



A DCI Deliberation Guide

Guns in America:

How Shall We Balance Concerns about Gun Rights and Gun Risks?

Format for Deliberation

Before the Deliberation

- I. Read this document (required)
- II. Read Britannica's article, "[Should More Gun Control Laws Be Enacted?](#)" (optional)
- III. Read NBC News's article, "[Six Proposals to Reduce Gun Violence and How They Work](#)" (optional)
- IV. Read this Constitutional Rights Foundation article, "[Policies on Guns](#)" (optional)

During the Deliberation

- I. Setting Expectations - 5 min.
- II. Getting to Know Each Other - 5 min.
- III. Understanding Tensions between Gun Rights and Gun Risks - 20 min.
- IV. Identifying, Evaluating, and Prioritizing Policies - 20 min.
- V. Reflections - 10 min.

Background

1. Introduction

The debate over gun control and gun rights is deeply ingrained in American history, reflecting a longstanding dichotomy between the cherished right to bear arms and the pressing need for public safety.¹ More generally, it embodies the tension between the government's obligation to safeguard individual rights ostensibly protected by the Constitution (the liberty to purchase a gun, the right to privacy with respect to one's mental health, etc.) and the government's obligation to "preserve the general welfare" and protect the public from undue risks of harm (e.g., harm from mass shootings, homicides, etc.).

This issue is therefore both a policy discussion and a discussion rooted in deeper commitments expressed in the U.S. Constitution. For some, it is all about the right to bear arms as a fundamental aspect of American identity and freedom, while for others it is all about the central importance of protecting the American people from danger.

On the one hand, **advocates for stronger protection of gun rights** view gun ownership as a vital right, emblematic of personal freedom, self-reliance and the ability to protect oneself, one's family, and one's property.² Gun rights advocacy is also tied to deep concerns about government overreach and long-standing traditions of hunting and sport shooting. On the other hand, **advocates for stricter gun regulations** focus on the state's obligation to protect the public. They argue there is an urgent need to curb gun violence and prevent tragedies that affect communities across the nation.³ They are highly motivated to reduce gun deaths and reduce the fear and sorrow associated with gun-related incidents.⁴

While gun regulation advocates may acknowledge the importance of guns for many Americans, they generally argue that the restrictions they favor are important and do not violate Constitutionally-protected gun rights. Likewise, gun rights advocates may also be concerned about firearm-related homicides, suicides, and accidents, but generally believe that stricter regulations will not reduce those tragedies and may in fact cause them to increase. Advocates on both sides of this issue tend to feel very strongly about their ideals and positions as they relate to guns in America.

The attitudes of the broader American public are more varied. According to a 2024 Gallup poll, 31% of respondents are either very satisfied (12%) or somewhat satisfied (19%) with the nation's laws or policies on guns, while 4% had no opinion and 65% were either very or somewhat dissatisfied.⁵ The percentage of Americans who are dissatisfied is the highest it has been in the 21 years Gallup has been asking the question, with 45% highly dissatisfied.⁶ The same poll found that 56% of Americans feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict, 12% feel that they should be made less strict, and 31% feel that they should be kept as they are now. Of those respondents who are dissatisfied with current regulations, 72% want stricter laws and 13% want less strict laws.⁷

The point of sharing this public opinion data is not to suggest that the popularity of a position should determine whether a particular position is right or wrong – majorities can be mistaken and can also be persuaded by good reasons and strong evidence. It is to highlight that **there is a spectrum of opinion on this issue both in terms of how strongly people feel about it and how they come down on it.** Other polling data highlights another important point – that beneath the simple binary of too strict or not strict enough is a multiplicity of nuanced issues and questions. For example, 73% of Americans in 2023 were against bans on handguns (except for the police and other authorized persons), 64% thought having a gun in the house makes it safer, and 55% believed (in 2022) that there should be a ban on the manufacture, possession and sale of semi-automatic guns.⁸ These are only a few of the specific policies that are connected to this issue, and **these poll results demonstrate how varied and complicated beliefs about them are.**

The intensity of perspectives on this issue is therefore deeply intertwined with the complexity of the gun regulation/gun rights debate, which not only focuses on policy solutions but also touches on deep-seated values, fears, and aspirations. As we delve into this deliberation, it's helpful to approach the conversation with curiosity, kindness, and empathy, recognizing the valid concerns and emotions on all sides of this issue. A dialogue that explores the diverse perspectives on this issue is crucial to creating the possibility of finding common ground and crafting a set of policies that everyone can agree with, even if we might not agree with each individual policy. Thus, deliberating about this topic is a critical step, as it invites a broad spectrum of voices to contribute to a nuanced understanding and thoughtful approach to one of the most polarizing issues of our time.

