbers of offenders for long periods of time, but to convey a clear message that illegal carrying of firearms will not be tolerated. The goal is to break up the common pattern of repeated arrests for gun possession, with little or no consequences, eventually leading to an arrest for a homicide or other serious gun crime, with severe consequences.
 - Accountability measures should be supported by an **education campaign** alerting the public to the consequences of illegally carrying firearms.
- With respect to shootings and other serious gun crimes, law enforcement agencies should **work closely with state and local prosecutors**, early in the investigatory process, to build strong cases that can be successfully prosecuted.
- As part of their focused deterrence strategies, agencies should form **close partnerships with federal officials** on prosecuting high-risk gun offenders in federal court.
- Agencies should create and support **victim and witness protection programs** to guard against intimidation and to support cooperation with investigators and prosecutors.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Domestic violence
- Everyday gun violence

WHO’S RESPONSIBLE:

- State legislatures
- State and local governments (executive branch)
- Law enforcement agencies
- State, local, and federal prosecutors
- Judges

RECOMMENDATION #2:

Keep guns out of the hands of people who are legally prohibited from owning them.

This recommendation has the potential to reduce fatalities in all four categories of gun deaths: suicides; everyday street crime; domestic violence-related shootings; and mass shootings.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) has prevented more than 1.5 million illegal firearms sales since 1998.
- **However, a lack of timely, complete and standardized reporting of information to NICS limits its effectiveness, particularly with respect to information about applicants who have a history of mental illness.**
- Not all background checks can be completed within the three-business day window provided for under current law.
- In most states, private sales or transfers of firearms do not go through a background check process.
- Most states do not require gun owners to be licensed or permitted.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Strengthen the federal background check system by:
 - Ensuring more complete, timely, and standardized reporting of information to the National Instant Criminal Background Check System,

with a focus on criminal convictions, drug abuse, and mental health data. (Implementation of the “Fix NICS” Act should be a priority.)

- **Requiring background checks for all private sales and transfers** (potentially through Federal Firearms Licensees), including weapons sold at gun shows and over the Internet.
- **Increasing the length of time** during which background checks can be completed, to minimize “delayed denial” situations.
- Expanding disqualifying criteria for purchasing a firearm **to include intimate partner domestic violence** (closing the so-called “boyfriend loophole”) and the misdemeanor offense of stalking.
- States should enact **licensing or permitting systems** for gun owners as another mechanism to help ensure that people who purchase and possess firearms are responsible gun owners.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Domestic violence
- Everyday gun violence
- Mass shootings
- Suicide

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Congress
- State legislatures
- Federal Firearms Licensees (gun dealers)

RECOMMENDATION #3:

Every gun owner must secure guns in the home. And guns should be removed from homes where they pose an extreme risk.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- The availability of firearms in the home can dramatically increase the risk of domestic violence homicides.
- Unsecured guns in the home can also increase the risk of suicide, especially among teens.
- Some mass shooters, including several school shooters, have used unsecured guns in their homes to commit their crimes.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- **All gun owners should use gun safes and locks to ensure that their firearms cannot be taken by a member of the household to commit suicide or to shoot other persons.**
- Enact and enforce laws (such as Child Access Protection statutes) that mandate the **safe storage of firearms** in homes and vehicles. These laws should be supported by public education campaigns that explain how to safely secure firearms, as well as prosecution of violators.
- Enact and utilize **Extreme-Risk Protection Order** laws that allow family members or friends to petition the courts to order the temporary removal of firearms from individuals who may be at risk of harming themselves or others.
- Enact and enforce laws that provide for the **immediate surrender of firearms upon conviction of domestic violence offenses** or other disqualifying events under federal law. Agencies should create and train specialized units to enforce protection orders and remove firearms from these offenders.
- Develop and use **lethality assessment tools** for officers responding to the scene of a domestic violence incident, to determine if the victim is at risk of being killed in a subsequent incident.
- Enact laws requiring gun owners to **report to police the loss or theft of their firearms.**

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Domestic violence
- Mass shootings
- Suicide

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Individuals, including family members (both gun owners and non-gun owners)
- State legislatures
- Law enforcement agencies
- Prosecutors
- Courts

RECOMMENDATION #4:

Implement evidence-based policing strategies to target the small number of offenders who are responsible for most gun violence.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- A small number of criminals commit a hugely disproportionate number of all gun crimes.
- Most gun crimes take place in a relatively small number of geographic areas.
- Enforcement strategies that identify and deter repeat gun offenders have proven effective.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Law enforcement agencies should vigorously **investigate nonfatal shootings and gun possession cases**, as a strategy for preventing future shootings and homicides.
- Agencies should implement **evidence-based enforcement and prevention strategies** that include:
 - Focused deterrence
 - Hot spot policing
 - Directed patrols
 - Problem-oriented policing.
- **Predictive Policing Models** can help agencies more effectively deploy resources to support these initiatives.
- Efforts to build **community trust and engagement** can help ensure that community members will tell police what they know about gun violence offenders.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Everyday gun violence

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Law enforcement agencies
- Prosecutors
- Community members
- The research community.

RECOMMENDATION #5:

Ballistics technology is extremely powerful. We need to fully utilize it. Connecting guns to their users helps to solve crimes and prevent future offenses.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- The same weapon is frequently used in multiple gun crimes.
- Technology is making it easier – and faster – for law enforcement agencies to connect weapons that are used in multiple crimes and to trace them to their original purchaser.
- Ballistics evidence supports the investigation and prosecution of gun crimes.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Law enforcement agencies should **collect ballistics evidence in all shootings**, including random shootings and those in which no one is hit.
- Agencies should strive to develop the necessary resources or partnerships to **run all ballistics evidence through the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN)** and aggressively pursue all investigative leads. The goal should be to submit casings and receive results from NIBIN within 48 hours.
- Agencies should **test-fire all guns they recover** and trace all crime guns through the eTrace system.
- The ATF's **Crime Gun Intelligence Centers** should be a priority for federal funding, and local agencies should take full advantage of this resource.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Everyday gun violence

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Law enforcement agencies
- ATF
- Congress

RECOMMENDATION #6:

To reduce the carnage, limit the availability of high-powered firearms.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- In most U.S. cities, semi-automatic pistols have replaced revolvers as the most common weapon used in everyday gun violence.
- Higher-caliber firearms and ammunition cause more physical harm to victims, increasing the chances of serious injury or death.
- Mass shootings increasingly involve semi-automatic rifles that employ large-capacity ammunition magazines.
- So-called bump stocks, which can easily turn a semi-automatic gun into a near-fully automatic weapon, increase the rate at which the weapon fires. When combined with large-capacity ammunition magazines, bump stocks dramatically increase the fatalities in mass shootings.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Limit the **capacity of ammunition magazines** to 10 rounds.
- Ban the **sale and importation of bump stocks.**²⁶
- Ban the future **sale and importation of military-style weapons that have no purpose except to kill large numbers of people as quickly as possible.**

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Everyday gun violence
- Mass shootings

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- State legislatures
- Congress

RECOMMENDATION #7:

Stop guns from entering the black market.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- In most gun crimes, the person with the weapon is not the original purchaser.
- Many crime guns enter the black market through straw purchases, or they are stolen.
- Once in the black market, crime guns often change hands among a network of gang members or other groups.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Law enforcement agencies should vigorously investigate and prosecute purchasers and gun dealers who engage in **straw purchases and other illegal gun trafficking schemes.**
- To guard against gun store burglaries and robberies, there should be **strict physical security standards** at federally licensed firearms dealers.
- Individuals should be required to **report stolen or lost firearms.** To support the reporting of stolen firearms, there should be public education campaigns to explain how to record identifying information about the firearm (e.g., serial number) and how to report it as stolen.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Domestic violence
- Everyday gun violence
- Mass shootings

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- State legislatures
- Law enforcement agencies
- Individual gun owners

26. See “Justice Department will ban bump-stock devices that turn rifles into fully automatic weapons.” Washington Post, Dec. 18, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/justice-department-will-ban-bump-stock-devices-that-turn-rifles-into-fully-automatic-weapons/2018/12/18/6ee08434-02e2-11e9-b5df-5d3874f1ac36_story.html?utm_term=.1a386f3107cf

See also “Dianne Feinstein: Don’t celebrate the Trump administration’s bump stock ban too quickly.” Washington Post, Dec. 19, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2018/12/20/dianne-feinstein-dont-celebrate-trump-administrations-bump-stock-ban-too-quickly/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.92d67d6883a0

RECOMMENDATION #8:

Assess threats to prevent mass shootings.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- Almost all mass shootings are planned attacks that require time and effort to carry out.
- Offenders typically signal their intentions in advance, often on social media.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- Develop and use **threat assessment protocols** for individuals who come to the attention of law enforcement as potential mass attack offenders.
- To combat school shootings, school resource officers, teachers and other school personnel **should be trained to look for signs of crisis or violence**, and protocols should be established for reporting and following up on those threats.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Mass shootings

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Law enforcement agencies
- Schools

RECOMMENDATION #9:

Expand gun violence research.

WHAT WE KNOW:

- A number of Justice Department agencies have funded and conducted significant research on gun violence. However, since 1996, through the so-called “Dickey Amendment,” Congress has prohibited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using federal funds “to advocate or promote gun control.” The interpretation of this stricture has reduced gun violence research.
- In a March 2018 federal spending bill, Congress approved language indicating that the CDC can conduct research into gun violence, although the Dickey Amendment itself remains in effect.
- Many private foundations have provided funding for gun violence research. However, private funding levels are not sufficient to meet the research needs in this area.

RECOMMENDED APPROACHES:

- The federal government, through the CDC and other agencies, should support **high-quality research on evidence-based strategies for combating gun violence**.
- **Private foundations should continue to support gun violence research.**
- Law enforcement agencies should work closely with the research community to **engage in research projects** that examine the effectiveness of their gun violence programs and strategies.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON:

- Domestic violence
- Everyday gun violence
- Mass shootings
- Suicide

WHO'S RESPONSIBLE:

- Congress
- Philanthropic organizations
- Research community
- Law enforcement agencies

Gun Violence Category #1: Suicides with Firearms

AT PERF'S CONFERENCE ON GUN VIOLENCE, Dr. Jerry Reed, a Senior Vice President at the Education Development Center who focuses on suicide prevention, shared his expertise on strategies for reducing suicide. Following are excerpts from Dr. Reed's presentation:

Dr. Jerry Reed, Education Development Center:

Most Suicide Attempts Do Not End in Death – Except Those Involving Guns

First, I should note that suicide rates in the United States have risen 25 percent since 1999, and they continue to rise. In 2016 there were 44,965 suicide deaths, making suicide the 10th leading cause of death in America.

Here are some of the key facts to understand to prevent suicide deaths:

- **Most people do not attempt suicide repeatedly until they die:** 90 percent of people who attempt suicide but survive do not go on to die by suicide later. It is a myth that people who attempt suicide and survive will just find another way to take their lives later.
- **Guns are the most lethal method:** Approximately 90 percent of suicides attempted with a gun end in death (compared to only 10 percent of suicides attempted by all other means combined).

- **Guns result in the most suicide deaths:**

Because guns are very lethal in causing death very quickly, and because they are often used by suicidal persons, more than half of all suicide deaths in America, 50.9 percent, are completed with a firearm. The next most common means are suffocation and poisoning. Poisoning is the most common method of *attempting* suicide, accounting for 55.7 percent of attempts, but because it can take time for a poison to take effect, there are more opportunities for lives to be saved with medical treatment.

- **Impulsivity:** Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a crisis. In 71 percent of suicide attempts, the person makes the suicide attempt within an hour of deciding to end their life. **In 24 percent of cases, the action is committed less than five minutes after the decision.** Younger people are especially



Dr. Jerry Reed,
Education
Development
Center

likely, compared to older people, to attempt suicide impulsively.

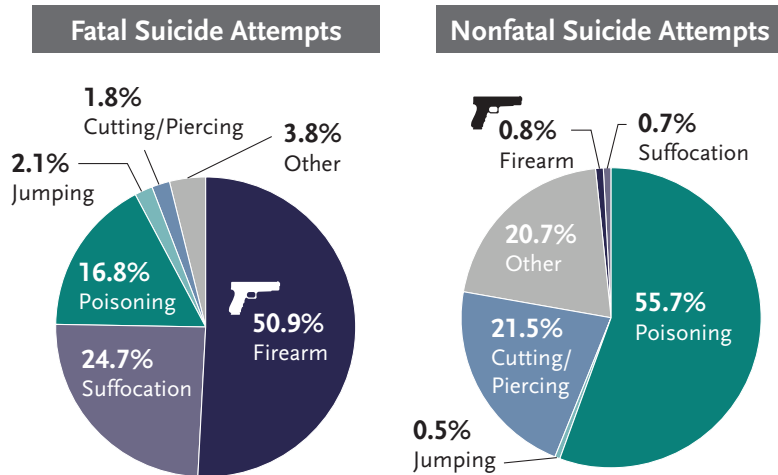
So we know that suicide attempts often occur impulsively, and that 90 percent of people who attempt suicide and survive do not go on to complete suicide later. Thus, it is critically important that we try to reduce access to the *means* of dying by suicide during periods of risk.

To save lives, remove access to the means of suicide: In 2012, I had the privilege of serving as co-lead of the National Strategy for Suicide Prevention Task Force with the United States' Surgeon General at that time, Dr. Regina Benjamin, and we led the development of a new National Strategy for Suicide Prevention.²⁷ We made a key goal of reducing access to lethal means for those at high risk for suicide.

This means encouraging psychologists and others who interact with individuals at risk of suicide to routinely assess whether they have access to lethal means, and to partner with gun dealers and gun owners' groups to incorporate suicide awareness as a basic tenet of firearm safety.

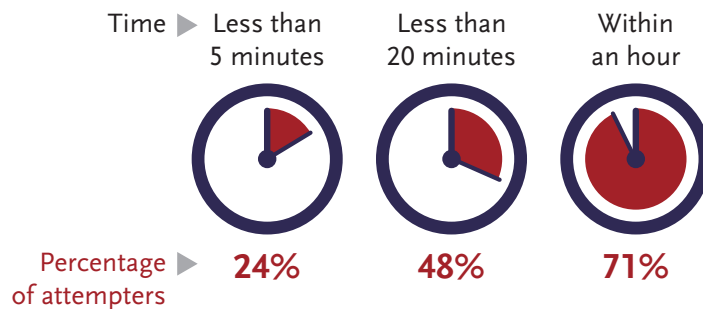
Firearms used in suicides by youths usually belong to a parent. States and regions with higher rates of household gun ownership have higher rates of gun suicide. New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts have the lowest rates of suicide with firearm, and Montana, Nevada,

Fatal and Nonfatal Suicide Attempts by Method



Time from Decision to Action < 1 hour

Restricting Means During Periods of Risk Is Crucial



Wyoming, and Idaho have the highest rates.

