

## Domestic Violence and Guns in the United States: A Lethal Combination

Too many women, men, and children are threatened, injured, and killed by intimate partners and family members in domestic violence incidents perpetrated with firearms. The following statistics outline the burden of domestic violence committed with firearms and the dangers of abusers' easy access to guns.

### Intimate Partner Homicide in the United States

- Women in the US are 11x more likely to be killed with a gun than in other high-income countries.<sup>1</sup>
- More than half of women killed with guns are killed by an intimate partner or family member.<sup>2</sup>
- In the US, intimate partner homicide comprises 40-50% of all murders of women.<sup>3</sup>
- Every 16 hours, an American woman is shot and killed by their intimate partner.<sup>4</sup>

### Nonfatal Gun Use

- About 4.5 million American women who are alive today - 1 in 27<sup>5</sup> - have had an intimate partner threaten them with a gun.<sup>6</sup> Abusers' previous threats with a weapon and threats to kill are both predictors of intimate partner homicide.<sup>7</sup>
- Nearly 1 million women who are alive today have been shot or shot at by an intimate partner.<sup>8</sup>

### Abusers' Access to Firearms Increases the Risk that an Intimate Partner Will Die

- Research shows when an abusive partner has access to a firearm, the risk the other partner will die increases more than five-fold.<sup>9</sup>

### Policies Restricting Firearm Access to Domestic Abusers are Effective

- In states that require background checks prior to every handgun sale, 38% fewer women are shot and killed by an intimate partner.<sup>10</sup>
- Reducing abusers' access to guns saves lives. In states that restrict access to firearms by individuals subject to domestic violence restraining orders, there is a 25% reduction in risk of domestic violence homicide. And even more striking, studies show that "would-be killers do not replace guns with other weapons to effect the same number of killings."<sup>11</sup>

**Bottom Line:** Guns make domestic violence more lethal, and reducing firearm access to domestic abusers saves lives.

**About the Ed Fund:**

The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (Ed Fund) was founded in 1978 as a 501(c)(3) organization that makes communities safer by working to reduce gun violence. The Ed Fund achieves this by engaging in policy development, advocacy, community and stakeholder engagement, and technical assistance.

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<sup>1</sup> Richardson, E. G., & Hemenway, D. (2011). Homicide, suicide, and unintentional firearm fatality: comparing the United States with other high-income countries, 2003. *Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery*, 70(1), 238-243.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Report, 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Greenfield LA, Rand MR, Craven D, et al. (1998). Violence by Intimates: Analysis of Data on Crimes by Current or Former Spouses, Boyfriends, and Girlfriends. Washington, DC: US Dept of Justice.

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.ap.org/projects/2016/domestic-gun-homicides/>

<sup>5</sup> [http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS\\_14\\_5YR\\_DP05&src=pt](http://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?pid=ACS_14_5YR_DP05&src=pt)

<sup>6</sup> Sorenson SB and RA Schut. (2016). Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature. *Trauma, Violence, Abuse*. Available: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27630138>

<sup>7</sup> Campbell JC, Webster D, Koziol-McLain J, et al. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1089-1097.

<sup>8</sup> Sorenson SB and RA Schut. (2016). *Nonfatal Gun Use in Intimate Partner Violence: A Systematic Review of the Literature*. Trauma, Violence, Abuse. Available: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/27630138>

<sup>9</sup> Campbell JC, Webster D, Koziol-McLain J, et al. (2003). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. *American Journal of Public Health*, 93(7), 1089-1097.

<sup>10</sup> Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Reports, 2010, available at <http://bit.ly/V1GvFe> (excludes New York due to incomplete data).

<sup>11</sup> Zeoli AM and Webster DW. (2010). Effects of domestic violence policies, alcohol taxes and police staffing levels on intimate partner homicide in large US cities. *Injury Prevention*, 16(2), 90-95.



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