This guide will begin with an overview of the factors influencing peoples' general orientation to this issue and why they might be more likely to support more strict or less strict gun regulations. Then it will dive into the complexity underlying this simple dichotomy and explore four dimensions of public policies related to guns:

1. **Populations:** Who should be able to have guns?
2. **Types:** What kinds of guns should they be able to have?
3. **Requirements:** Under what conditions should they be able to have them?
4. **Locations:** Where should they be able to have them?

While the guide covers a wide range of issues related to guns in America, given space limitations it is not a comprehensive review of all of the different facets of this topic. But examining these specific questions and the datapoints and arguments provided in the guide (and those that participants also bring to the discussion) should help us all better understand the complexities of this contentious issue, where we agree and disagree about it, and how we might best balance concerns about both gun rights and gun safety.

2. Factors Related to Discussions about Guns

There are numerous factors that influence our thinking about guns in America. They include the number of deaths and injuries from guns in the United States in absolute terms, over time, and relative to other countries. They include the role guns can play in enhancing personal safety and the sense that the right to bear arms is an intrinsic right that is protected by the Constitution. They include the belief that guns have some unique qualities that require us to pay special attention to them and the belief that guns are only one of many contributors to the violence we see in our communities. And they include the competing beliefs that gun possession and gun regulations may deter crime, have no effect on crime, or lead to increased gun violence. This section will briefly summarize each of these different factors.

2.1 Gun Deaths

In 2021, 48,830 people died from gun-related injuries, which is more than the 42,915 people who are estimated to have died in automobile accidents that same year.⁹ Gun regulation advocates often cite this comparison as a reason for making gun laws more strict.¹⁰ The per capita rate (14.6 gun deaths per 100,000 people) in 2021 was the highest it has been since the mid-1990s, but it remains below its peak level in the 1970s.¹¹ Approximately 54% of firearm-related deaths in 2021 were suicides while 43% were murders (3% were accidental, involved law enforcement, or had undetermined causes).¹² Firearms were the leading cause of death for children between 1 and 17 in 2020 and 2021, and the rate of deaths per 100,000 children has increased 68% since 2000.¹³

According to data compiled by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, the age-adjusted firearm homicide rate in the United States is significantly higher than in other high-income countries; for example, it is 33 times the rate of Australia and 77 times that of Germany.¹⁴ The rates of gun violence within the US vary considerably; Washington, DC, has the highest age-adjusted firearm homicide rate in the country at 14.4 per 100,000 people, putting it on par with countries like Brazil and Jamaica, which are among the top ten globally for firearm violence.¹⁵ At the opposite end, New Hampshire has the lowest rate in the US at 1.1 per 100,000, similar to Chile.¹⁶ Yet, this rate is still three times higher than that of Cyprus, which at 0.36 deaths per 100,000, has the highest rate in Europe.¹⁷

These statistics illustrate the high levels of gun violence in the United States compared to other causes of death, other periods of time, and other countries, and are frequently-cited reasons for increased gun regulation.¹⁸ Proponents of strict gun control laws argue that these measures are necessary to keep guns out of the hands of those who might misuse them, and to prevent mass shootings and reduce gun deaths.

2.2 The Right to Bear Arms

Pro-gun advocates assert that the right to bear arms is a fundamental right and a cornerstone of personal liberty, offering a check against potential government tyranny. They reference the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution as a safeguard for this freedom, emphasizing its foundational role in American democracy.¹⁹ They are generally critical of many gun regulations because they are viewed as infringing on this right protected by the Second Amendment.