Putting time and distance between suicidal thoughts and actions: I believe that an important strategy is to try to place time and distance between a suicidal person's thoughts and his or her behavior. Most suicidal actions are taken within one hour of making the decision, some within five minutes. *If you can delay the action, you can save lives.*

27. 2012 National Strategy for Suicide Prevention: Goals and Objectives for Action. A report of the U.S. Surgeon General and of the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. <https://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/national-strategy-suicide-prevention/full-report.pdf>. See also "Extreme Risk Protection Orders," page 44 of this report.

Policies that may decrease gun-related suicide deaths include:

- Background checks to buy firearms,
- Requiring a permit to purchase,
- Waiting periods for purchase of a firearm,
- Laws to prevent children from gaining access to firearms, and
- Gun possession prohibitions associated with mental illness and red flag laws. In Indiana and Connecticut, there was a reduction in suicide deaths as a result of the red flag laws.²⁸

We have found that there's no one solution to suicide. It will be a combination of evidence-based practices, most of which we already know about, such as a waiting period and an age limit. It might be police agencies providing a safe storage facility for firearms, so when a family member is concerned about a loved one who is at risk of suicide, they have a way to get the firearm out of the house and store it.

Chuck Wexler: Dr. Reed, I'm told that a recent study in Connecticut found that when police remove guns from the homes of people contemplating suicide, the suicide rate declined, and many people did not attempt to retrieve their weapon. Is that right?

Dr. Reed: Yes, the suicide rate was lower, because people don't seek out other means of suicide if their "means of choice," so to speak – firearms – are removed. There's a myth that if you take away one means of suicide, people will just find another way to take their lives. It's just not true.

The other interesting thing we have found is that if you directly ask someone whether they are thinking of suicide, most people who are thinking of it will be honest and tell you yes.

Wexler: So family members and friends have a key role, right? If you know that a loved one is going through serious life changes or seems depressed, you should ask them about it, and if they seem to be at risk and there's a gun in the house, you should speak up, because police won't know if nobody tells them.

Dr. Reed: Yes, and if the question is who is responsible for preventing suicide, I think the answer is "all of us." If somebody in your family is displaying behavior that's very different from how they behaved two weeks ago, or if they've been through a life transition – just back from the military, just out of college, just divorced, just lost their spouse – and you see some behavior that's not consistent with what you've seen from that person in the past, that's a good time to ask the question.

And if there is a firearm in the home, you can say, "Hey, look, sometimes when people go through this kind of situation, they have thoughts of suicide. Why don't you let me hold on to your firearm, or let me take your gun down to the local police station and see if they'll store it while you're going through what you're going through?"

28. "Effects of Risk-Based Firearm Seizure Laws in Connecticut and Indiana on Suicide Rates, 1981–2015." <https://ps.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ps.201700250>

Gun Violence Category #2: “Everyday” Homicides and Nonfatal Shootings

TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF GUN VIOLENCE committed on a daily basis in the United States, PERF asked the top police officials of five cities – New York City; New Orleans; Chicago; Washington, DC; and Baltimore – to make presentations at the June 7 conference.

New York City Commissioner James O’Neill; New Orleans Superintendent Michael Harrison; Chicago Superintendent Eddie Johnson; Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Chief Peter Newsham, and Baltimore Commissioner Gary Tuggle each provided analyses of their gun violence problems and how they are addressing them.

Following are excerpts from those presentations:

New York City: A Focus on Neighborhood Policing, Technology, and Partnerships with Prosecutors

New York City Police Commissioner James O’Neill:

Shootings Are Down 85 Percent in NYC Because We Focus on Them and Work with Prosecutors

We’ve gone from 5,269 shootings in 1993 to 789 shootings in 2017, an 85-percent reduction, because we have a multi-layered approach.²⁹ The leadership I have – my four-star chief, Terry Monahan, Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea, and

New York City
Police
Commissioner
James O’Neill



all my three-star chiefs – grew up in the system of accountability since the early 1990s. Compstat has a lot to do with where we are today. We have used Compstat to drive crime down for many years. We focus on violence, we focus on homicides, we focus on shootings. Every one of us is glued to our iPhone, and news of every homicide comes over that phone, every shooting comes over that phone. Most of us wake up in the middle of the night to check the phone and see if there have been any shootings.

A few key statistics about homicides in New York:

- Half of our homicides in New York City are committed with guns.

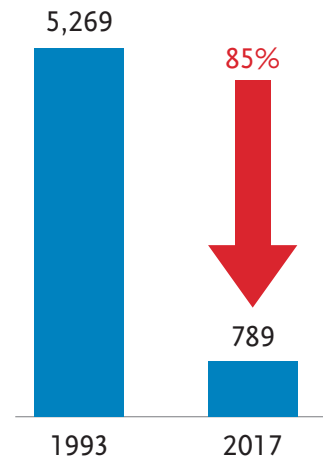
29. Shooting incidents continued to decline to 741 in 2018 (as of December 23), and homicides declined to 283. “NYPD Citywide Crime Statistics.” https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/nypd/downloads/excel/crime_statistics/cs-en-us-city.xlsx

- Two-thirds of all shootings occur on the street.
- One in four are gang-related.
- Another fourth are categorized as resulting from “disputes.” We try to be more specific whenever we can, but sometimes it’s difficult to figure out what the source of the violence is.
- Nearly three out of four victims are black.
- The most common age of victims, historically, has been 19 years old, although, as with many other cities, that has started to trend higher over the last couple years.
- Criminal shootings in New York City are nearly exclusively committed using illegally-possessed handguns. More than 55 percent of the illegal firearms entering New York City can be traced to the “Iron Pipeline” states of Virginia, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Georgia.
- Since 2014, seven NYPD officers have been killed by gunfire.

Neighborhood Policing: The biggest drop in homicides in the last dozen years or so was from 2016 to 2017. I think a lot of that has to do with our Neighborhood Policing initiative,³⁰ which involves focusing on the small number of drivers of violence, assigning officers to a neighborhood and making them accountable for it, and allowing officers to create relationships with community members, which results in good intelligence and information-gathering.

Technology: The technology that we’ve been building from 2014 to 2018 has also really helped us keep these crimes down. We have over 10,000 public and private cameras in the city. License plate readers are a big help. ShotSpotter has really made a big difference in cutting the time it takes us to respond to a shooting. We swab all

Criminal Shootings in New York City, 1993 vs 2017



our recovered firearms for DNA, resulting in a 448-percent increase in DNA hits since 2014.

Field Intelligence Officers: We have a field intelligence officer in each one of our 77 precincts. Their job is to focus on violence. It’s a sergeant and usually two or three cops, who debrief all the prisoners, recruit informants, conduct firearm search warrants, and conduct controlled gun buys. They recover over 1,000 guns every year.

Criminal Association Database: We have a criminal association database.³¹ We gather data on gang members, so if violence erupts between two groups, we know who might retaliate and we can try to defuse the situation. If you’re in a gang or a crew, we look at your social media posts, and we often find pictures of our subjects holding guns. That helps us push these cases forward. We also have a recidivist tracking and reporting database. And we have a multi-hit list, which is a list of people who have been shot multiple times. As in other cities, a very small percentage of the

30. Neighborhood Policing is a program, launched in 2015, that the NYPD describes as follows: “Neighborhood Policing divides precincts into four or five fully-staffed sectors that correspond, as much as possible, to the boundaries of actual established neighborhoods. The same officers work in the same neighborhoods on the same shifts, increasing their familiarity with local residents and local problems. The radio dispatchers, supervisors, and sector officers work together to maintain ‘sector integrity,’ meaning that the sector officers and sector cars do not leave the boundaries of their assigned sectors, except in precinct-wide emergencies.”

31. “Criminal Group Database is vital tool to controlling gang violence.” Op-Ed by Dermot Shea, NYPD Chief of Detectives. June 13, 2018. <http://nypdnews.com/2018/06/criminal-group-database-vital-tool-controlling-gang-violence-editorial-ny-daily-news/>

NYPD Works Closely with Prosecutors To Ensure that Gun Offenders Routinely Get Jail or Prison Time

Commissioner O'Neill: Unlike many cities, New York City is able to effect meaningful enforcement of gun laws.

If you get caught illegally possessing a gun in New York City, there's a 57 percent chance that you're going to go to jail or prison. The minimum prison time for illegal gun possession ranges from 2.0 years in Brooklyn and the Bronx to 3.45 years in Manhattan.

The case doesn't end with the arrest. In a way, the arrest is a starting point. Whether it's the detective, the sergeant, or the squad commander, whoever's involved must have direct contact with the district attorney's office to make sure that there will be meaningful prison time.

This was the direct result of work by Chief of Detectives Dermot Shea. We were seeing people involved in shootings getting released on their own recognizance. Instead of jail, they were getting put into diversion programs, but we had electronic monitoring and could see that they were continuing to be present at numerous shooting scenes. We decided that we really needed to pay attention to what's going on with the prosecutions of these offenders. So now, every time anyone does a gun case or makes a gun collar, we follow up on it.

Especially if you're on parole or probation, if you're in a gang, or if you have a history of domestic violence, it all increases your chances of being incarcerated if you get caught illegally possessing a gun.

population is involved in violence and crime, so that's who we focus on.

All of our 36,000 sworn officers have an iPhone that give them access to these databases.

Our Gun Violence Suppression Division works with prosecutors from the start: Enhanced shooting investigations are helping to propel us forward. Our Gun Violence Suppression Division does short-term, medium-term, and long-term cases that are about preventing firearms from coming into the city, and investigating groups and individuals who illegally possess firearms. Our local precinct detective squads also do gun cases.

We work from the outset with the prosecutor who's going to be involved in the case, whether it's the local prosecutor or the U.S. Attorney's Office. We don't do a case and then present it to them. We work together from the start, so when it comes time for a take-down, we're all on the same

page. As a result, the conviction rate is high and we get meaningful prison sentences.

Two years ago, we started the Gun Violence Suppression Division. It started in an ad hoc way, but it has become more formal with multiple sub-units, such as:

- The Joint Firearm Task Force, where we work with ATF on interstate trafficking of guns;
- The Gun Offender Monitoring Unit, where we constantly keep an eye on people who have been locked up in the past for gun offenses; and
- The Trigger Lock Unit, which reviews gun cases to take advantage of stiff federal penalties when possible. Trigger Lock is extremely helpful. If we have a gun collar and we can bring it federal, we do. Once you mention federal prosecution, they tend to talk.

New Orleans: Homicides Are Declining, Even Though the Criminal Justice Response to Gun Violence Is Weak

At PERF's conference, New Orleans Police Superintendent Michael Harrison provided his analysis of the challenges that his department is facing with respect to homicide patterns and investigations.

Despite the challenges, homicides in the city are declining. In 2018, New Orleans had 146 homicides, the lowest number since 1971.³²

Superintendent Michael Harrison:

Fewer Shootings in New Orleans Are Gang-Related, But Many Reflect the Aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

Gang-related shootings: At the moment, there are two different gang wars occurring in different parts of New Orleans, and the two wars are not even related to each other.

Unlike some other cities, in New Orleans gang shootings are not isolated to the territory where the gangs operate. Gang members may live in other parts of the city but go back to where they were raised to sell their drugs and operate as a gang. And so the violence becomes more widespread and not exclusively to where the drugs are being sold.

We're also seeing a level of sophistication, where gang members conduct surveillance on each other and catch their rivals in remote areas, in vulnerable areas, and they commit these violent acts in the remote locations.

But having said that, I should note that only about 30 percent of our nonfatal shootings and homicides are gang-motivated.

Sources of guns: As in other cities, guns are easy to get in New Orleans. But unlike New York City and Chicago where guns are bought outside the city or in neighboring states, in New Orleans

the majority of the guns we confiscate had been stolen in house burglaries and car burglaries. And in a large percentage of those cases, the guns were never reported stolen. The owner either didn't know it had been stolen or didn't report it. We think that in some cases, they are embarrassed that they left a gun in their car and didn't manage their gun safety properly.

Guns are shared: As in other cities, guns in New Orleans are passed around. We find that the guns are used in multiple shootings, multiple homicides. We know that they are being passed around from criminal to criminal.

New Orleans has some usual causes of gun violence, and some unusual causes: Regarding the causes of gun violence, we partnered with some social scientists who began to look at this and found two major factors. First, many of today's shooters had parents who were involved in a similar lifestyle or had a criminal history.

Second, we are still experiencing the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. That hurricane happened in 2005, but a 2014 study found that African-American youths in New Orleans had rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder several times the national average.³³ Many of them were in their early teens or preteens when the hurricane

>> continued on page 25



Superintendent
Michael Harrison

32. "New Orleans ends 2018 with 146 murders, fewest in nearly half a century." NOLA.com, Jan. 2, 2019. <https://www.nola.com/crime/2019/01/new-orleans-ends-2018-with-145-murders-fewest-in-nearly-half-a-century.html>

33. "Emotional Wellness and Exposure to Violence: Data from New Orleans Youth Age 11-15." Institute of Women and Ethnic Studies. <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/59f78bfbf43b558afe23e48a/t/5a84a73071c10b7697d3c5ad/1518642994026/EWS-Report-2015.pdf>.

Crime Gun Intelligence Centers Use Ballistic Evidence to Identify Homicide Suspects and Prevent Shootings

A major development in the investigation of gun violence is the growth of Crime Gun Intelligence Centers (CGICs), which are collaborations of federal and local law enforcement agencies that use forensic technologies to identify suspects in homicide and shooting cases.³⁴

CGICs have become a top priority of the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). CGICs have been established in every ATF Field Division, and ATF is encouraging local police agencies to develop a CGIC to generate leads and solve homicides and nonfatal shooting cases.

Centered on NIBIN's ballistics analysis:

CGICs center on the comprehensive use of ATF's National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN). When a gun is fired, it leaves a unique set of marks on the shell casing that is discharged from the gun and is often left behind at the site of a shooting. Using special equipment, law enforcement agencies can create electronic images of those markings. NIBIN is a massive national database of those images, each tied to the location where the shell casing was found.

At the same time, when police recover a firearm from a crime scene or from a criminal suspect, they can test-fire the gun and enter the shell casing's unique markings into NIBIN. Thus, every firearm's unique "fingerprint" can be loaded into NIBIN and matched with shell casings found at crime scenes or other locations.

One of the key concepts of CGICs is that police should consistently collect all ballistic evidence (crime guns and shell casings),

including casings recovered from scenes of nonfatal shootings and even shootings where no one was injured, because the difference between a nonfatal shooting and a homicide is often merely a matter of poor marksmanship.³⁵ A shell casing found at the scene of a nonfatal shooting often can be evidence in a fatal shooting that already was committed, or it may be used in the future to identify a suspect in a shooting that is committed later.

By helping detectives to connect a perpetrator to multiple crime scenes, ballistic evidence can result in arrests in homicide cases.

