

GUNS & COVID-19

COVID-19 has upended American life as we know it, leading to tremendous economic uncertainty, job loss, and strain on mental and emotional well-being. These risk factors exacerbate ever-present dangers of gun violence. **We must not lose sight of the dangers posed by guns and should take immediate steps to mitigate these risks.**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

- When an abusive partner has access to firearms, a victim of domestic violence is five times more likely to be killed. Many abuse survivors are at increased risk during this period of isolation, and lack the resources and support systems they might otherwise have access to.
- **Giffords recommends:** Courts and law enforcement should continue to provide access to emergency protective orders and proceedings that can provide protection for families during this crisis.

SUICIDE

- Guns are the most lethal commonly available means of suicide in the United States, used in only 5% of suicide attempts but responsible for over 50% of suicide deaths.
- **Giffords recommends:** Families should practice safe storage to reduce suicide risk among children and teens, and should take steps to remove firearms from the home if individuals exhibit warning signs.

SAFE STORAGE

- Children ages five to 14 are more than 20 times more likely to be killed in unintentional shootings in the US than in other high-income countries. In one study, 73% of children under age 10 living in homes with guns reported knowing the location of their parents' firearms.
- **Giffords recommends:** By practicing safe storage—keeping unattended firearms unloaded and locked, with ammunition stored separately—gun owners can significantly reduce the risks of unintentional shootings and firearm suicide and save lives.

COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

- Violence intervention workers around the country are continuing to mediate conflicts and reduce violence during a tumultuous time, while also pivoting to serve an essential public health role during this crisis. Community-based violence reduction programs are critical to keeping our streets calm.
- **Giffords recommends:** Violence intervention professionals and street outreach workers should be recognized as “essential services” that are exempt from shelter-in-place orders, and lawmakers should recognize the continued importance of ongoing investments in community-based violence reduction strategies.

GUN STORES

- Panic-buying guns will help no one during the COVID-19 pandemic, and in fact poses serious dangers, especially to first-time gun buyers and their families.
- Closing gun stores runs the risk of driving sales to the unregulated market, but leaving them open could strain law enforcement resources and worsen virus transmission.
- **Giffords recommends:** Officials should make decisions based on local conditions and public health experts, not misinformation spread by gun industry actors attempting to profit off this crisis.

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If you or someone you know may be considering suicide, contact the **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** at 1-800-273-8255. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, contact the **National Domestic Violence Hotline** at 1-800-799-7233.

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