The 2nd Amendment states, "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."²⁰ Legal scholars and Supreme Court justices have strongly disagreed about how best to interpret the text of this amendment.²¹ Some argue that it means the right to bear arms should be viewed only within the context of maintaining a well-regulated militia.²² Others assert that this right is independent of the considerations related to a militia.²³ The former view was the precedent of the Supreme Court until it issued its 5-4 ruling in *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which overturned a law banning handguns in Washington, DC.²⁴ The majority argued that "the Second Amendment

protects an individual right to possess a firearm unconnected with service in a militia, and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home.”²⁵ The four justices in the minority argued that it was instead “adopted to protect the right of the people of each of the several States to maintain a well-regulated militia.”²⁶

Those in support of the justices who ruled in favor of protecting gun rights have largely been referred to as Originalists. Originalists believe that interpretations of the Constitution must be understood in the way it was intended to be understood at the time of its writing (rather than be interpreted from a contemporary point of view).²⁷ Opponents of this approach, often referred to as Living Constitutionalists, claim Originalists defend antiquated norms that neglect the evolving needs of society. They fear that adherence to this approach will lead to the law failing to account for the present day and its differences from the time the document and its amendments were constructed. Living Constitutionalists generally believe evolving social attitudes are what enables judges to best apply the Constitution to the times we live in, while Originalists contend that social attitudes can lead to misinterpretations of the Constitution.²⁸

Within the broader federal context, the laws of U.S. states differ considerably in terms of how strictly they regulate guns. For those in favor of strong gun rights, Texas is often cited as having laws that appropriately protect the right of citizens to bear arms.²⁹ For instance, Texas does not require a permit for the open carry of long guns and does not mandate universal background checks for private sales. These policies will be described in more detail below.³⁰

2.3 Guns and Government Overreach

Advocates for the protection of gun rights also point to the idea that an armed populace can prevent not just individual crimes but also serve as a bulwark against potential government overreach and tyranny.³¹ As an editorial on the website of the Texas Public Policy Foundation argues, “the very presence of firearms in an empowered citizen populace has a deterring effect on overreach.”³²

2.4 Guns and Self-Defense

Additionally, gun rights advocates present statistics showing that firearms are used defensively between 500,000 to 3 million times each year (as cited in a 2013 National Academies of Sciences report), suggesting that guns are frequently and appropriately used for self-defense, sometimes without a shot being fired.³³ This perspective considers the individual's right to protect oneself and one's property as paramount, and views responsible gun ownership as a vital component of maintaining one's personal safety. Some have questioned the validity of these numbers, suggesting that they are overestimates and that firearms are “used far more often to intimidate than in self-defense.”³⁴

2.5 Guns as Deterrence

Critics of strict gun control argue that Texas' approach enables law-abiding citizens to use their firearms to deter crime, including homicides.³⁵ They can do so directly, by taking “non-fatal actions, like brandishing a weapon,” firing warning shots, or intentionally wounding an attacker.³⁶ Or they can do so indirectly; one survey suggests that “criminals are more worried about meeting an armed victim than they are about running into the police.”³⁷

2.6 Gun Regulations as Deterrence

However, supporters of stricter gun control often point to evidence that permissive gun laws contribute to higher rates of gun-related homicides and mass shootings.³⁸ A Columbia University study found that “a 10 unit increase in state permissiveness was associated with a significant 11 percent higher mass shooting rate; a 10 percent higher state firearm ownership rate was associated with a 35 percent higher rate of mass shootings.”³⁹ In California, for example, a state known for its strict gun control measures, the gun homicide rate is 3.5 per 100,000 people.⁴⁰ Conversely, in Mississippi, a state with more permissive gun laws, has a higher firearm homicide rate of 10.2 per 100,000 people.⁴¹

Statistically, the relationship between gun laws and homicide rates may be confounded by other variables. The organization Third Way found that the murder rate in states that voted for Donald Trump was 21% higher than states that voted for Joe Biden in 2020. The authors suggest that several factors, including not only gun ownership but also other factors, such as poverty levels, educational attainment, availability of social services, and police resources may all influence crime rate levels.⁴²