In some cases, a CGIC may be able to use NIBIN to arrest a nonfatal shooter before he commits a homicide.

Even ballistic testing of casings found by police responding to "shots fired" calls or gunshot detection systems can be useful. For example, it may be helpful for detectives to learn that a gun used in a homicide in Neighborhood A was also fired at another time at a certain location in Neighborhood B, if a potential suspect in the homicide is known to have been in Neighborhood B at that time.

Using ballistics to generate leads: ATF partnered with the Denver Police Department to create the first Crime Gun Intelligence Center in 2013. Previously, NIBIN had been seen largely as a forensic laboratory tool to support prosecutions. But with the development of CGICs, NIBIN is now also seen as a tool to be used in the field for developing investigative leads.³⁶

The importance of the timely analysis of recovered crime guns and shell casings is

34. "CGIC Concept." Webpage of the Bureau of Justice Assistance, U.S. Department of Justice. <http://cgici.wpengine.com/cgic-concept/>

35. "5 Things You Need to Know About Crime Gun Intelligence Centers." <https://crimegunintelcenters.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/5-THINGS-CGIC.pdf>

36. *The "Crime Gun Intelligence Center" Model: Case Studies of the Denver, Milwaukee, and Chicago Approaches to Investigating Gun Crime.* Police Executive Research Forum, 2017. Page 6. <http://www.policeforum.org/assets/crimegunintelligencecenter.pdf>

underscored by a recent Rutgers University study of NIBIN in the state of New Jersey. Researchers found that when two shootings with the same firearm were linked through NIBIN ballistics analysis, a third shooting event using the same weapon will occur within 90 days, 50 percent of the time.³⁷ Thus, to prevent the next fatal or nonfatal shooting, investigators have a fairly narrow time frame for intervening with the shooter and the weapon.

Since 2013, CGICs have been established or are being developed in Milwaukee, Chicago, Kansas City, Los Angeles, Phoenix, Washington, DC, and many other cities.

Tom Brandon of ATF says CGICs are “a game changer”: At PERF’s gun violence conference, ATF Deputy Director Thomas Brandon enthusiastically described ATF’s emphasis on Crime Gun Intelligence Centers.

“This has been a game changer,” Director Brandon said. “Three years ago, we pivoted to Crime Gun Intelligence Centers, based on feedback we were getting about where ATF can bring value to policing. You wanted comprehensive tracing. We coupled that with social media analysis, cell phone exploitation, and gunshot detection. It all starts with the chief working with the local D.A., the U.S. Attorney, and partnering with ATF. Our goal is

ATF Deputy
Director
Thomas Brandon



to be a better partner to make you successful in reducing gun violence.”

Brandon added: “Incidentally, we’ve heard several chiefs talk about suspects saying, ‘I’m just carrying a gun to protect myself on the street.’ But the NIBIN hits can confirm that or disprove it. If he’s saying, ‘I’m just carrying the gun for protection,’ but the gun comes back with seven NIBIN hits, that can be important information for prosecutors and can also be used at sentencing.”

In many cases, NIBIN evidence has an impact early on in a case, Brandon added.

“Often these NIBIN leads aren’t even used as evidence in court,” he said, “because with the detectives and the ATF agents working



ATF brought a NIBIN van to PERF’s conference to demonstrate the capabilities of portable equipment for ballistics analysis.

37. NIBIN Data Analysis. Rutgers University, Masters of Business and Science Program, 2018.

together, people flip, plead guilty, and you're able to raise your clearance rates."

Denver Chief R.C. White says CGICs require a commitment of resources: Robert C. White, who was Chief of Police in Denver at the time of the PERF gun violence conference, said that his city's pioneering CGIC has helped to reduce gun violence in Denver.

"Every shell casing, even if it's just someone shooting at the sky on the Fourth of July, every casing in the city and county of Denver is processed in our crime lab," Chief White said. "Every gun, regardless of how it's

recovered, if it's a crime gun or just found somewhere, is processed at our crime lab."

"The CGIC works for us because we are committed to it," Chief White added. "The troops on the street are required, as soon as there's a report of a shot fired, to go there immediately and try to retrieve the casing. It's very challenging to get some of those casings at night. When daylight comes, the officers are out there interviewing people and trying to recover those casings. It works for us because we connect all our dots, from a technology perspective and also by having the police officers on the street."

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uprooted their lives, and most of them never got any mental health care for it. Most of them did not finish high school. And now they're being arrested for multiple shootings and/or homicides. The average age for shooting and homicide suspects and victims has been trending upward, and now, 13 years after Katrina, the average age is over 30.

Unlike in other cities, a large portion of our shootings are not necessarily drug-related, but are retaliation from previous bad acts. It's people who know one another and get into disputes, and decide to solve their problems with a firearm. For example, we had two murders last Mardi Gras day, and in both cases it was people who went to a parade together as friends, got into a fight, and one shot the other.

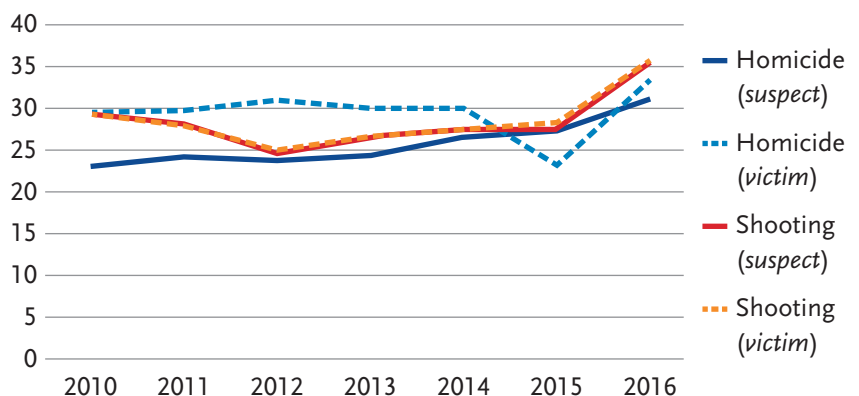
Criminal justice system response is weak: As with so many other cities, in New Orleans, there is a lot of overlap in the demographics of

our shooters and our victims. They tend to have similar criminal histories, with multiple arrests for firearms and other crimes. But because of the criminal justice system, they're able to plea-bargain and avoid jail time for some time before they receive any consequences.

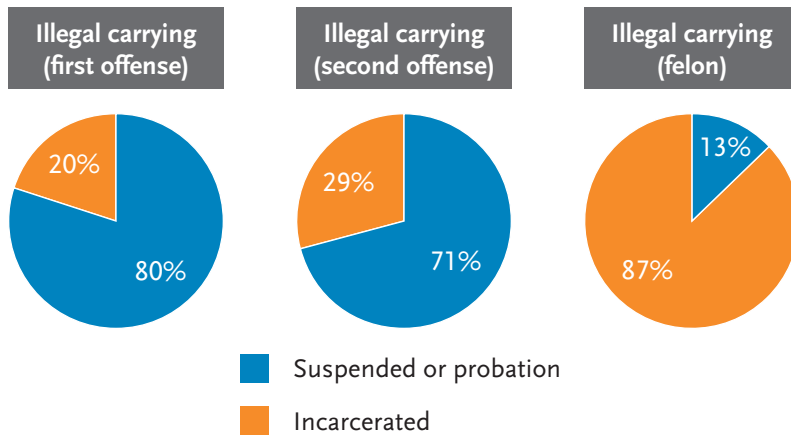
For example, if you're convicted of illegal possession of a firearm for the first time, there's only a 20-percent chance you will be incarcerated. Second offense, it only increases to 29 percent. On a third conviction, it becomes a felony, and it's only then that the likelihood of incarceration jumps to 87 percent.

How old are gun offenders and victims in New Orleans?

Average ages of gun violence victims and suspects, 2010–2016



Conviction Outcomes in New Orleans – Illegal Carrying of a Firearm



- Those arrested for a generic illegal carrying violation are rarely sentenced to immediate jail time
- Repeat illegal carrying offenders are only sentenced to immediate jail time 29% of the time.
- On the other hand, felons who are convicted of illegal carrying are sentenced to immediate jail time the vast majority (87%) of the time.

*Data from 2012–present. Includes only those offenders who were convicted. Offenders convicted of multiple charges excluded from dataset.

When is the decision point to use a gun?

I believe that the decision point to use a firearm is not necessarily when you pull it out and pull the trigger.

When we talk to the young men who are involved in these shootings, we find that the decision point to use the firearm, more often than not, was when they left home with it. At that moment, they knew that at some point the likelihood to use that firearm existed, and decided they wanted to carry their gun.

As chiefs from other cities have said, many of these young men calculate that it is safer for them to get caught with the firearm by police than to get caught *without* the firearm by somebody out there who wants to do them harm. Maybe they were involved in some recent violence and they know there may be retaliation. And there’s just a culture in New Orleans of people committing violent acts against each other, because that’s the way they solve their problems.

Chicago: Gun Violence Has Declined Since 2016 Following New Police Strategies and Focus

Gun violence in Chicago spiked between 2014 and 2016, following a decade of relatively low homicide rates from 2004 to 2014. Fortunately, the city’s homicide numbers have declined since 2016.

As of December 30, the city experienced 561 homicides in 2018, compared to 659 for the same period in 2017 and 774 for the same period in 2016. Total shooting incidents totaled 2,383, compared to 2,772 for the same period in 2017.³⁸

Guns are used in a large majority of the homicides in Chicago, accounting for 93 percent of the homicides in 2017.

As in many other major cities, gun violence in Chicago is concentrated in a relatively small number of neighborhoods.

At the PERF conference, Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson presented the latest gun violence trends in Chicago and the major factors causing gun violence in the city, including a lack of consequences for individuals caught illegally carrying a firearm.

9,500 crime guns recovered in 2018, in a city that has no gun stores: One cause of the high levels

38. “Chicago Police Department CompStat, Citywide Crime Statistics.” https://home.chicagopolice.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/1_PDFsam_CompStat-Public-2018-Week-52.pdf



“You’ll hear that Chicago has some of the strongest gun laws in the country, but it’s not true. Take UUW—unlawful use of weapon. The first time an individual is caught with an illegal firearm, on the books it says it’s a felony. But in reality, the sentencing is for a misdemeanor. It actually takes three times before a UUW offender is treated like a felon. What often happens the first two times is that we catch them, and they’re out in 48 hours.

“Our gang members in Chicago would be afraid to carry a gun if we had a law like New York’s, where the first time you get caught with an illegal weapon, you get three and a half years.”

— Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson

of gun violence in Chicago is the sheer number of weapons in the city. Between 2013 and 2017, the Chicago Police Department recovered nearly 7,000 “crime guns” every year,³⁹ and in 2018, Chicago police recovered approximately 9,500 crime guns – more than the comparable numbers for New York City and Los Angeles combined.⁴⁰

Chicago has no federally licensed gun dealers within its city limits. However, two gun dealers just outside of Chicago, in Riverdale and Lyons, IL, account for more than 11 percent of the firearms recovered by Chicago police from 2013 to 2016.⁴¹

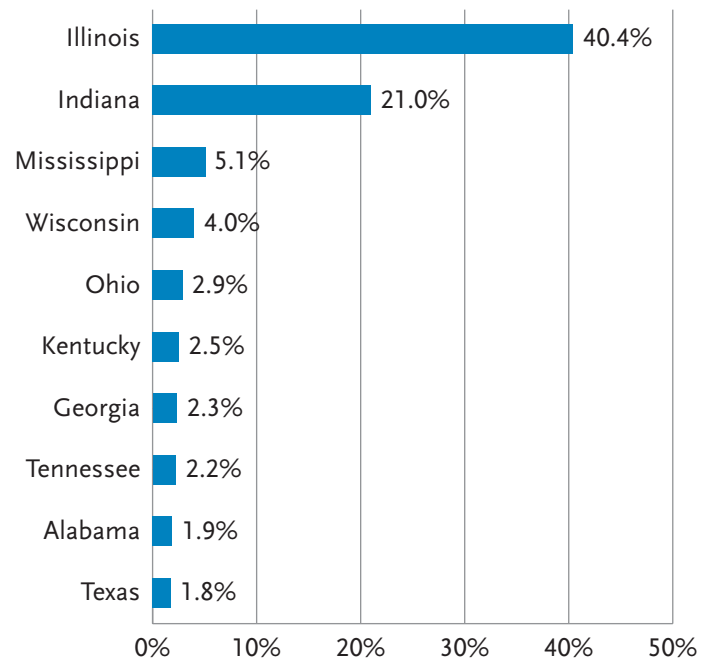
Approximately 60 percent of the guns recovered in Chicago were originally purchased outside of Illinois. One state, Indiana, accounts for 21 percent of the crime guns recovered in Chicago.⁴²

“One of the problems for Chicago is that we sit between Indiana and Wisconsin, both of which have very lax gun laws,” Superintendent Johnson said. “So our gang members take a quick drive across the border, take their girlfriends and go to gun shows, and they’ll fill up a

garbage bag full of guns, bring them back, and issue them to their gang members.”

Suspects caught with firearms in Chicago are almost never the people who originally purchased

Top 10 Source States of Recovered Firearms in Chicago, 2013–2016



39. Gun Trace Report 2017. City of Chicago: Office of the Mayor, Chicago Police Department. <https://www.chicago.gov/content/dam/city/depts/mayor/Press%20Room/Press%20Releases/2017/October/GTR2017.pdf>. “Crime guns” are defined as firearms recovered by the police that were illegally possessed, used, or suspected to have been used in furtherance of a crime.

40. “Chicago Police on Track to Seize 9,500 Guns This Year, Most in 5 Years.” NBC Chicago, Dec. 24, 2018. <https://www.nbcchicago.com/news/local/Chicago-police-on-track-to-seize-9500-guns-this-year-most-in-5-years-503449781.html?amp=y>

41. Ibid., p. 4.

42. Ibid., p. 7.



“What our research has found is that a lot of people carry guns for personal safety. Guns are very easily accessible, and they are mostly obtained through informal sources. Guns also are quite affordable in these neighborhoods, and they are often borrowed rather than purchased.”

— Dr. Nancy La Vigne, Vice President for Justice Policy, The Urban Institute

the weapons, Johnson explained. From 2013 to 2016, nearly 95 percent of the people caught with a firearm in the city were not the original purchaser. Superintendent Johnson said that guns often pass through multiple hands and are involved in multiple crimes. He said Chicago police recover many “gang guns,” which are weapons passed among gang members to commit crimes.

Homicides that stem from altercations and “beefs” on social media: Homicides stemming from altercations account for half of the homicides in Chicago. (Altercations include retaliatory violence and arguments that turn deadly in the moment, often motivated by personal slights or insults – as opposed to homicides stemming from disputes over drug selling, homicides committed during robberies or other crimes, domestic violence homicides, and other causes).

Superintendent Johnson said that many arguments, or “beefs,” start with insults on social media and result in drive-by or execution-style shootings on the street.

