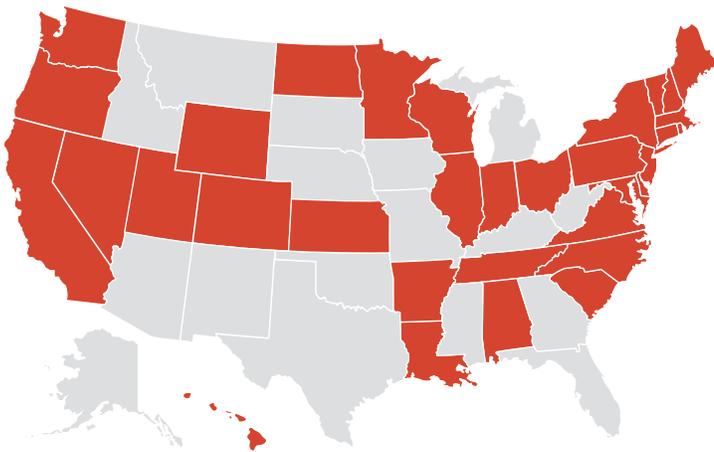


# GUNS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

For the millions of American women and children affected by domestic violence every year, guns in the hands of abusers pose a serious threat. In fact, **the presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation makes it five times more likely an abused woman will die.**<sup>1</sup> Protecting the lives of American women and their families requires lawmakers to take steps to ensure that dangerous domestic abusers and convicted stalkers don't have access to guns.

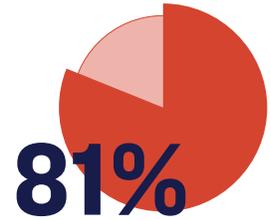
## 33 STATES HAVE PASSED DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS SINCE 2013



In the face of inaction in Congress, states across the country are enacting laws to close loopholes in federal law and limit access to guns by abusers and stalkers.

**giffordslawcenter.org**

FACEBOOK /Giffords    TWITTER @GiffordsCourage



**81%** of Americans support legislation that helps keep guns out of the hands of domestic abusers and stalkers.<sup>2</sup>

**600** Each year, at least 600 women in America are shot and killed by an intimate partner—that's one woman every 16 hours.<sup>3</sup>

**55%** Guns turn already violent situations deadly—55% of intimate partner homicides in America are committed with firearms.<sup>4</sup>

**4.5 million** women in the US have been threatened with a gun by an intimate partner, and nearly 1 million women alive today have survived being shot by an intimate partner.<sup>5</sup>



**THE GUN HOMICIDE RATE FOR WOMEN IN THE US IS 21 TIMES HIGHER THAN IN OTHER HIGH-INCOME COUNTRIES<sup>6</sup>**

This disparity is fueled in large part by elevated rates of intimate partner gun homicides in America.

## Federal Law: The Lethal Nexus of Firearms and Intimate Partner Violence

Data demonstrates that intimate partner violence combined with access to firearms is a deadly combination. Gaps in federal law that allow abusers and stalkers to obtain guns are a key driver of the staggering levels of lethal violence against women in the US.

### CLOSE THE “BOYFRIEND GAP”

More than half of all intimate partner homicides are committed by dating partners.<sup>7</sup> Federal law prohibits abusers from accessing firearms if they have been convicted of domestic violence against certain categories of victims, including current or former spouses, parents, people who have a child in common, and current or former cohabitants. **But federal law does not prohibit people from accessing guns if they have been convicted of abusing current or former dating partners.** This deadly “boyfriend gap” allows a significant number of abusers to acquire and own firearms, which they can use to terrorize and harm their partners.

### CLOSE THE “STALKING GAP”

Stalking is a strong predictor of future violence. One study of female murder victims in 10 cities found that **76% of women murdered by a current or former intimate partner, and 85% of women who survived a murder attempt**, had been stalked in the year preceding the murder.<sup>8</sup> Under current federal law, individuals convicted of misdemeanor stalking offenses are not prohibited from accessing guns. Closing the “stalker gap” in federal law would help ensure that all individuals convicted of stalking offenses are prohibited from accessing firearms.

## State Law

Across the country, a number of states have adopted laws that fill gaps in federal law by more comprehensively restricting access to firearms and ammunition by domestic abusers. A robust body of research shows that these laws are associated with significant reductions in intimate partner homicides.

For example, **state laws that restrict firearm access in domestic violence cases when a restraining order has been issued are linked to a 13% reduction in intimate partner homicides committed with firearms.**<sup>9</sup> Reductions in intimate partner homicides are even larger when state laws close the “boyfriend gap” and require that abusers provide proof that they actually relinquished their firearms.<sup>10</sup>

Although many states have enacted laws that help restrict domestic abusers’ access to firearms, there is still much work to be done. By enacting strong gun safety laws, we can take a stand to protect abused women and save lives from gun violence.

PUBLISHED MARCH 2019

For more details and underlying research, visit [lawcenter.giffords.org/domestic-violence](http://lawcenter.giffords.org/domestic-violence)

# giffordslawcenter.org

FACEBOOK /Giffords    TWITTER @GiffordsCourage

## 280+

lifesaving gun safety laws have been enacted in 45 states and DC since the tragedy at Sandy Hook.

## 136,000

Americans are shot each year—over one million in the past decade.

## 25x

Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed in a gun homicide than people in other high-income countries.

## WE’RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For 25 years, the legal experts at Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

CONTACT US

[media@giffords.org](mailto:media@giffords.org)

**GUNS AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE CITATIONS**

1. J.C. Campbell, et al., "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study," *American Journal of Public Health* 93, no.7 (2003):1089-1097.
2. Colleen L. Barry, et al., "Public Support for Gun Violence Prevention Policies Among Gun Owners and Non-Gun Owners in 2017," *American Journal of Public Health* 108, no. 7 (2018): 878-881.
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting Program: Supplementary Homicide Reports (SHR), 2012-2016.
4. *Id.*
5. Susan B. Sorenson and Rebecca A. Schut, "Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature," *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse* 19, no. 4 (2018): 431-442.
6. Erin Grinshteyn and David Hemenway, "Violent death rates in the US compared to those of the other high-income countries, 2015," *Preventive Medicine* 123, (2019): 20-26.
7. April M. Zeoli and Amy Bonomi, "Pretty in Pink? Firearm Hazards for Domestic Violence Victims," *Women's Health Issues* 25, no. 1 (2015): 3-5.
8. Judith M. McFarlane, et al., "Stalking and Intimate Partner Femicide," *Homicide Studies* 3, no. 4 (1999): 300-316.
9. April M. Zeoli, et al., "Analysis of the Strength of Legal Firearms Restrictions for Perpetrators of Domestic Violence and Their Association with Intimate Partner Homicide," *American Journal of Epidemiology* 187, no. 11 (2018).
10. *Id.*