2.7 Effectiveness of Gun Laws

Critics of strict gun laws also suggest that such restrictions do not effectively prevent criminals from obtaining firearms illegally.⁴³

2.8 The Uniqueness of Guns

As Sarah Logemann asks in *A Resource for Generous Dialogue about Gun Violence*, “What is unique about gun violence?”⁴⁴ Citing the Bible, she writes that people have been killing each other since the time of Cain and Abel and have used many different ways to do so.⁴⁵ Gun regulation advocates might respond by emphasizing the relative lethality of guns, the limited time between decision and impact when using a gun as opposed to other weapons, and the high levels of both accessibility and usability of firearms.⁴⁶ Other arguments highlight the versatility of guns – they “permit attacks at greater range and from positions of better concealment than other weapons...[and] attacks by persons physically or psychologically unable to overpower their victim through violent physical contact.”⁴⁷ These features are likely the reason that guns are “are virtually the only weapon used in killing police officers.”⁴⁸

2.9 Other Factors Driving Gun Deaths

Gun rights advocates sometimes emphasize other factors that may be causing gun-related deaths. This is a variation of the argument, “Guns don’t kill people, people kill people,” and the implication is that we should focus on the root causes of these deaths rather than the particular weapon used to kill.⁴⁹ Below are some of the factors that are often cited as contributors to high rates of gun violence:

- **Economic Factors:** Joblessness can in some cases lead to increased crime rates.⁵⁰ Economic distress can drive individuals towards criminal activities as a means of survival or due to the frustration and hopelessness that come with financial instability. One study found that during the pandemic, unemployment was associated with gun violence and homicides in 16 cities.⁵¹
- **Social Inequalities:** Socio-economic disparities and racial inequalities can also exacerbate tensions within communities, leading to higher rates of violence. Areas with significant socio-economic divides may experience more frequent instances of violence as marginalized groups might face systemic barriers that contribute to a cycle of poverty and crime.⁵²
- **Mental Health Services:** The availability and accessibility of mental health services play a crucial role in addressing potential violent behaviors. Inadequate mental health support can leave individuals with untreated mental health issues, some of whom may pose a risk to themselves and others.⁵³
- **Education and Community Programs:** Lack of educational opportunities and community support programs can contribute to higher murder rates. Education and community engagement are vital for providing individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary for productive participation in society, as well as offering alternatives to criminal activities.⁵⁴
- **Drug and Alcohol Abuse:** Substance abuse is closely linked to violent behavior, including murder. The use of drugs and alcohol can impair judgment and lead to aggressive behaviors, making substance abuse a significant factor in discussions about murder rates.⁵⁵

This multiplicity of factors support the argument that addressing high crime rates, including gun violence, may require a holistic approach that considers not only gun control measures but also interventions aimed at improving economic conditions, reducing social inequalities, enhancing access to mental health services, and supporting education and community programs. Gun regulation advocates might agree that addressing these areas is indeed important, but not to the exclusion of also introducing more strict gun regulations that can also reduce gun violence.

3. Dimensions of Gun Policies

Building on the broader arguments above related to gun regulations, this section will explore the different dimensions of these policies. It adapts the concept of the gun rights spectrum introduced by Sarah Logemann to highlight the point that we may fall on different parts of the spectrum depending on which dimension we are considering.⁵⁶

Nobo

3.1 Populations: Who Should Be Able to Have Guns?

This dimension is perhaps the most foundational one – who should be allowed to have guns? It ranges from no one to everyone, with several options in between.

Populations: Who Should Be Able to Have Guns?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nobody	Military and police while on the job	Police while off duty (in addition to those in 2)	Hunters (in addition to those in 2-3)	Everyone 18+ without mental illnesses	Everyone 18+	Everyone

Regulations preventing people with mental illnesses from possessing guns have been most commonly debated in recent years. Federal law currently does not allow gun possession by people who have been involuntarily committed to a psychiatric hospital or found to be a danger to themselves or others.⁵⁷ These laws, however, will only be enforced if states have similar laws in place.⁵⁸ Conversely, some states have laws that also ban possession of guns by people who have been found to be incapable of managing their affairs due to mental illness (18 states), found not guilty due to reason of insanity (29 states), found incompetent to stand trial (27 states), and other reasons related to mental illness.⁵⁹