The percentage of homicides stemming from altercations declined from 74 percent in 2015 to 50 percent in 2017.

The Offenders. A large majority of people arrested for a homicide or nonfatal shooting in Chicago have a prior criminal history. Nine out of 10 of those arrested in 2017 had at least one prior arrest. More than half had a prior

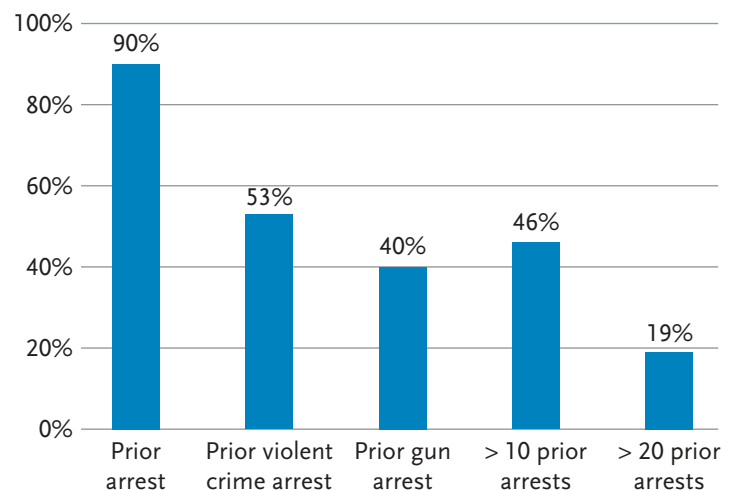
arrest for a violent crime, and 40 percent had a prior arrest for a gun offense.

Lack of Consequences. Like other chiefs at the PERF conference, including New Orleans Superintendent Michael Harrison, Superintendent Johnson said that a lack of consequences for people caught illegally carrying a firearm is a major factor in Chicago’s high rate of gun violence.

Carrying guns for self-protection: Superintendent Johnson said that some people in high-crime neighborhoods illegally carry firearms for self-protection, believing that in Chicago, as in New Orleans, the consequences of being caught with a gun by the

Who are the shooters in Chicago?

Homicide and Shooting Suspects: Prior Arrests, 2017



police are less dangerous than the consequences of getting caught without a gun by a rival gang member.

His observations are backed up by ongoing research by the Urban Institute, which is mapping where gun violence is occurring in Chicago and interviewing people in those communities, with a particular focus on those aged 18 to 26.⁴³ According to Dr. Nancy La Vigne, Vice President for Justice Policy at the Urban Institute, researchers are discovering extremely high rates of carrying guns by this age cohort in high-crime neighborhoods, and personal safety is a primary motivator. People who have been victimized in the past year are much more likely to be carrying a firearm, she said.

Signs of progress

Superintendent Johnson credited several developments with helping police reduce gun violence, especially in areas of the West and South Sides that have experienced the highest rates of homicides and shootings.

Strategic Decision Support Centers: Strategic Decision Support Centers⁴⁴ have been created in several high-activity police districts. These decentralized command centers collect and analyze data in real time, and also monitor gunshot detectors and video security cameras. Using current intelligence data and gunshot detection, the Police Department is able to direct resources to emerging crime problems and deploy beat officers in locations where they will be most effective in conducting preventive patrols. Superintendent Johnson said the SDSCs were a major reason behind sharp decreases in homicides and shootings in both the 7th (Englewood) and 11th (Harrison) police districts.

Advances in NIBIN, connecting guns to crimes: Another technology cited by Superintendent Johnson is the National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN), operated by ATF. A key element of Chicago's Crime Gun Intelligence Center, NIBIN is helping Chicago police process and analyze ballistics evidence more quickly, which allows police to

connect individual guns to multiple crimes. Superintendent Johnson noted that in the past, police often had to wait days to get results of ballistics evidence checks. With NIBIN, the process can often be completed in a matter of hours.

Working with prosecutors: Superintendent Johnson, like Commissioner James O'Neill in New York City, said that working closely with prosecutors is critically important:

"The Cook County State's Attorney that we have now, Kim Foxx, came into office shortly after I became Superintendent, and we have developed a great relationship. We saw that when gun offenders went to court, they were being released on probation quickly, and our conviction rate for these gun crimes was below 30 percent. That's just unacceptable. It frustrated State's Attorney Foxx, as well as myself and the cops who are working these cases.

"So Kim agreed to have vertical prosecutions. That means that the prosecutor who gets a case at the front end will carry that case the entire way. So now they have some skin in the game.

"Kim also agreed to embed assistant state's attorneys on task forces in our most violent districts, and that has helped immensely. The prosecutors also started coming to our districts' roll call training, to let the officers know exactly what they need to get convictions on these gun cases. Another thing we did was make sure that at the first hearing for these gun offenders, we can show the judges their violent histories.

"So we have increased that conviction rate from 27 percent to about 80 percent now, in less than a year's time, because we put these mechanisms in place.

"But for the majority of gun offenders, there are few consequences for them that first or second time. The people that I'm talking about are cases that we really focus on, because they're the worst of the worst."

— **Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson**

43. "We Carry Guns to Stay Safe": Perspectives on Guns and Gun Violence from Young Adults Living in Chicago's West and South Sides. Urban Institute, October 4, 2018. <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/we-carry-guns-stay-safe>.

44. See "Technology," Chicago Police Department web page. <https://home.chicagopolice.org/reform/technology/>

Washington, DC: Police Are Making Progress, But Other Criminal Justice Agencies Must Step Up

Metropolitan Washington, DC Police Chief Peter Newsham



Chief Peter Newsham, Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department:

The Justice System Fails to Take Gun Offenses Seriously – Until It Becomes a Homicide

We have just over 700,000 people in the District of Columbia, and between 2015 and 2017 we had substantial decreases in homicides with guns, assaults with guns, and robberies with a gun. But we had 160 homicides in 2018, compared to 116 in 2017.⁴⁵ The violence is concentrated to some degree in one of our seven police districts.

We are having an impact, but it's persistent and a difficult problem for us to solve. Our gun recoveries have been steadily increasing, and we'll probably recover another 2,000 or 2,100 guns this year.

Origins of gun crime in DC: There was a time as recently as 2015 when a lot of our gun crime was associated with beefs between various crews and gang members. Now we are seeing more gun violence stemming from disputes between people who know each other or have some kind of relationship. Or a firearm is introduced into a random dispute, and somebody ends up shot dead or suffering from a gunshot wound.

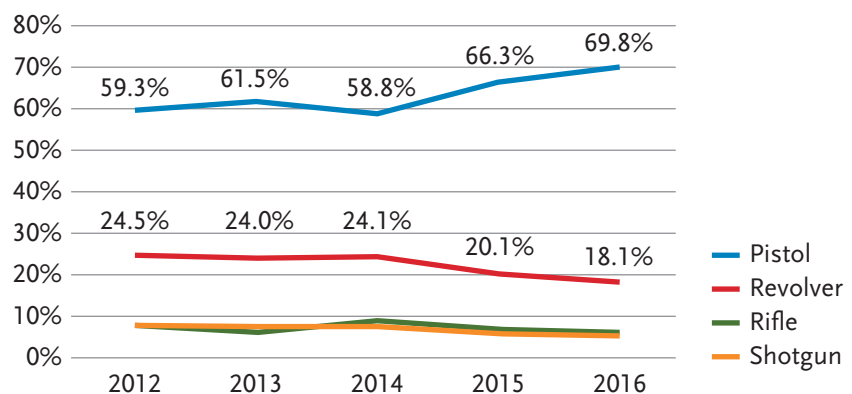
For example, last Memorial Day weekend we had two couples who got into a dispute over a parking spot. One of the males went into the house, came back, and resolved the dispute by murdering the other couple.

That type of gun violence is more difficult to target. When we had

the crew violence, you can identify the crews and focus in on their members. But when people are using firearms to settle random disputes, it's more unpredictable and difficult.

Types of weapons used in crime: Regarding the weapons that we recover, about 70 percent of the firearms used in gun crimes in the District are semi-automatic pistols, followed by revolvers, and then rifles. I think this pattern is probably common in major cities. We do not have the assault weapons issue that some other cities may have. Assault weapons are out there and are being used, but not as often as pistols.

Gun Types Recovered in DC, by Year



45. District Crime Data at a Glance.” Metropolitan Police Department. <https://mpdc.dc.gov/page/district-crime-data-glance>.

And the 9 millimeter still is the caliber of choice, with the .40 caliber starting to go up in usage, and the .22 and the .45 remaining pretty consistent down below.

Where guns in DC come from: We do not manufacture or sell firearms in the District of Columbia. Virginia and Maryland are the major source states. Gun laws in Virginia are less strict than they are in the District of Columbia. Our investigations have not shown people bringing in firearms in large numbers.

Our sense, based on information we get from our Crime Gun Intelligence Center with the ATF, is that we have two major scenarios: First, guns are being passed around by criminal actors. Or second, if you need a gun, you can just go over to Virginia and buy a gun, or have somebody buy you a gun through a straw purchase if you have a criminal record.

Nearly all homicide offenders have prior criminal records: We looked at the criminal records of our 2017 known homicide offenders in the District, and found that 35 of the 39 offenders, or 90 percent of them, had prior arrest records in DC, most often for assaults with a dangerous weapon (ADW). In addition, 24 of them, or 62 percent, had prior arrests for violent crimes in Maryland or Virginia or other jurisdictions.

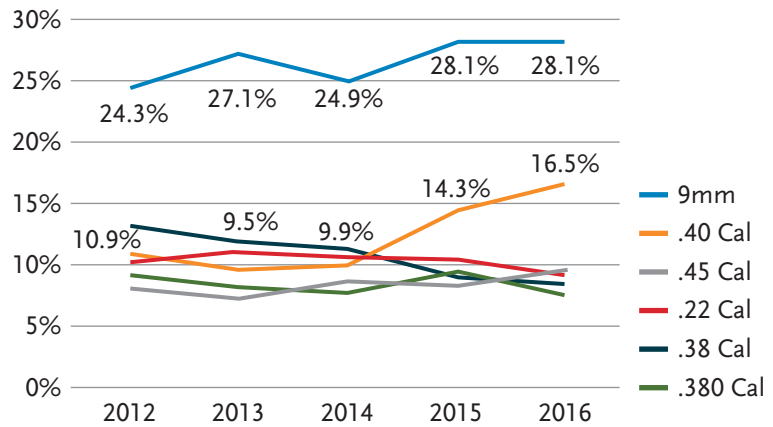
“High-Intensity Supervision” may actually mean little or no supervision. Furthermore, 17 of the 39 homicide offenders, or 44 percent,

were under supervision at the time of the homicide.

So I ask this question all the time: If we had 17 people in the District of Columbia under probation or parole or pretrial supervision, and while they were under supervision, they went out and murdered someone, what does that supervision look like?

Policing in America is being looked at very carefully. We all know that and feel it, and I think we accept that. But I think there are parts of the criminal justice system that are not being looked at as carefully. I would argue that if we

Calibers of Guns Recovered in DC, by Year



Guns Recovered in DC and Traced to an Originating State by the ATF

Gun Origin State	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Virginia	210	232	268	236	241	338	494
Maryland	297	232	220	169	176	197	227
North Carolina	82	77	74	65	72	73	94
Georgia	38	55	43	38	38	32	85
South Carolina	39	29	34	36	33	64	77
District of Columbia	101	20	26	32	36	39	54
Other	213	226	226	219	218	238	310
Total	980	871	891	795	814	981	1,341

arrest somebody who is a violent offender, and that person is allowed to go back out into the community, and they re-offend, then somebody has failed, and it's not the police. I think that the bright light that is being placed on policing also needs to be put on some other parts of the criminal justice system.

We need to pay very close attention to what supervision looks like. We do a summer crime initiative, and as part of that, they looked at the areas most plagued with violent crimes and identified 384 people as being under “high-intensity supervision.” And they went out into the community and tried to do home visits on these 384 or so people. They were able to contact about 70 of the 384. I asked the supervision agencies, “Where were the other 310?” They couldn’t tell me. *They didn’t know where those folks were.*

I said, “Well, how is that high-intensity supervision?” I think there really needs to be some responsibility and close attention paid to that.

A Lack of Consequences for Illegal Possession of Firearms

Wexler: Chief, if someone gets picked up in the District illegally carrying a firearm, the chances of them getting any jail time is pretty low, is that right?



Baltimore Police Commissioner Gary Tuggle

Chief Newsham: It’s very low, and I think that that’s very well known in the criminal community. And I think the public is largely unaware of how low the penalties are for illegally carrying firearms in the District of Columbia.

Wexler: You have said that you’re not looking to warehouse people for long sentences, but there has to be *some* consequence.

Chief Newsham: The consequence has to be significant enough to change behavior, and right now that’s not the case. We have cases that go to trial, they’ll litigate the case for however long it takes, and in the end they will render a guilty verdict *and sentence the defendant to time served.*

And that information is going back to other people in the community who are inclined to carry a gun. They know that illegal possession of firearms is not being taken very seriously.

Baltimore: Shootings Are Connected to Drugs and Gangs, And Large-Capacity Magazines Are Common

Police Commissioner Gary Tuggle:

We Are Focusing on 6,218 “At-Risk Individuals” Who May Become the Next Victims or Shooters

Baltimore is a city of about 620,000 people, and as of December 1, 2018, we have had 287 homicides this year, compared to 320 for the same period in 2017. This year we have had 618 nonfatal shootings, compared to 651 for the same period in 2017.⁴⁶

Baltimore sits on major Interstate highway corridors from the south and the north. One of the trends that we’ve seen is that gun stores are being robbed in Virginia and Pennsylvania, and the stolen guns end up in Baltimore in neighborhoods where we have drug dealing.

Large-capacity magazines are common in Baltimore: Most guns that we recover in Baltimore are pistols, but close to 20 percent are long guns.

46. Baltimore Police Department, “Incident Report, Citywide.” <https://www.baltimorepolice.org/crime-stats/crime-map-data-stats>. Accessed Dec. 17, 2018.

And one-third of the recovered guns have magazine capacities of more than 10 rounds. In 40 percent of the shootings in Baltimore, casings are left behind, and we have been able to locate between five and 10 casings per shooting.

So that tells us that these high-capacity magazines are being used, and we need to make a very concerted effort to get those high-capacity magazines off the streets.

At-Risk Individuals: To help us focus our attention on the largest aspects of gun violence, we have created a list of who we call “At-Risk Individuals” (ARIs). This list is not based on people’s race, sex, age, income, or other demographic factors. It’s basically a list of people who have been arrested twice or more in the past seven years. The list has 6,218 people – about 1 percent of the city’s population.

Many of these people have a higher-than-average risk of being homicide victims or suspects. Earlier this year we studied the 6,218 At-Risk Individuals and found that 65 of them had already been a victim of a homicide or a nonfatal shooting; 16 of them had been a suspect in a homicide or nonfatal shooting; and 12 had been a person of interest in a homicide or shooting.

