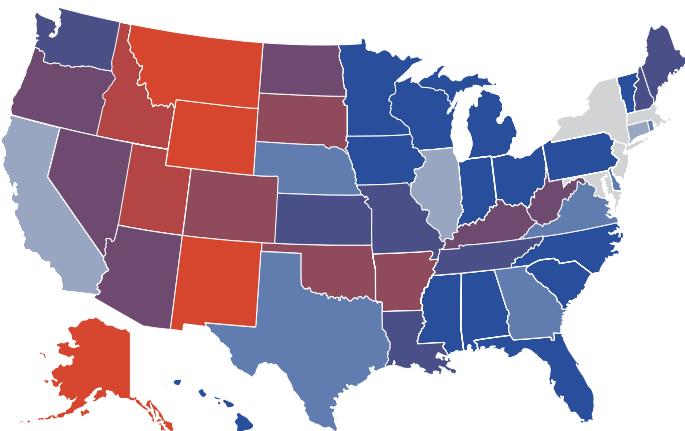


# THE TRUTH ABOUT GUNS AND SUICIDE

Suicide affects a tragically large and growing number of American families. **But these tragedies are preventable.**

The vast majority of people who attempt suicide survive their attempt and go on to live out their lives—unless they use firearms. **Responsible gun safety reforms must be part of a comprehensive response to this public health crisis.**

## SUICIDE RATES BY STATE



2015 SUICIDE DEATH RATE PER 100,000



Suicide rates are much higher in states with weak gun laws and broad access to firearms, like Alaska, Montana, New Mexico, and Wyoming.

## SUICIDE'S TOLL

Since 2000, approximately 600,000 Americans have died by suicide, including nearly 20,000 minors. Though guns are used in just 5% of suicide attempts they are responsible for 50% of all suicide deaths.

**48%**

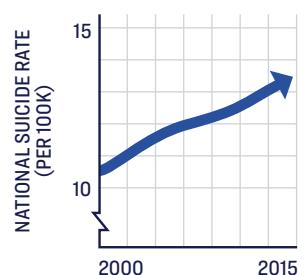
Suicides are usually impulsive acts utilizing whatever methods are immediately available. 48% of people harm themselves within 10 minutes of deciding to attempt suicide. 71% do so within one hour.

**90%**

The prognosis for most suicide attempt survivors is hopeful. The vast majority never attempt again, and 90% live out their lives and do not die by suicide.

## SUICIDE RATES ARE RISING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

National suicide rates per 100,000 increased by 27% between 2000 and 2015—resulting in the highest levels in 35 years.



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## Three Effective Suicide Prevention Policies

### 1. TEMPORARILY REMOVING FIREARM ACCESS DURING CRISIS PERIODS

Enacted in CA and WA, the Extreme Risk Protection Order law empowers a person's family members, roommates, or local law enforcement to present sworn evidence to a judge for a court order that would temporarily suspend the most clearly dangerous or suicidal people's access to weapons during crisis periods.

### 2. SAFELY STORING FIREARMS

When children and teens have unsupervised access to guns, tragedies result far too often. MA is the only state in the nation that affirmatively requires its residents to securely lock up their firearms when they are not in use. As a result, guns were used in just 9% of youth suicides in MA compared to 39% nationally, and MA youth are 55% less likely to die by suicide than the US average. The other 4 states with the lowest youth suicide rates all require that firearms be safely stored around children and require that gun locks be sold with firearms.

### 3. REDUCING IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO FIREARMS

Some states have enacted laws to ensure that people who do not already own a firearm cannot gain immediate access to the most lethal means of suicide. The brief but crucial window these laws afford improves people's chances of surviving crisis periods. States that have recently repealed waiting period laws have seen their firearm suicide rates increase.

## Commonsense Gun Policy Reforms Save Lives from Suicide

Several states have enacted effective suicide prevention policies to limit at-risk individuals' access to guns during periods of mental crisis.

- Help families take proactive steps through the civil courts to **keep loved ones from accessing firearms** when they are most vulnerable.
- Ensure gun owners have reliable options for **temporarily storing firearms** outside the home.
- Require a **waiting period** for gun purchases to prevent impulsive suicides.
- Prevent people with the most severe mental illness from acquiring weapons through **comprehensive background checks**.
- Promote **safe gun storage** practices and **smart gun technology** to ensure guns are inaccessible to unsupervised minors and unauthorized users.
- Require **healthcare professionals** to receive suicide prevention training and protect their right to share relevant information about gun safety with patients.
- Promote an **informed public discussion** about mental health and suicide.

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

**210+**

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

**115,000**

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

**25x**

Americans are 25 times more likely to be killed by a gun than people in other developed nations.

## WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

For nearly 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.

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