Arguments for and against restrictions on gun possession by people with mental illnesses:

For: Proponents of these measures argue that, while not all people with mental illnesses are inherently dangerous, there is evidence to suggest that many suffering from particular types of mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia) do have a higher risk of committing a homicide and attempting suicide.⁶⁰ Given that one study showed 2% of patients released from psychiatric facilities committed an act of violence with a gun within one year of release, guns are used in more than half of all suicides, and 9 out of 10 firearm suicides result in death, keeping guns out of their possession would proactively prevent these individuals from harming themselves and others.⁶¹

Against: Opponents of this measure argue that people with mental illnesses are stigmatized by the media and that a large majority are never violent.⁶² They feel a ban on weapons sales would deprive perfectly safe gun owners of the right to defend themselves when mental illness only

accounts for a small proportion of interpersonal violence – 4% – in the United States.⁶³ Laws restricting gun possession based on mental illness “will not stop gun violence, and instead, could fuel prejudice and fear around people living with a mental illness and may lead to people avoiding mental health services.”⁶⁴

3.2 Types: What kinds of guns should citizens be able to own and/or carry?

A second dimension of gun regulations is what kinds of firearms should people be allowed to have. Positions can range from none to all kinds, with several options in between.

Types: What kinds of guns should citizens be able to own and/or carry?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
None	Hunting Rifles	Handguns (in addition to those in 2)	Semi-Automatic Weapons (in addition to those in 2-3)	High Capacity Ammunition Magazines (in addition to those in 2-4)	Automatic Weapons (in addition to those in 2-5)	All Kinds

Guns fall into a number of different categories, and these categories can be relevant for regulation as can be seen in the chart above. Some people who are concerned about gun regulation prefer to talk in terms of “assault weapons,” a loosely-defined category typically considered to include semi-automatic firearms with large capacity magazines.⁶⁵ A semi-automatic firearm automatically loads the next round to fire but requires the shooter to pull the trigger for each shot. A high-capacity magazine, according to the now-expired 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban, could hold more than ten cartridges of ammunition.⁶⁶ With this background, we can consider the arguments below.

Arguments for and against banning assault weapons:

For: Those in favor of banning assault weapons argue that people are capable of defending themselves with other, less dangerous types of guns, and that these kinds of weapons put society at risk of mass acts of violence.⁶⁷ In this view, they should therefore be banned to prevent mass shootings from being carried out, which Everytown For Gun Safety argues is plausible because, during the 10 year federal prohibition, it found at least 11 mass shootings were prevented.⁶⁸

Against: Those against banning assault weapons argue these weapons are not the only ones used in mass shootings and they are responsible for very few deaths in the U.S. In their view, banning them would erode our Constitutional rights, and particularly those who may not be trained or physically capable of handling more difficult weapons to use like pistols or shotguns.⁶⁹ Under these bans, these individuals who include disabled persons would be unable

to defend themselves and unfairly harmed should access to these kinds of weapons be banned.⁷⁰

Arguments for and against banning high-capacity ammunition magazines:

For: Similarly to proponents of assault weapons bans, those who support a ban on high-capacity magazines argue that private ownership of these types of weapons is unnecessary for self-defense. They also argue that almost two-thirds of mass shootings over three decades involved magazines with more than 10 rounds, and that banning them would significantly reduce the threat of mass shootings by taking away the capability to carry out these acts as effectively.⁷¹ However, there is no universally agreed upon definition of “high-capacity magazine.”

Against: Those opposed to the banning of high-capacity magazines argue that shootings carried out with weapons with high-capacity magazines only affect a minority of gun-related crimes.⁷² Like assault weapons, banning them would deprive the vast majority of gun owners of an effective tool for self-defense.⁷³ Implementing a ban would be practically difficult because of the high number of magazines in circulation without resorting to extreme policies to do so.⁷⁴

3.3 Requirements: Under what conditions should citizens be able to own and/or carry guns?

The next dimension of gun regulations is the conditions under which permitted citizens are allowed to own and possess the types of firearms that have been allowed by law. Beyond the far ends of the spectrum (never and none), the options include training and/or background checks that are either mandatory or optional and either thorough or limited.