While the criterion for inclusion in the list was at least two prior arrests, more than 60 percent of them have at least six prior arrests, and 22 percent have more than 10 prior arrests.

Notably, 11 percent of the At-Risk Individuals have a prior arrest for murder, and 59 percent have at least one arrest for assault. More than 43 percent had a prior arrest as a juvenile. And 33 percent are on probation or parole. We’re seeing more people who are under supervision but are in possession of guns.

We believe that the At-Risk Individual List will help us focus our resources by telling us who in

Gun Recoveries in Baltimore

From 1/1/2017 to 4/29/2018, a total of 2,627 guns were recovered in Baltimore.

RECOVERED GUNS – TYPES

Gun Type	# of Guns
Pistol	2,143
Semi-Automatic	1,427
Revolver	604
Other	112
Rifle	248
Shotgun	235
Semi-Auto Replica	1

MAGAZINE CAPACITY OF RECOVERED GUNS

Magazine Capacity	# of Guns
Blank	25
1–5	577
6–10	1,135
11–15	500
> 15	390

our community may be likely to shoot someone or be shot themselves.

Guns and drugs are closely connected:

Nearly 90 percent of the At-Risk Individuals have a prior arrest for a drug crime. I think that reflects the reality that a lot of violence is based on the struggle for drug markets and territories. The most highly sought-after drug markets in Baltimore are the places where we see the most violence. There’s a direct correlation there.

There is also an issue of generational violence in households, stemming from generations of families using and distributing drugs. These are patterns that we consistently see in our cities.

Lack of consequences for gun possession

offenders: I should also mention that 34 percent of our At-Risk Individuals have arrests for illegal gun possession. The problem is getting those cases convicted. We often see that juries just aren’t convicting. That could be caused by the public’s negative perception of police, or on the fact that many people who sit on juries come from areas where violence is very prevalent, and they’ve become desensitized to it. And that’s a very scary thing.

Emergency medical care saves lives, but many victims survive only to be revictimized,

or to commit a homicide: And as is the case in other cities, we are concerned that the nonfatal shootings of today often become the retaliatory shootings of tomorrow. In Baltimore we have tremendous medical facilities, such as the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center and the Johns Hopkins University Hospital. They do a very good job of saving lives. But unfortunately, many of the individuals who survive these nonfatal shootings either go on to shoot other people or become victims again themselves.

Social media is facilitating violence: Social media is without a doubt one of our worst enemies with respect to violence. These drug dealers who are involved in multiple drug operations don't have to stand face-to-face to talk smack about each other. They do it via social media. Social media has become a facilitator for a lot of this violence.

6 Common Themes in New York City, New Orleans, Chicago, Washington, DC, Baltimore

Each of the five cities that made presentations at the *Critical Issues* meeting has unique gun violence issues they are dealing with. However, six common themes emerged from the five cities:

1. **There is a consistent lack of consequences for many gun offenders.** With the exception of New York City, chiefs in all of the cities expressed frustration over the lack of meaningful consequences for the illegal possession (and, in some cases, use) of a firearm.

In these cities, it typically takes multiple gun offenses before an individual faces any incarceration time. None of the chiefs advocated draconian, mandatory-minimum sentences for a first offense. However, there was consensus that there needs to be some level of consequence that is swift, certain, and proportional to the crime.

2. **Many shootings and gun homicides are the result of interpersonal disputes, or “beefs.”**

While disputes related to gangs and drugs continue to occur, these cities are also seeing shootings resulting from basic arguments among

people who know each other. Many of these beefs originate on social media, but others are spur-of-the-moment disputes that escalate quickly with the introduction of a firearm. These spontaneous events are extremely difficult to predict and prevent.

3. **Semi-automatic pistols are the weapon of choice in street homicides and nonfatal shootings.**

9-mm. semi-automatic pistols are the weapons most frequently recovered by police in these cities. Large-capacity ammunition magazines are also a problem. Use of military-style “assault weapons” is not widespread, but rather is concentrated in certain high-crime neighborhoods.

4. **Many gun violence offenders and victims have similar profiles.**

The most striking similarity is that many offenders and victims have extensive criminal histories, often for violent offenses involving firearms. Many offenders and victims are young black males, although the age is rising in some cities such as New Orleans.

5. **Strategic use of technology can make a difference.**

Cities are turning to technologies such as gunshot detection systems, security cameras, license plate readers, and other systems to rapidly collect information about shootings. Police are bringing this information into command centers where it can be verified and analyzed, and then the information is pushed back out to responding officers and detectives.

NIBIN and eTrace are also playing a larger role in the investigation and prevention of gun crimes.

6. **Police must work closely with prosecutors on gun crime.**

Police agencies are forming closer partnerships with prosecutors' offices, so officers better understand what it takes to build a successful prosecution for a gun crime, and prosecutors are involved early in investigations.

Gun Violence Category #3: Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

AT THE PERF CONFERENCE, DR. ANDREA CIMINO, an expert on domestic violence, presented an overview of research studies that have explored risk factors as well as laws that have helped reduce homicides stemming from intimate partner violence.

**Dr. Andrea Cimino,
Johns Hopkins University School of Nursing:**

Intimate Partner Violence Is Common, It Can Escalate to Homicide, and It Is a Threat to Us All

Nationally, one in three women experience intimate partner violence (IPV),⁴⁷ and in the most severe cases, it can turn deadly. Between one in seven and one in five homicides of women were committed by an intimate partner.⁴⁸ Women are six times more likely than men to be killed by an intimate partner rather than someone else. In fact, intimate partner homicide is the leading cause of death for African-American women ages 15 to 45.

IPV and firearms can lead to homicide: The majority of intimate partner homicides involve a firearm. Abused women are 2 to 2.5 times more

likely to be killed with a firearm than any other means.⁴⁹ Even if homicide does not occur, many abusers use firearms to maintain power and control—by threatening to kill the woman, her children, and himself.⁵⁰ One study showed that about two-thirds of women in domestic violence shelters have been threatened with a firearm by a partner, and about 5 percent of them report having actually been shot at.⁵¹



Dr. Andrea Cimino,
Johns Hopkins University

47. “The National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey: 2010 summary report.” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/nisvs_report2010-a.pdf

48. Planty, M., and Truman, J. L. (2013). *Firearm Violence, 1993-2011*. U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Also see Kellermann, A. L., and Mercy, J. A. (1992). “Men, Women, And Murder: Gender-Specific Differences in Rates of Fatal Violence and Victimization.” *Journal of Trauma*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/1635092>

49. Garcia, L., Soria, C., Hurwitz E.L. “Homicides and Intimate Partner Violence.” *Trauma, Violence, and Abuse*. 2007. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1524838007307294>

50. Sorenson, S.B., and Schut, R. A. (2016). “Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature.” *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27630138>

51. Sorenson SB, Wiebe DJ. Weapons in the lives of battered women. *Am J Public Health*. 2004;94(8):1412-1417. doi:10.2105/AJPH.94.8.1412

Some have advocated that women be armed with firearms, but this offers no additional protection. One study showed that firearm possession *by a victim* neither increased nor decreased a victim's risk of being killed by an intimate partner, but research shows that having a firearm in the home [and available to the *perpetrator*] increases the risk of homicide by more than five times.⁵²

Risk factors for Intimate Partner homicide:

There are warning signs that IPV will escalate to a homicide. The Danger Assessment⁵³ identified major lethality risk factors.⁵⁴ These include a history of IPV, especially if it is severe or extreme (e.g., strangulation or “choking,” threats with a weapon), if it increases over time, or if the abuser has made past threats to kill the victim. Abusive partners who kill tend to be highly jealous and controlling, to have forced their partner to have sex with them, or to be unemployed. The risk of homicide also increases if there are drugs involved, if the victim has a child who is not biologically the perpetrator's, or if the couple recently separated. Studies have shown that the most dangerous time for a woman is immediately after she leaves an abusive partner.

Abusers with firearms are a public safety risk: It is more than the lives of abused women that are at risk when an abuser has a firearm. Police know that domestic incidents are some of the most dangerous calls they handle.⁵⁵ In fact,

domestic calls are the third leading cause of law enforcement officer deaths. One study showed that 22 percent of law enforcement officers who are killed were responding to a domestic incident, and 95 percent of those officer deaths involved a firearm.⁵⁶ Sadly, two-thirds of those officers killed were wearing body armor; more than half died from shots to the head or neck.⁵⁷

Domestic violence connection to mass shootings: Perpetrators of four recent mass shooting events (Sutherland Springs, TX; Las Vegas, NV; Orlando, FL; San Bernardino, CA) had documented histories of intimate partner violence. In the Santa Fe high school shooting, the first victim killed was a young woman who publicly turned down the shooter, which is believed to have spurred the shooting.⁵⁸ Alarming, in over half of the 156 identifiable mass shootings between 2009 and 2016, the shooter's victims included a current or former partner or another member of the family.⁵⁹

Firearms laws can save lives, but they need strengthening: As the nation argues about what can be done to prevent firearm violence, I want to remind everyone that there are effective policies that are known to save lives. The strongest laws prohibit abusers from buying or possessing firearms, require background checks on all firearm sales, and create processes to ensure that abusers turn in firearms.⁶⁰ States with laws that prohibit domestic abusers with a restraining order from

52. Campbell JC, Webster D, Koziol-McLain J, et al. Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2003;93(7):1089-1097.

53. The Danger Assessment helps to determine the level of danger an abused woman has of being killed by her intimate partner. <https://www.dangerassessment.org/>

54. Campbell, J. C., Webster, D. W., & Glass, N. (2009). The danger assessment: validation of a lethality risk assessment instrument for intimate partner femicide. *Journal of interpersonal violence*, 24(4), 653-674.

55. Kercher, C., Swedler, D. I., Pollack, K. M., & Webster, D. W. (2013). Homicides of law enforcement officers responding to domestic disturbance calls. *Injury prevention*, injuryprev-2012.

56. J. David Hirschel, Charles W. Dean & Richard C. Lumb (1994) The relative contribution of domestic violence to assault and injury of police officers, *Justice Quarterly*, 11:1, 99-117, DOI: 10.1080/07418829400092151. Also, Breul, Nick and Mike Keith. (2016). *Deadly Calls and Fatal Encounters: Analysis of U.S. law enforcement line of duty deaths when officers responded to dispatched calls for service and conducted enforcement (2010-2014)*. (Washington, D.C.: Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services): <https://www.valorforblue.org/Documents/Publications/Public/2000-2014LODD-Analysis-NLEOMF-COPSooffice.pdf>

57. Ibid.

58. “Santa Fe school shooting: Suspect ‘was rejected’ by victim Shana Fisher.” BBC News, May 21, 2018. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-44194074>

59. Everytown for Gun Safety. *Mass Shootings in the United States: 2009–2016*; 2017. https://everytownresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Analysis_of_Mass_Shooting_033117.pdf

60. Webster, D. W., & Wintemute, G. J. (2015). Effects of policies designed to keep firearms from high-risk individuals. *Annual review of public health*, 36, 21-37.

buying or possessing firearms have 25 percent fewer intimate partner homicides.⁶¹ Mandatory background checks have resulted in 38 percent fewer Intimate Partner homicides.⁶²

But these laws are often circumvented. Unlicensed sellers do not perform background checks, and unmarried domestic abusers can purchase guns without restrictions—we call this “the boyfriend loophole.”⁶³ Lastly, some states lack mechanisms to collect firearms from abusers, effectively rendering these laws unenforceable.⁶⁴

The important take-aways here are that:

- ***Intimate partner violence can escalate to homicide, especially when firearms are involved;***
- ***Abusers who have firearms are a threat to us all, not just abused women; and***
- ***There are effective policies to prevent firearm violence and intimate partner homicides.***

For decades, we’ve told women about their risks of being killed. We tell them that the things that are happening in their lives are similar to what was happening to women before they were murdered by their partner. For decades, we’ve been asking women to be prepared—instructing them to create safety plans, stash money where they can get it when they need it, or pack a ‘go bag’ in case they need to flee their partner.

And for decades, women have been doing everything 100 percent “right.” But for decades, women continue to be killed at the hands of their intimate partner.

It is time that we look for solutions that don’t involve women modifying *their* behavior.

Denver
Police Chief
Robert C. White



Denver Police Chief Robert C. White:

Our Police Department Hired Victim Advocates Who Guide and Offer Aid to Domestic Violence Victims

We recently hired 16 additional victim advocates. **They’re not police officers, but they work for the Police Department.** They respond to all of our domestic violence calls, with the ultimate goal of preventing situations from escalating to aggravated assault or homicide.

The victim advocates act as case managers for the victims, provide them with social services, and guide them through the criminal justice process. I think our success to some degree has been a result of hiring these advocates and having them work with victims early in the process.

Boston Police Commissioner William Evans:

We Strictly Enforce Orders Barring Gun Ownership By Domestic Violence Offenders

Any time we get a restraining order in a domestic violence incident, if the offender has any firearms at all, we take them out of the home, or the

>> *continued on page 40*

61. Zeoli AM, Webster DW. Effects of Domestic Violence Policies, Alcohol Taxes and Police Staffing Levels on Intimate Partner Homicide in Large U.S. Cities. *Injury Prevention: Journal of the International Society for Child and Adolescent Injury Prevention*. 2010;16(2):90-95. doi:10.1136/ip.2009.024620

62. Everytown for Gun Safety. (2014). *Guns and Violence Against Women: America’s Uniquely Lethal Domestic Violence Problem*. p.9. <https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2015/04/guns-and-violence-against-women.pdf>

63. Everytown for Gun Safety. (2014). *Guns and Violence Against Women: America’s Uniquely Lethal Domestic Violence Problem*. p.7. <https://everytownresearch.org/reports/guns-and-violence-against-women/>

64. Zeoli, A. M., McCourt, A., Buggs, S., Frattaroli, S., Lilley, D., & Webster, D. W. (2017). Analysis of the strength of legal firearms restrictions for perpetrators of domestic violence and their association with intimate partner homicide. *Am J Epidemiol*.

11 Questions in a Domestic Violence Lethality Screen

Below is a set of questions in a domestic violence lethality screen produced by the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence. This screen (and similar tools produced by other organizations) are designed to help police officers and other first responders determine the level of risk that a domestic violence victim has of being killed by her or his intimate partner.

If a victim's responses trigger a protocol referral, the responding officer may take actions such as contacting a domestic violence hotline and encouraging the victim to speak with a victim advocate.

Lethality assessment screens also can be used by health care providers, social workers, or family members or friends of a victim, in order to identify victims who are at high levels of risk for lethal violence.

