

Where Bishops United stands

Bishops United urges our cities, states and nation to adopt policies and pass legislation that will reduce the number of Americans killed and wounded by gunfire. These include common sense gun safety measures that enjoy the support of gun owners alike, such as:

- handgun purchaser licensing
- background checks on all gun purchasers
- restrictions on gun ownership by domestic abusers
- classification of gun trafficking as a federal crime
- encouragement for the development of “smart gun” technology
- federal funding for research into gun violence prevention strategies
- safe storage of firearms

Bishops United also urges Episcopalians to work for handgun purchaser licensing, as supported by [Resolution B008](#) of the 2015 General Convention, the passage of an effective statute making gun trafficking a federal crime and the development of smart gun technology.

The roots of the Wear Orange movement

Wear Orange started with a small group of friends on the Southside of Chicago — and in just a few years it’s grown into a nationwide movement to honor the 91 lives cut short by gun violence and hundreds more injured every day.

Wear Orange started in 2013, when Hadiya Pendleton — a majorette and high school student from the south side of Chicago was shot and killed just a week after marching in President Obama’s 2nd inaugural parade. Soon after this tragedy, Hadiya’s childhood friends, asked their classmates to commemorate Hadiya’s life – and the lives of hundreds claimed by Chicago’s gun violence each year — by wearing orange. Explaining the action, they said, “Orange is used because hunters wear the color to warn other hunters not to shoot. By wearing orange, we are showing others that we are human and wish not be gunned down.”

Last year — on what would have been Hadiya Pendletons’ 18th Birthday — we helped to establish June 2nd as the first Gun Violence Awareness Day. Today we are here to recognize Hadiya, the 91 Americans killed due to gun violence, and the hundreds more injured each day. We are also here to demonstrate that we believe our country can do better, and that we are committed to ending gun violence.

Americans, including gun owners support common sense gun legislation

Overwhelming majorities of Americans, including large majorities of gun owners and members of the National Rifle Association, support requiring background checks for all gun purchases. The numbers fluctuate from poll to poll, but seldom dip below about 85 percent. Yet Congress will not act. We need to keep the pressure on our legislators to take this very

simple step that would make it harder for people who are not legally permitted to own guns from acquiring them.

In a survey conducted last year by researchers with the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research, 79 percent of respondents favored prohibiting people under domestic violence restraining orders from owning a gun for the duration of the order. Seventy percent of respondents favored prohibiting those who had been convicted of domestic violence from owning a gun for 10 years following the conviction. Despite large majorities favoring these and other gun safety measures ([see pages 2 and 3 here](#)), Congress refuses to act.

Additionally, 73 percent of gun owners in that survey supported prohibiting a person convicted of a serious crime as a juvenile from having a gun for 10 years and 75 percent supported prohibiting people who have been convicted of public display of gun in a threatening manner excluding self-defense from having a gun for 10 years.

These statistics demonstrate that despite media portrayals of a nation torn in two over gun violence issues, there is a great deal of common ground among those who own guns and those who do not. But our legislators lack the will to act.

The Toll of gun violence

On an average day, 91 Americans die from gunshot wounds.

There are nearly 12,000 gun murders a year in the U.S. – and though crime rates have fallen steadily in recent years, that number has fluctuated much since the late 1990s.

The CDC's National Electronic Injury Surveillance System estimates the number of annual non-fatal firearm injuries based on reports from a sample of hospital emergency departments: over the last five years, there were more than 200 non-fatal firearm injuries each day.

Of the 33,599 firearm deaths in the US in 2013 (the most recent year of data available), 21,344 (or 64 percent) were suicides.

The firearm homicide rate in the U.S. is seven times higher than in the average high-income country.

([All data here](#), see footnotes)

At-risk populations

Women

554 American women are shot to death by a romantic partner every year. That's one every 16 hours. Domestic abuse is five [times more likely](#) to turn deadly if firearms are present in a home

Homicide is the leading cause of death in the United States among young African American women aged 15 to 45 years and the seventh leading cause of premature death among women overall. American women are killed by intimate partners (husbands, lovers, ex-husbands, or ex-lovers) more often than by any other type of perpetrator. And, over the past 25 years, more intimate partner homicides in the U.S. have been committed with guns than with all other weapons combined.

In an investigation of illegal online gun sales, Mayors Against Illegal Guns found that 25% of prohibited purchasers seeking guns online had a domestic violence arrest.

Children

756 children (under 18) were killed by gunfire in 2015. 75 percent of them were [under the age of 12](#).

Since the mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Connecticut, in December 2012, an American child under 12 has died by intentional or accidental gunfire every other day, according to analysis by NBC News. And those children are far more likely to die from guns held by family members and acquaintances than strangers, according to [an NBC News analysis](#) of FBI data.

[Toddlers are killing themselves or others on a weekly basis.](#)

[Four toddlers shot and killed themselves in one week in April](#)

Black Americans

In 2010, black Americans constituted 55 percent of the victims of homicides committed with guns, but only 13 percent of the population. Roughly half of the people killed with guns each year in the U. S. are black men who constitute six percent of the population.

According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, black men are ten times more likely than white men to be murdered with guns.

Black parents (39 percent) are nearly twice as likely as white parents (22 percent) to say they worry about their child getting shot, according to [a recent Pew study](#).

Sources

Domestic violence

<https://everytownresearch.org/reports/guns-and-violence-against-women/>

<https://www.thetrace.org/2016/05/gun-ownership-makes-women-safer-debunked/>

Polling

<http://www.jhsph.edu/news/news-releases/2015/large-majority-of-americans-includin->

[gun-owners-support-stronger-gun-safety-policies.html](http://www.thetrace.org/2015/12/gun-owners-support-stronger-gun-safety-policies.html)

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0091743515001668>

Comprehensive research website

<http://www.jhsph.edu/research/centers-and-institutes/johns-hopkins-center-for-gun-policy-and-research/>

Academic research in Preventive Medicine journal

<http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/journal/00917435/79/supp/C>

Easy reference

<https://www.thetrace.org/2015/12/gun-violence-stats-2015/>