Requirements: Under what conditions should they be able to have them?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never (they are not allowed to have them)	Thorough and Mandatory Training and Background Checks	Thorough and Mandatory Background Checks	Limited and Mandatory Training and Background Checks	Limited and Optional Training and Background Checks	Limited and Optional Background Checks	None (no reqs. For having them)

One approach to regulating gun ownership is to regulate the sale of guns. One way to do so in the U.S. is to subject those purchasing guns at gun shows to background checks before they can make the purchase. Another approach is to monitor and track the purchases of guns at gun shows and elsewhere. A third approach is to require waiting periods for gun buyers before they can purchase a gun. With this background, we will now examine arguments for and against these different gun policies.

Arguments for and against making private gun sales and sales at gun shows subject to background checks:

For: Supporters of such universal background checks argue that these kinds of gun sales can be loopholes for extremely dangerous and potentially threatening people to purchase guns who would otherwise be restricted from acquiring firearms.⁷⁵ This is because, although federal law requires criminal background checks for all firearm sales by licensed dealers, it does not require these checks by non-licensed dealers, i.e., sellers who are private individuals.⁷⁶ It is therefore up to each state to determine what it requires of private individual sellers, and whether an individual buyer at a gun show must pass a criminal background check before purchasing from an individual seller.⁷⁷ These advocates argue all gun sales should be subjected to the same standards in order to ensure that background checks serve their purpose, which is to prevent firearms from coming into the hands of dangerous individuals.⁷⁸ In their view, this purpose is directly undermined by the existence of gun distributors who do not require checks.

Against: Opponents argue that the so-called “gun show loophole” is a misnomer because over 90 percent of the sellers at gun shows are indeed licensed dealers, and less than 1% of criminals buy their guns at gun shows.⁷⁹ Opponents of this policy are not necessarily against any system of criminal background checks but tend to argue that we should not *expand* the background check laws to include private unlicensed sellers.⁸⁰ They argue that very few guns are purchased through private sellers, and that many sellers at gun shows are federally licensed to sell guns, meaning they complete background checks on all sales.⁸¹ They argue these regulations will not reduce gun violence, at least not to any significant extent. Instead, they believe these regulations are designed to reduce gun purchases by law-abiding citizens by holding these markets to higher standards. Some also point to the fact that the 1994 Brady Act, which required background checks at all federally licensed gun dealers, did not reduce homicide rates at all.⁸²

Arguments for and against creating a federal government database to track all gun sales:

For: Advocates for a federal database for gun sales often cite its potential for improving law enforcement's ability to solve gun crimes and deter gun violence, as ownership information would be readily available.⁸³ Furthermore, surveys show that 54% of gun owners are open to the idea of such a database.⁸⁴ These proponents believe that a federal database would help law enforcement solve crimes by making the process of gun tracing more efficient. It would also aid in preventing those deemed unsafe from acquiring firearms.⁸⁵

Against: Critics argue that a federal database is a form of government overreach and could lead to a gun registry that raises privacy and Second Amendment concerns.⁸⁶ Many gun owners view their firearm ownership as an essential part of their personal freedom and are resistant to policies they perceive to track or control gun ownership. Additionally, there is a concern that “gun ownership records could provide a potential road map for criminals in search of firearms, as well as potential for neighborhood gossip.”⁸⁷

Shortening Waiting Periods for People Who Want to Buy Guns Legally:

For: Advocates for shortening waiting periods argue that these delays infringe upon the Second Amendment rights and can prevent individuals from quickly obtaining a firearm for urgent self-defense needs.⁸⁸ Advocates argue that immediate access to firearms is crucial for self-defense. Those in favor of shortening waiting periods argue that modern technology can expedite background checks without compromising their thoroughness, and that there is “no evidence that waiting periods reduce suicides, homicides, or mass shootings.”⁸⁹

Against: Opponents of this idea maintain that waiting periods are crucial for thorough background checks, reducing impulsive violence and suicides, and ensuring that firearms do not fall into the wrong hands.⁹⁰ A study in the American Journal of Public Health found that states with waiting periods had 51% fewer firearm suicides and a 27% lower overall suicide rate. Furthermore, a study in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences reported a 17% reduction in homicides with waiting periods.⁹¹

3.4 Locations: Where should they be citizens to have guns?

Gun regulations can also focus on where citizens are permitted to have firearms. Options range from nowhere to everywhere, with many options in between. This section will explore the arguments for and against several of these regulatory options.