According to the Maryland Network Against Domestic Violence, "Even victims who are assessed as 'non-high danger'... and those who are not ready to seek help, receive valuable information from the Lethality Screen. It affords them insight into the warning signs that could indicate that an abusive relationship is escalating in severity. Additionally, the officer's concern for the victim, as well as the visible partnership between the officer and the advocate, demonstrate to victims that there are people who care about their situation and are available to help when victims are able to safely seek services."

Additional information is available at <https://www.nccpsafety.org/resources/library/domestic-violence-lethality-screen-for-first-responders> and <https://lethalityassessmentprogram.org/about-lap/how-lap-works/>.

Domestic Violence Lethality Screen for First Responders

A "Yes" response to any of Questions #1–3 automatically triggers the protocol referral.

1. Has he/she ever used a weapon against you or threatened you with a weapon?
2. Has he/she threatened to kill you or your children?
3. Do you think he/she might try to kill you?

Negative responses to Questions #1–3, but positive responses to at least four of Questions #4–11, trigger the protocol referral.

4. Does he/she have a gun or can he/she get one easily?
5. Has he/she ever tried to choke you?
6. Is he/she violently or constantly jealous or does he/she control most of your daily activities?
7. Have you left him/her or separated after living together or being married?
8. Is he/she unemployed?
9. Has he/she ever tried to kill himself/herself?
10. Do you have a child that he/she knows is not his/hers?
11. Does he/she follow or spy on you or leave threatening messages?

An officer may trigger the protocol referral, if not already triggered above, as a result of the victim's response to the below question, or whenever the officer believes the victim is in a potentially lethal situation.

Is there anything else that worries you about your safety? If yes, what worries you?

Protection Orders Restrict Gun Ownership by Domestic Violence Offenders

Protection orders that require perpetrators of domestic violence to surrender any firearms they own can be an effective tool to ensure public safety. However, enforcement of these orders can be challenging for law enforcement agencies, requiring significant resources to seize firearms and otherwise enforce the orders, and to store the seized weapons.

Seattle has four detectives and a sergeant who serve domestic violence protection orders:

Many agencies are taking innovative actions to ensure that protection orders are enforced. For example, the Seattle Police Department (SPD) has a team of four detectives and a sergeant who receive all domestic violence protection orders, serve the orders, and recover firearms.

If a domestic violence offender refuses to surrender his firearms, the process moves to the courts, where the perpetrator is charged with contempt of court.

SPD is looking to expand this model to surrounding jurisdictions in King County by helping neighboring agencies to enforce protection orders. The King County Sheriff's Office also has dedicated officers for enforcing protection orders.

SPD also utilizes Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs) (see pp. 44–45) in domestic violence cases in conjunction with domestic

violence protection orders. ERPOs are not exclusive to domestic violence cases; they can be applied to persons with mental illness or other conditions that make them a high risk for owning firearms. **ERPOs tend to prevent gun ownership for longer periods of time than domestic violence protection orders.**

Portland, Oregon police work with sheriff's deputies and prosecutors:

In 2015, the Portland, OR Police Bureau, the Portland District Attorney's Office, and the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office coordinated a multi-agency response to enforcing domestic violence protection orders. Protection orders are processed and served by the District Attorney's Office. Once the orders are served, the Police Bureau has dedicated two officers and a sergeant to the Gun Dispossession Unit, who are tasked with collecting weapons that perpetrators have been prohibited from possessing.

Due to the volume of domestic violence calls, the Police Bureau uses a lethality assessment to prioritize cases. Of the 12,000 domestic violence cases that the Police Bureau responds to per year, about 8 to 10 percent receive extensive follow-up, including action by the Gun Dispossession Unit to ensure that guns are taken from perpetrators.

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order will require the offender to surrender them forthwith. We can get an order 24/7 because we always have an emergency judge on call.

And when anyone applies for a gun permit, if they have any indication of domestic violence in their background, we will never give them a gun permit. Any history of domestic violence whatsoever will stop a gun permit – and the courts have stood behind us on that.

**Kristine Hamann, Executive Director,
Prosecutors' Center for Excellence:**

*Lethality Assessment Instruments Are Very Helpful
For Advising Prosecutors and Judges
Throughout the Case*

Lethality instruments⁶⁵ (see page 38) increasingly are used at the charging stage, particularly in domestic violence cases, to determine the risks faced by a victim. The more we can hear from the officer about risk factors, the better a prosecutor's charging decisions will be. The lethality instrument can also assist the judge at various stages of the case.

Kansas City, MO Police Chief Richard Smith:

*Victim Advocates and Social Workers Can Help
Victims Get Services, and Stop the Violence*

The role of victim advocates in serving crime victims is helping to build trust with the community while working to reduce crime. When we introduce a victim advocate to a crime victim, that victim has an opportunity to open up and share information that may have not been shared with an officer.

In Kansas City, we are starting an initiative of embedding social workers at our six patrol divisions. We have found success in dealing with issues that would have gone unaddressed without a third party as a partner. Victim advocates and social workers help our victims receive services and provide valuable assistance during a very traumatic time.

**Roberta Valente, Policy Consultant,
National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:**

*Victims' Willingness to Work with Police
Depends on Whether They Have a Safety Plan*

If domestic violence survivors are not offered confidential resources to help them develop a safety plan, they will be hesitant to cooperate



Boston Police Commissioner William Evans (LEFT); Executive Director Kristine Hamann, Prosecutors' Center for Excellence (MIDDLE); and Kansas City, MO Police Chief Richard Smith (RIGHT)

65. Lethality assessment instruments are tools for assessing the likelihood that a domestic violence offender will eventually kill his partner. The instruments typically consist of a checklist of questions for an officer to ask a victim, such as "Has he ever used a weapon against you? Has he threatened to kill you or your children? Do you think he might try to kill you? Does he have access to a gun? Has he ever tried to choke you? Is he constantly jealous or does he control most of your daily activities? Is he unemployed? Has he ever tried to kill himself?"

Policy Consultant Roberta Valente, National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (RIGHT) and Seattle Assistant Police Chief Marc Garth Green (FAR RIGHT)



with police. This is why it is so important for law enforcement to partner with victim advocates who can help a survivor develop a safety plan. If a survivor knows that her assailant will quickly be released after a hearing and will come right back, and she has no plan for being protected, she doesn't have options for working with the police.

Victim advocates tell us that many survivors say things like, "I'm not quite sure what's happening. I'm not sure if it's a crime. I'm not sure if I have any rights here."

So survivors need to have the opportunity to speak confidentially to someone who can help them understand their options, and provide them with information about what services are available. It's very hard when it's just a police officer coming to the door. Many survivors are not aware of what their options are, and that is why it is so important to have a victim advocate there.

Seattle, WA Assistant Chief Marc Garth Green:

Some Domestic Violence Offenders Threaten the Entire Community

We have a dedicated support system of victim advocates. When domestic violence calls come in, our victim advocates make contact with the victims and start working with them on the protection order process.

These cases are very serious. In one case, we had a young woman whose boyfriend threatened to kill her and blow up the entire neighborhood. We arrested him, recovered 37 firearms from him, and later served a search warrant on a storage unit where he had incendiary devices.

Gun Violence Category #4: Mass Shootings

MASS SHOOTINGS IN THE UNITED STATES OCCUR far less often than suicides committed with guns, fatal shootings in domestic violence cases, and other homicides committed with firearms. However, mass shootings receive a great deal of attention in the news media, and they provoke concern in American communities, in part because most mass shooting victims are chosen randomly, not because the shooter has any personal connection to them.

So the threat of being a victim of a mass shooting can seem more real to people who do not have other risk factors for being shot, such as being involved in criminal activity, or living or working in a neighborhood with high levels of violence.

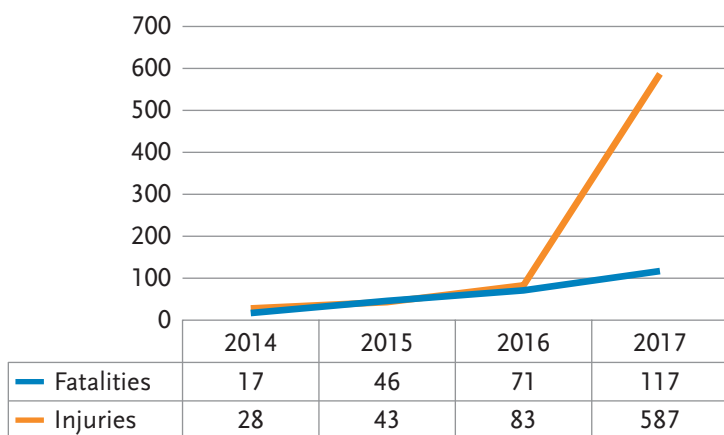
Other factors that raise concerns about mass shootings include the fact that many mass shootings involve young or vulnerable victims, and they occur in schools, churches, movie theaters and other entertainment venues, or other locations that once seemed safe.

Mass shooting casualties increased steadily from 2014 to 2017, with 17 fatalities in 2014, 46 in 2015, 71 in 2016, and 117 in 2017. The

number of nonfatal injuries also increased, from 28 in 2014 to 48 in 2015 and 83 in 2016, and then increased exponentially to 587 in 2017 because of the mass shooting in Las Vegas on October 1.⁶⁶

At PERF's conference, Dr. Lina Alathari provided an overview of the work of the National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC), an agency of the U.S. Secret Service whose mission is "to provide guidance on threat

Mass Shooting Casualties, 2014–17



Note: The large increase in injuries in 2017 reflects the October 1 shooting of hundreds of victims at an outdoor music festival in Las Vegas.

Source: U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime

66. "Mass Casualty Shootings." U.S. Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime. https://ovc.ncjrs.gov/ncvrw2018/info_flyers/fact_sheets/2018NCVWRW_MassCasualty_508_QC.pdf. See also "US Mass Shootings, 1982-2018: Data from Mother Jones' Investigation." <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2012/12/mass-shootings-mother-jones-full-data/>

Note: Statistics regarding casualties in mass shootings vary depending on definitions; some sources count only injuries from gunshot wounds, while others also include injuries such as falls and head injuries that occur when people try to flee a scene quickly.

assessment and training, both within the Secret Service and to its law enforcement, public safety, and academic partners.”

Dr. Lina Alathari, Chief, National Threat Assessment Center, U.S. Secret Service:

The Secret Service Assesses Risks Posed by Potential Suspects. To Create Accurate Risk Factors, We Must Understand People Who Have Attacked Others in the Past.

The National Threat Assessment Center (NTAC) was created in 1998 to conduct research on targeted violence, to translate the findings operationally, and to provide training to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies and others with public safety responsibilities. In 2000, Congress formally authorized NTAC’s mission to conduct research, training, consultation, and information-sharing on threat assessment and the prevention of targeted violence.

In addition to releasing research reports and providing training, we provide consultation to agencies on establishing threat assessment programs and processes, as well as on complex threat cases.

Our focus is on prevention. We want to be able to identify individuals before they commit a targeted or mass attack. (I use the term “attack”



Dr. Lina Alathari,
U.S. Secret
Service

rather than “shooting” because we study these incidents regardless of what weapon they’re using. But the large majority of these attacks are committed with firearms.)

All of NTAC’s reports are available on the Secret Service website.⁶⁷

For example, we recently released a report in which we studied the details of 28 mass attacks that were carried out in the United States in 2017,⁶⁸ to see what we could learn about the attackers, their motives, prior behaviors, and life circumstances, including whether they had come to the attention of others because of threatening or concerning behaviors.

We conduct these studies because we want to learn more about why these incidents happen, where they occur, whom they affect, and what we can learn about the attackers, for the purpose of preventing future incidents.

To assess risk, one must know the prior behaviors and histories of attackers: The Secret Service is charged with protecting large numbers of federal government officials and government facilities. So when we conduct an investigation of someone who comes to our attention because he or she has demonstrated an unusual or threatening interest in one of the people or the sites that the Secret Service is charged with protecting, we have to assess the person and try to determine whether he or she poses a risk of violence or other safety risk.

That leads us to ask, what kind of information should we be gathering to inform our assessment? What are the concerning behaviors that were associated with attacks in the past? What life circumstances or stressor is the individual going through?

Evaluations of mass attacks at schools: One of our most important reports followed the tragic mass shooting at the Columbine High School in 1999. No one had conducted a large-scale study of school shooting phenomena

>> continued on page 46

67. “NTAC Research and Publications.” <https://www.secretservice.gov/protection/ntac/research/>

68. “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces – 2017.” U.S. Secret Service, National Threat Assessment Center. March 2018. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC-Mass_Attacks_in_Public_Spaces-2017.pdf

Extreme Risk Protection Orders: Protecting Persons in Crisis, as Well as the Public

PERF's conference on gun violence included a presentation by Josh Horwitz, Executive Director of the Educational Fund to Stop Violence, about the recent proliferation of state laws providing for Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs).

ERPOs are civil court orders, issued by a judge, that temporarily prohibit a person in crisis from possessing or purchasing firearms or ammunition.

ERPOs allow police agencies or family members of a person in crisis to petition a court to issue such a prohibition against gun ownership by the person in crisis.

In the spring of 2018, PERF surveyed its member police chiefs, sheriffs, or other heads of agencies, asking them which law, regulation, or program in their view could have the largest impact in reducing gun violence fatalities. **A frequent recommendation, made by approximately one-fourth of respondents, was to establish and enforce Extreme Risk Protection Orders.**

ERPOs are highlighted in the news media following mass shooting incidents, when the public wants to know what could have been done to prevent the shooting. But these orders also have implications for reducing suicides by persons in crisis. And they have a connection to domestic violence homicides as well, because they are similar to domestic violence protection orders in effect in all 50 states and the District of Columbia.

States with Extreme Risk Laws	
California	Gun Violence Restraining Order
Connecticut	Risk-warrant
Delaware	Lethal Violence Protection Order
Florida	Risk Protection Order
Illinois	Firearms Restraining Order
Indiana	Proceedings for the Seizure and Retention of a Firearm
Maryland	Extreme Risk Protection Order
Massachusetts	Extreme Risk Protection Order
New Jersey	Extreme Risk Protection Order

Oregon	Extreme Risk Protection Order
Rhode Island	Extreme Risk Protection Order
Vermont	Extreme Risk Protection Order
Washington	Extreme Risk Protection Order

As of October 2018, at least 13 states have enacted laws to create Extreme Risk Protection Orders.

Mr. Horwitz provided an overview of the issue:

Executive Director Josh Horwitz, Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence:

The Evidence Is Very Clear: Extreme Risk Protection Orders Save Lives

News media stories often call Extreme Risk Protection laws “red flag” laws. But mental health experts are concerned that that term stigmatizes people with mental illness, in effect placing a scarlet letter on them. So we call them Extreme Risk Protection Orders, Gun Violence Restraining Orders, or similar terms that simply describe what the laws do, rather than stigmatizing mental illness.