Locations: Where should citizens be able to have guns?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nowhere	Only in your home	Only out of your home for specified reasons	Teachers and school officials in schools (and 2-3)	Concealed carry – with permit (and 2-4)	Open carry – with permit (and 2-5)	Permitless carry (no restrictions)

Allowing People to Carry Guns Without a Permit:

For: Supporters of permitless carry, or “constitutional carry,” argue that it removes unnecessary barriers to the exercise of Second Amendment rights, enables citizens to determine for themselves how to protect themselves, and simplifies the process and reduces the costs for law-abiding citizens to carry a firearm for self-defense.⁹² They also assert that it enables citizens to take responsibility for their own safety and suggest that the decrease in violent crime since 1991 is due to the increase the number of people carrying firearms.⁹³ They also note that gun buyers still have to go through required background checks and individuals previously prohibited to possess firearms still are not allowed to obtain them.⁹⁴

Against: Critics contend that removing permit requirements undermines public safety by allowing potentially untrained individuals to carry firearms in public who have not gone any background check.⁹⁵ They assert there is no evidence that permitless carry laws are associated with crime reduction. In contrast, the Violence Policy Center found over 2000 holders of concealed carry permits were involved in homicides or suicides since 2007.⁹⁶ Everytown also points to a study that states with weak or no concealed carry laws had 29% higher rates of workplace homicides committed with guns.⁹⁷

Allowing People to Carry Concealed Guns in More Places with a Permit:

This policy option requires us to understand the concept of “concealed carry,” which is the practice of carrying a concealed firearm on one’s person in public. It constitutes carrying a weapon, most commonly a handgun, in proximity to or on one’s person in public places in a way that hides the weapon’s presence from surrounding observers. States have different laws regarding who is allowed to engage in concealed carry, where they are allowed to do so, and how difficult it should be to become legally allowed to concealed carry.⁹⁸

In 2022, the Supreme Court ruled in its *New York Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* decision that concealed carrying guns outside of the home is a protected right under the 2nd Amendment.⁹⁹ The decision made the legality of state laws on guns contingent on whether the 2nd Amendment protects the activities involving guns that states are attempt to regulate. It thus invalidated arguments by states that the reasons for restricting the possession of a gun outside of one’s home outweighed the burden of that restriction on the gun owner.¹⁰⁰ Advocates of gun rights celebrated the decision as a reaffirmation of the rights granted to them in the Constitution.¹⁰¹ No longer would they need to undergo lengthy and difficult application processes to obtain open-carry permits which limited the right to carry outside the home to a strict set of specific conditions.¹⁰² Gun control advocates, on the other hand, lamented the decision as robbing the states of the right to determine the best way to handle guns being carried in public to ensure the safety of their citizens.¹⁰³

Within the context of this decision, we can examine arguments for and against making concealed carry laws less restrictive.

For: Opponents of strict concealed carry laws argue that self-defense is an essential right of every citizen. They contend in many situations carrying a gun is the only way to ensure a person is capable of self-defense. They point to numerous examples of mass murder and violent crimes being prevented and greatly reduced because of concealed carry laws enabling people to defend themselves and those around them.¹⁰⁴ Advocates for allowing people to carry concealed firearms in more places often cite a decline in violent crimes with the increase in concealed carry permits. For example, the Crime Prevention Research Center reported a 22% decrease in murder rates and a 15% decrease in violent crime rates between 2007 and 2015 in states with the most significant increases in permits.¹⁰⁵ Beyond the reduction of violence and crime, they would argue that cities with harsh gun control laws often have some of the highest crime rates and that concealed carry would deter much of this crime.¹⁰⁶