ERPOs give law enforcement agencies clear legal authority to remove firearms from someone in crisis. Generally they come in two forms:

- A temporary emergency order, which is very similar to a domestic violence restraining order; and



Executive Director Josh Horwitz, Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence

- **A permanent or one-year order, which requires a higher level of evidence.**

With all of these laws, you go before a judge and present your evidence, and if the judge agrees, you can get an order to remove firearms from the person. I'm sure all the police chiefs in this room have methods to remove firearms from a crisis situation. Police in California, for example, have been very successful in working with the person, when they take the firearm, to develop a safety plan.

This is not something where you need to go to criminal court. ERPOs are subject to civil standards, very similar to domestic violence restraining orders.

There is evidence of success in Connecticut:

Most of these laws are new, but Connecticut's law dates back 19 years, and we've seen evidence there of how well these orders work. People sometimes say there's no clear evidence in the field of gun policy, but **this is an area where the evidence is very clear. Gun violence restraining orders save lives.**

A major study out of Duke University found that the Connecticut law saves the lives of people who are the subjects of the orders, because many of them are a danger to themselves as well as to other people.⁶⁹ They're suicidal, so if you are able to remove their guns, you remove the means of suicide that is by far the most lethal means. Even if they try another means after you remove the gun, such as poisoning, the lethality rate is so much lower than it is for guns.

The Connecticut study found that for every 10 to 20 risk-warrants that are issued, one life is saved.

And anecdotal information is starting to come in from California, indicating that police have used their Gun Violence Restraining Order law to remove firearms from people who were intent on committing a mass shooting. So this is public safety legislation.

The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence has produced reports and fact sheets detailing the history of Extreme Risk Protection Order laws, research into their effectiveness, and explanations of how they work, including the following:⁷⁰

Fact Sheets

- [Extreme Risk Laws](#)
- [Data Behind Extreme Risk Laws](#)
- [Extreme Risk Laws One-Pager](#)
- [Extreme Risk Laws Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Extreme Risk Laws vs. Domestic Violence Restraining Orders – How are they different?](#)
- [Limiting Access to Lethal Means: Applying the Social Ecological Model for Firearm Suicide Prevention](#)

Reports

- [Extreme Risk Protection Orders: An Opportunity to Save Lives in Washington State](#)
- [Guns, Public Health, and Mental Illness: An Evidence-Based Approach for State Policy](#)

69. Jeffrey W. Swanson et al., Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut's Risk-Based Gun Removal Law: Does it Prevent Suicides?, 80 *Law and Contemporary Problems* 179-208 (2017). <http://scholarship.law.duke.edu/lcp/vol80/iss2/8>

70. "Extreme Risk Laws," Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. See "Resources" tab. <https://efsgv.org/extreme-risk-laws/#>

from a behavioral perspective, which led the Secret Service to partner with the Department of Education to study attacks at K-12 schools. The report, titled the Safe School Initiative (SSI)⁷¹ and the accompanying guide that we released,⁷² set the standard for establishing threat assessment programs in schools.

We conducted several more school studies, including one we informally call “the Bystander study,”⁷³ which was conducted based on the SSI

finding that in 81 percent of the school shootings in the study, other kids knew about that potential shooter’s plans. As a result, we wanted to explore why students sometimes report information they have about a potential school attack, and why they sometimes do not. We found that often, this had to do with the climate of the school, the relationship students have with the school, misjudging the immediacy of a threat, and other factors.

Following the Virginia Tech tragedy in 2007, we again collaborated with the Department of

FBI’s Report on Pre-Attack Behaviors

In June 2018, the FBI released *A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States Between 2000 and 2013*.⁷⁴ In this report, the FBI focuses on the backgrounds and motives of 63 active shooters, in order to identify potential warning signs of shooters and prevent further tragedies.

Key Findings:

- **Mental Illness**

- 25 percent of the shooters had a verified diagnosis of a mental illness.

- **Targets**

- 64 percent of the shooters specifically targeted at least one of their victims.

- **Criminal Background**

- 35 percent of the shooters aged 18 and over had adult convictions.

- **Troubling Behavior**

- 62 percent showed a history of acting in an abusive or oppressive way.

- 16 percent had a history of intimate partner violence.
- 11 percent engaged in stalking behavior.

- **Firearms Acquisition**

- 40 percent of active shooters bought the firearms legally and specifically for the purpose of the attack.
- 35 percent already owned the firearms used in the shooting for a significant period of time before the attack.
- 11 percent got the firearm from someone they knew (borrowed or otherwise).
- 6 percent stole the firearms.
- 2 percent purchased the firearms illegally.

- **Pre-Planned Attacks**

- 77 percent of the shooters took a week or longer planning the attack.
- 46 percent spent a week or longer preparing and procuring the means for the attack.

71. “The Final Report and Findings of the Safe School Initiative: Implications for the Prevention of School Attacks in the United States.” 2001. <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/preventingattacksreport.pdf>

72. “Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates.” 2002. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/ssi_guide.pdf

73. “Prior Knowledge of Potential School-Based Violence: Information Students Learn May Prevent a Targeted Attack.” 2008. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/bystander_study.pdf

74. <https://www.hsd.org/?view&did=812282>

Education and also the FBI this time to look at targeted violence in institutions of higher education.⁷⁵

Attacks against federal, state, and local officials, including law enforcement: In 2015, we released a study examining targeted violence directed against federal government officials and agencies from 2001 to 2013.⁷⁶ In that time period, there were 43 of these attacks, which occurred in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

Currently we are collecting information about targeted violence carried out against state and local government officials and agencies, which will be the subject of future reports. For example, so far we have identified over 300 attacks targeting local government officials and agencies, with approximately three-quarters of those targeting law enforcement.

Based on our experience and the research we conduct, the National Threat Assessment Center trains law enforcement officials and school personnel on the prevention of targeted violence. Our trainings are tailored toward the audiences, and provide the steps for conducting threat assessment investigations, identifying individuals who are exhibiting threatening or concerning behavior, gathering information to assess the risk they pose, and applying intervention strategies to mitigate that risk.

Active shooters who are suicidal: Often when we are training law enforcement officials about preventing mass attacks, we say that one of the factors to assess in someone who elicited concern is whether the person has experienced suicidal thoughts or had attempted suicide in the past. We find that in previous attacks, if someone was suicidal, they often experienced feelings of hopelessness and despair that may have led them to view violence as the only option to cope with those feelings.

For example, in one incident of school violence, the shooter shot four of his friends in a high school, two of whom were his cousins. He

Las Vegas Deputy Police Chief Shawn Andersen



chose his friends and cousins because he wanted them with him on the other side. So while on the surface it looks like he was shooting students to express anger, or aggression, in reality, he wanted his friends with him after death.

Ideas on Preventing Mass Shootings

Several participants at PERF's meeting discussed the importance of threat assessment and follow-through to prevent mass shootings.

Deputy Chief Shawn Andersen, Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department:

*Mass Shootings Cause Trauma for
Everyone at the Scene,
Not Only the Dead and Injured*

Chief Andersen discussed the October 1, 2017 mass shooting in which Stephen Paddock fired more than 1,100 rounds from the 32nd floor of the Mandalay Bay hotel, killing 58 people who were attending an open-air concert and injuring more than 800 others.

We focus on the deaths of 58 people. Fifty-eight people were killed in 10 minutes. It's unbelievable, unfathomable. It's hard to believe that a single person can even do that. But there were also more than 800 people who were injured

75. "Campus Attacks: Targeted Violence Affecting Institutions of Higher Education." 2010. <https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/CampusAttacks041610.pdf>

76. "Attacks on Federal Government 2001-2013: Threat Assessment Considerations." 2015. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/Attacks_on_Federal_Government_2001-2013.pdf



Clearwater, FL Chief Dan Slaughter (FAR LEFT) and Fresno, CA Chief Jerry Dyer (LEFT)

in this, including more than 350 with gunshot wounds or shrapnel.

Imagine in your communities, hundreds of people showing up with those types of devastating injuries in your hospitals at 11 o'clock at night. We would have had far more people dead if not for the unbelievable work in our hospitals and the work by first responders. We also had people helping each other, driving wounded victims to hospitals in pickup trucks and cars.

Psychological trauma: We also don't mention often enough that 22,000 people were at that concert. 22,000 people who were there to have a churro and a beer and listen to country music. None of them expected that to occur. As police officers, we know how much trauma is exacted upon people who get shot at with handguns and rifles. They don't recover from that quickly. We had 22,000 people getting shot at from an unknown direction, watching the carnage of a high-caliber weapon ripping through people's bodies, trying to escape, with no place to go.

And this was not 22,000 people from a single school, a single workplace, a single hometown. It was people from all over the country. How do we help those people get through this? How do we provide them services? What does a person who goes back home to Gillette, Wyoming do to get right again?

Fear is highest when knowledge is low. The more we can let people know what happened, how it happened, and the vulnerabilities, the more they feel like they can fix it. They can feel in control of their lives again. That's important. Our job is to fight crime, but it's also to reduce the fear of crime.

Clearwater, FL Chief Dan Slaughter:

A Florida State Law Severely Restricts Our Ability to Investigate Potential Threats

At the state level, I would like to see Florida State Statute 790.335⁷⁷ repealed. This law restricts the creation of a record that lists firearms owned by a person, but it was written in such a broad way by the NRA that it puts citizens in extreme risk.

After Parkland, there were a lot of critical questions about how "dots were not connected." Florida State Statute 790.335 prevents those dots from being connected. For example, imagine a law enforcement officer is on patrol and sees a person driving a car on the public roads circulating around the school. The officer does a traffic stop and finds a man with two AR-15s and two handguns on the back seat. The officer questions the man, who says he is just driving around and doesn't want to talk about the guns. His license is clear, and there are no warrants against him, so the officer is required to let him leave.

77. "The 2017 Florida Statutes." Online Sunshine, Official Internet Site of the Florida Legislature. http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&URL=0700-0799/0790/Sections/0790.335.html

In Florida, if the officer were to write a Field Interview Report (FIR) and list the firearms the subject had in his possession, the officer would be violating the law. The officer would be subject to a \$5,000 fine, removal from his position, and no government funds could be used to defend the officer. In this example, no FIR would be written.

Fast forward now, and the person states on social media that he wants to kill people, and a threat assessment is done. The investigator doing the threat assessment would not have the benefit of the FIR about the man driving around the school with the AR-15s on the back seat.

Fresno, CA Chief Jerry Dyer:

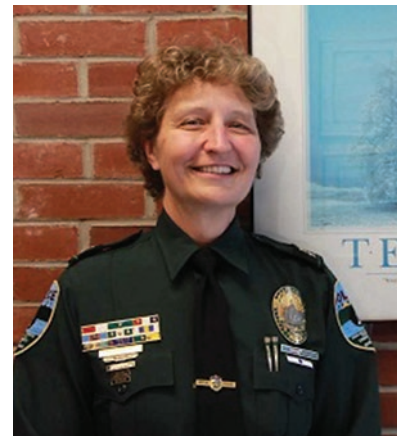
To Prevent Mass Shootings, We Need Information-Sharing with Mental Health Personnel

If I could create or change one law to reduce mass shootings, it would be to allow for increased sharing of information from mental health professionals to law enforcement through a shared database. HIPAA laws are outdated, they keep law enforcement in the dark, and they allow dangerous people with mental health issues to remain anonymous to law enforcement. Times have changed, and we must change with them.

University of Vermont Police Chief Lianne Tuomey:

Limiting Magazine Capacity Can Give Someone Time to Fight Back While a Shooter Is Reloading

Limiting magazine capacity⁷⁸ could reduce the number of people injured and killed in active shooter incidents, because it could give someone time to fight back while a shooter is reloading. We can't pull the guns back, but there is no excuse for failing to limit the number of deaths in mass shooting incidents.



University of
Vermont
Police Chief
Lianne Tuomey

78. Most states that have laws limiting magazine capacity place the limit at 10 rounds. See “Large Capacity Magazines, Summary of State Law.” Gifford Law Center. <https://lawcenter.giffords.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/hardware-ammunition/large-capacity-magazines/>

New NTAC Report: Police School Resource Officers (SROs) Have a Key Role in Assessing Threats Posed by Students

In July 2018, following the mass shootings in Parkland, FL and Santa Fe, TX, the National Threat Assessment Center released a 32-page guide⁷⁹ for schools and school districts to create comprehensive plans to prevent targeted violence.

NTAC has conducted 450 training sessions on preventing targeted school violence for more than 93,000 school administrators, teachers, school resource officers, and other public safety partners.

Following are excerpts from the NTAC report:

Identifying students of concern: The goal of a threat assessment is to identify students of concern, assess their risk for engaging in violence or other harmful activities, and identify intervention strategies to manage that risk.

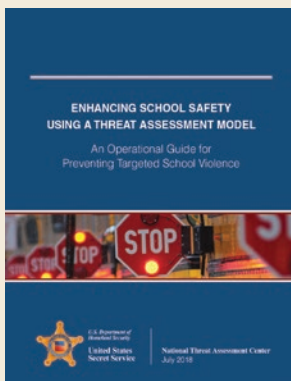
There is no one profile of a student attacker. There have been male and female attackers, high-achieving students with good grades as well as poor performers. These acts of violence were committed by students who were loners and socially isolated, and by those who were well-liked and popular.

Step 1: Establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team

The first step is to establish a multidisciplinary threat assessment team of individuals who will direct, manage, and document the threat assessment process.

The Team will receive reports about concerning students and situations, gather additional information, assess the risk posed to the school community, and develop intervention and management strategies.

Teams should include personnel from a variety of disciplines within the school community, including teachers, guidance counselors, coaches, school resource officers,



mental health professionals, and school administrators.

Step 2: Define prohibited and concerning behaviors.

Schools need to establish policies defining prohibited behaviors that are unacceptable and therefore warrant immediate intervention. These include threatening or engaging in violence, bringing a weapon to school, bullying or harassing others, and other concerning or criminal behaviors.

Step 3: Create a central reporting mechanism.

Students may elicit concern from those around them in a variety of ways. They may make threatening or concerning statements in person, online, or in text messages; they may engage in observable risky behavior; or they may turn in assignments with statements or content that is unusual or bizarre.

When this occurs, those around the student need a method of reporting their concerns to the Team.

Schools can establish one or more reporting mechanisms, such as an online form posted on the school website, a dedicated email address or phone number, smart phone application platforms, or another mechanism.

Regardless of what method schools choose to receive these reports, there should be an option for passing information anonymously.

Step 4: Determine the threshold for law enforcement intervention.

Reports regarding student behaviors involving weapons, threats of violence, physical violence, or concerns about an individual's safety should immediately be reported to local law enforcement.

79. https://www.secretservice.gov/data/protection/ntac/USSS_NTAC_Enhancing_School_Safety_Guide_7.11.18.pdf

This is one reason why including a school resource officer or local law enforcement officer on the Team is beneficial.

Step 5: Establish assessment procedures.

Maintain documentation to keep track of when reports come in; the information that is gathered; when, where, and how it was obtained; who was interviewed; the behaviors and circumstances of the student of concern; and the intervention strategies taken.

Communications: Look for concerning, unusual, bizarre, threatening, or violent communications the student made. The student's communications may reveal grievances held about certain issues or a possible intended target. They may allude to violent intentions or warn others to stay away from school at a certain time.

Inappropriate interests: Gather information about whether the student has shown an inappropriate or heightened interest in topics such as school attacks or attackers, mass attacks, or other types of violence.

Weapons access: In addition to determining whether the student has any inappropriate interests or fascination with weapons, the Team should assess whether the student has access to weapons. Many school attackers used firearms acquired from their homes.

Stressors: All students face stressors such as setbacks, losses, and other challenges as part of their lives. While many students are resilient and can overcome these situations, for some, these stressors may become overwhelming and ultimately influence their decision to carry out an attack at school.

Desperation or despair: Assess whether the student feels hopeless, desperate, or out of options.

Capacity to carry out an attack: Determine whether the student's thinking and behavior is organized enough to plan and execute an attack and whether the student has the resources to carry it out.

Planning: Targeted attacks at school are rarely sudden or impulsive acts of violence. The Team should assess whether the student has made specific plans to harm the school. The student might create lists of individuals or groups targeted for violence, or research tactics and materials needed to carry out the attack. The student may conduct surveillance, draw maps of the planned location, and test security responses at school.

Step 6: Develop risk management options.

Each student who comes to the Team's attention will require an individualized management plan. Often, the Team will determine that the student is not currently at risk for engaging in violence, but requires monitoring or is in need of guidance.

Sometimes management involves suspension or expulsion from school. When this is necessary, Teams and school administrators should consider how it might affect their ability to monitor the student.

Removing a student from school does not eliminate the risk to the school community.

Step 7: Create and promote safe school climates.

Students in safe school climates feel empowered to share concerns with adults, without feeling ashamed or facing the stigma of being labeled a "snitch." Encourage teachers and staff to build positive, trusting relationships with students by actively listening to students and taking an interest in what they say.

Step 8: Conduct training for all stakeholders.

Law enforcement and school resource officers: Not every school will have a school resource officer, but schools can still develop relationships with local law enforcement agencies and personnel. Schools can encourage local officers to co-teach classes at the school, serve as coaches or assistant coaches of sports teams, and work with parents and teachers at after-school events.

Research on Gun Violence Policies Is Weak, But Research on Programs Is Strong

By Dr. Sean Goodison
Deputy Director, PERF Center for Applied
Research and Management

The term “gun violence” is often used as shorthand for any crime involving a gun. But this simplification masks differences in various types of crime that have distinct causes, victims, and fact patterns. A mass shooting at a school is not the same type of crime as a homicide committed in a gang feud or a shooting in a domestic violence case. Furthermore, references to “gun violence” often fail to acknowledge the most common type of gun-related fatality: suicides.

Policing research shows that successful policy solutions are usually tailored to a specific problem, rather than a “one size fits all” approach.

There are two areas of gun violence research:

1. **Gun policies** – existing laws, new proposed legislation, regulations, etc. That is the big-picture view as laws are typically enacted over large spaces (e.g. nationally or statewide).
2. **Gun programs** – how police departments, sheriffs’ offices, and other law enforcement agencies can reduce gun violence. These are generally smaller-picture efforts, affecting the single city, town, or county served by a law enforcement agency.

Overall, the research into gun programs is stronger and more conclusive than research into gun policies.



Dr. Sean Goodison

Gun programs research

Gun programs reflect local jurisdictions’ actions to affect gun violence, and generally can be implemented by law enforcement agencies without any change to gun laws. Some of these programs have strong records of reducing gun-related crime.

There are four main classes of law enforcement programs shown to reduce crime, when implemented properly:

- **Hot spots policing:** Focused interventions by police or sheriffs’ departments within small geographic areas of high crime;⁸⁰
- **Focused deterrence:** Changing criminal offenders’ behavior through a strategic, coordinated program of enforcement and social services;⁸¹
- **Problem-oriented policing:** Proactive strategies in which police address underlying problems that contribute to crime, particularly through the use of the

80. Braga, A. A., Papachristos, A. V., & Hureau, D. M. (2014). The effects of hot spots policing on crime: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis. *Justice quarterly*, 31(4), 633-663.

81. Braga, A. A., & Weisburd, D. L. (2015). Focused deterrence and the prevention of violent gun injuries: Practice, theoretical principles, and scientific evidence. *Annual review of public health*, 36, 55-68.

SARA model for problem solving (scanning to identify recurring issues; analysis of a problem; response; and assessment of whether the response had the desired effect);⁸²

- **Directed patrol:** Assigning additional officers to high-crime areas, with orders to conduct proactive activity rather than just responding to calls for service.⁸³

Gun policy research

- *Gun Policy in America*, by the RAND Corporation, is a comprehensive and rigorous examination of thousands of studies on the effects of gun policy in the United States.⁸⁴
 - Given the scope of this work, one might expect that many policy questions have been resolved and clear guidance is available for policymakers on many issues. Unfortunately, that is not the case.
 - **The massive review by RAND indicates that little is scientifically known about the effects of gun policy in the United States.**
 - Although the RAND report reviewed thousands of studies, only 54 studies published since 2003 met RAND's standards for methodological rigor. In other words, there is a large amount of research, but nearly all of it is scientifically weak.
- Recommendation:**
Expand gun violence research.
- The federal government, through the CDC and other agencies, should support high-quality research on evidence-based strategies for combating gun violence.
- Private foundations should continue to support gun violence research.
- Law enforcement agencies should work closely with the research community to engage in research projects that examine the effectiveness of their gun violence programs and strategies.
- Special attention should be given to researching the policies and programs that are recommended in this report, especially:
- Legislation and practices that result in jail time or other meaningful sanctions for illegal possession of a firearm, and whether such practices are associated with lower violent crime rates (e.g., comparing the experience of New York City, which enforces laws governing gun possession, with Baltimore, Chicago, New Orleans, and/or other cities that have weak enforcement).
 - Policies and practices that fill gaps in the nation's current background check system for purchasing a firearm.
 - Whether Extreme Risk Protection Orders succeed in their goal of reducing homicides and suicides by removing weapons from persons with mental illness or other conditions that can contribute to acts of violence.

82. Weisburd, D., Telep, C. W., Hinkle, J. C., & Eck, J. E. (2010). Is problem-oriented policing effective in reducing crime and disorder?. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 9(1), 139-172.

83. Koper, C. S., Mayo-Wilson, E., Smith, J., & Koper, C. S. (2012). Police strategies to reduce illegal possession and carrying of firearms: effects. *Campbell Systematic Reviews*, 11.

84. "Gun Policy In America." RAND Corporation. <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy.html>

Conclusion: What Works, and What Can Be Done Now

THE UNITED STATES HAS A HOMICIDE RATE that is approximately 4 to 10 times higher than those of other Western industrialized nations, including France, Germany, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Greece, Norway, Denmark, the Netherlands, and many others.⁸⁵ So we know that it is possible to have lower rates of gun violence, because other countries have such a tiny fraction of our problem.

American police chiefs and sheriffs report that the sheer volume of guns on our streets contributes to our high rates of gun violence. According to the Congressional Research Service, gun ownership in the United States has roughly doubled since 1968, to approximately 310 million firearms.⁸⁶ And that is a genie that cannot be put back in the bottle.

But at the same time, we know that gun violence varies widely across the United States. Some cities are finding it much more difficult than others to reduce fatal and nonfatal shootings. Police leaders attribute these differences to the vastly different laws and policies in effect in different locations.

Perhaps the most important difference, chiefs and sheriffs say, is that some states have laws and prosecutorial practices of imposing jail time or other meaningful sanctions for illegal possession of a gun by convicted felons and other persons who are legally prohibited from owning guns. New York City also has tight controls and permitting requirements for gun ownership.

In New York City, being arrested for illegal gun possession usually results in jail time. In other cities, such as Chicago, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Washington, DC, illegal possession of a firearm often is not treated as a serious crime, especially for the first or second offenses.

The result is that many more guns are carried on the streets, where gang members and other offenders use them to intimidate rivals or retaliate for prior acts of violence. Police chiefs report that some gang members consider the consequences of being stopped by the police for illegally carrying a gun less dangerous than being caught on the street without a gun by a rival gang member. Many police chiefs also note that shootings increasingly stem from petty arguments or “beefs,” which often are fueled by feuds on social media but sometimes erupt spontaneously. People have been killed over arguments about a parking space.

Law enforcement leaders also note that some states and cities have laws and ordinances that go far beyond minimum federal requirements in preventing purchases of firearms by persons who are legally prohibited from owning guns. In cities and states with weak laws, it is far easier for felons, persons with mental illness, or other disqualified persons to buy guns through straw purchases, purchases at gun shows, or other mechanisms. And even in cities that

85. “Intentional Homicide Victims.” United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Statistics and Data. <https://dataunodc.un.org/crime/intentional-homicide-victims>

86. Congressional Research Service. Krouse, William J. “Gun Control Legislation.” November 14, 2012. <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/RL32842.pdf>

have some strict gun ordinances, such as Chicago and Washington, DC, the laws are undermined if nearby cities or states have much weaker laws.

This report provides analysis and nine recommendations, all of which are based on the advice we received from hundreds of police and sheriffs' department leaders, as well as other experts on related issues of suicides and domestic violence.

There is enormous potential for reducing suicides by reducing access to firearms, because firearms are by far the most lethal way to attempt suicide. Approximately 90 percent of suicides attempted with a gun end in death, compared to only 10 percent of suicides attempted by all other means combined. And in the vast majority of cases, a person who attempts suicide but survives *does not keep trying* to commit suicide. So we need a national effort to create distance and time between potentially suicidal persons and firearms.

PERF's recommendations in this report are based on the expertise of the people who deal with the effects of gun violence every day. So we believe they can help any jurisdiction achieve the type of success in reducing gun violence that has been demonstrated over decades by New York City, where shootings have declined by 85 percent since the 1990s and continue to drop.

We also need research on what works. Do laws, and enforcement practices, governing gun possession make a difference in the levels of gun violence? Do legal consequences matter? Are Extreme Risk Protection Orders and Domestic Violence Protection

Orders successful in reducing gun violence? We have anecdotal evidence suggesting certain impacts, but we need to vastly expand research to measure results, and then we must share the results with the field and with policymakers.

Today there is a tendency to think that nothing can be done about gun violence in America. Enactment of significant new legislation on the national level is unlikely. Just as this report was going to print, the House of Representatives passed legislation to expand background checks for gun purchases and allow more time for those checks could be completed (two of the recommendations in this report), but prospects for Senate approval were uncertain.

However, as this report explains, there are promising actions that can be taken now without new laws. Gun owners can secure and lock their firearms, to prevent them from being used by a family member to commit a homicide or suicide, and to prevent them from being stolen in a burglary. Community members can work with the police to share information about gun violence in their neighborhoods. Police can coordinate with prosecutors to ensure that current legal standards are enforced appropriately to reduce gun crime. Police can increase their use of powerful ballistics evidence. And school officials, parents, and police can work together to assess threats and prevent mass shootings.

The responsibility for addressing gun violence rests with everyone, not just Congress, state lawmakers, or police agencies. A concerted effort by all of us offers the best hope for change.

About the Police Executive Research Forum

THE POLICE EXECUTIVE RESEARCH FORUM (PERF) is an independent research organization that focuses on critical issues in policing. Since its founding in 1976, PERF has identified best practices on fundamental issues such as reducing police use of force; developing community policing and problem-oriented policing; using technologies to deliver police services to the community; and developing and assessing crime reduction strategies.

PERF strives to advance professionalism in policing and to improve the delivery of police services through the exercise of strong national leadership; public debate of police and criminal justice issues; and research and policy development.

The nature of PERF's work can be seen in the reports PERF has published over the years. Most of these reports are available without charge online at <http://www.policeforum.org/free-online-documents>. All of the titles in the *Critical Issues in Policing* series can be found on the back cover of this report and on the PERF website at <https://www.policeforum.org/critical-issues-series>.

In addition to conducting research and publishing reports on our findings, PERF conducts

management studies of individual law enforcement agencies; educates hundreds of police officials each year in the Senior Management Institute for Police, a three-week executive development program; and provides executive search services to governments that wish to conduct national searches for their next police chief.

All of PERF's work benefits from PERF's status as a membership organization of police officials, who share information and open their agencies to research and study. PERF members also include academics, federal government leaders, and others with an interest in policing and criminal justice.

All PERF members must have a four-year college degree and must subscribe to a set of founding principles, emphasizing the importance of research and public debate in policing, adherence to the Constitution and the highest standards of ethics and integrity, and accountability to the communities that police agencies serve.

PERF is governed by a member-elected President and Board of Directors and a Board-appointed Executive Director.

To learn more about PERF, visit www.policeforum.org.



MOTOROLA SOLUTIONS
FOUNDATION

About the Motorola Solutions Foundation

The Motorola Solutions Foundation is the charitable and philanthropic arm of Motorola Solutions, the leading provider of mission-critical communications, software and video solutions that help build safer cities and thriving communities. The Motorola Solutions Foundation makes strategic grants, forges strong community partnerships and fosters innovation by funding programs in public safety education, disaster relief, employee programs, and education,

especially science, technology, engineering, and math. In supporting public safety education, the Foundation focuses on supporting families of fallen public safety officers, advancing the education of public safety professionals and supporting community public safety education programs. The Motorola Solutions Foundation provides over \$11 million in support to over 250 charitable organizations and universities in over 30 countries annually.

For more information on Motorola Solutions Corporate and Foundation giving, visit www.motorolasolutions.com/giving.

For more information on Motorola Solutions, visit www.motorolasolutions.com.

APPENDIX:

Participants at the Critical Issues Meeting – Reducing Gun Violence: Focusing on What Works

June 7, 2018, Washington, DC

Participants' titles and affiliations are those at the time of the meeting.

Chief Art Acevedo HOUSTON (TX) POLICE DEPARTMENT	Lieutenant Robert Backus LANSING (MI) POLICE DEPARTMENT	Major Shawn Buchanan EAST POINT (GA) POLICE DEPARTMENT
Law Enforcement Policy Analyst Brian Acken RTI INTERNATIONAL	Deputy Chief Christopher Bailey INDIANAPOLIS (IN) METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT	Program Analyst Peter Bukiri U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, ATF
Director Jon Adler U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, BJA	Deputy Chief Shon Barnes SALISBURY (NC) POLICE DEPARTMENT	Adam Burden NORTH MIAMI (FL) POLICE DEPARTMENT
Dr. Lina Alathari U.S. SECRET SERVICE, NATIONAL THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER	Lydia Barrett SHOTSPOTTER	Sheriff Timothy Cameron ST. MARY'S COUNTY (MD) SHERIFF'S OFFICE
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