For: Proponents of making concealed carry requirements more robust contend that making concealed carry easier increases instances of increase total and firearm-related homicides.¹⁰⁷ A Stanford study found that right-to-carry laws are linked to an 8% increase in aggravated assault.¹⁰⁸ Additionally, a National Bureau of Economic Research study indicated that violent crime is estimated to be 13-15% higher a decade after the adoption of right-to-carry laws.¹⁰⁹ These advocates argue that more guns in public places could escalate ordinary conflicts into deadly encounters and increase the likelihood of accidental shootings. They argue that open carry restrictions are important safety measures which are the only way to properly ensure people allowed to concealed carry are properly trained to do so safely. They argue law enforcement's job becomes more difficult when concealed carry limits are lifted as investigations into violent crimes become more difficult.¹¹⁰

Allowing Teachers and School Officials to Carry Guns in K-12 Schools:

In the wake of recent school shootings, some have proposed that teachers and school officials be allowed to keep and carry guns in K-12 schools. This section will summarize arguments for and against such a policy.

For: Advocates for arming teachers and school officials argue that this measure would enable a quicker response to active shooter situations, potentially deterring would-be attackers and saving lives. There are instances where armed individuals on school grounds have successfully stopped shootings, reinforcing the argument for the presence of armed defenders in schools. The principle behind this is not only the immediate neutralization of a threat but also the potential deterrence it provides against the initiation of such attacks. Proponents believe that, with proper training and strict protocols, the benefits of having armed personnel on campus could outweigh the risks, providing an immediate line of defense in critical situations.¹¹¹

Against: On the other hand, critics raise significant concerns about the implications of introducing more firearms into the school environment. Major educational and law enforcement organizations, including the American Federation of Teachers, National Education Association, and the National Association of School Resource Officers, stand against arming educators, citing risks to students, staff, and law enforcement. They argue that the presence of guns could increase the likelihood of accidental discharges and the potential for guns to be accessed by unintended individuals, including students. There is also a fear that the educational setting could be compromised, creating an atmosphere of fear rather than safety. The psychological impact of students knowing their teachers are armed could potentially affect the learning environment and student-teacher relationships.¹¹²

Setting Expectations (5 min)

In this section, we will review the “Expected Outcomes,” Deliberative Dispositions,” and “Conversation Agreements” below.

Expected Outcomes of the Conversation

The purpose of this deliberation is to deepen our understanding of gun policies in the United States. Over the course of the deliberation, we will have the opportunity to listen to the perspectives of our fellow deliberators as well as share our own experiences and beliefs related to guns and federal and states’ laws that regulate them. By the end of the conversation, we will have deliberated about the strongest and weakest arguments for strengthening or weakening gun regulations and discussed our highest and lowest priorities for reforming gun policies in the United States. We will also have talked about the Supreme Court’s decision about New York State’s concealed carry law. Finally, we will have reflected on our conversation, our areas of both agreement and disagreement, and what we have learned from our time together.

Deliberative Dispositions

The DCI has identified several “deliberative dispositions” as critical to the success of deliberative enterprises. When participants adopt these dispositions, they are much more likely to feel their deliberations are meaningful, respectful, and productive. Several of the Conversation Agreements recommended below directly reflect and reinforce these dispositions, which include a commitment to egalitarianism, open mindedness, empathy, charity, attentiveness, and anticipation, among others. A full list and description of these dispositions is available at <https://deliberativecitizenship.org/deliberative-dispositions/>.

Conversation Agreements

In entering into this discussion, to the best of our ability, we each agree to:

1. Be authentic and respectful
2. Be an attentive and active listener
3. Be a purposeful and concise speaker
4. Approach fellow deliberators’ stories, experiences, and arguments with curiosity, not hostility
5. Assume the best - and not the worst - about the intentions and values of others, and avoid snap judgements
6. Demonstrate intellectual humility, recognizing that no one has all the answers, by asking questions and making space for others to do the same
7. Critique the idea we disagree with, not the person expressing it, and remember to practice empathy
8. Note areas of both agreement and disagreement
9. Respect the confidentiality of the discussion

10. Avoid speaking in absolutes (e.g., “All people think this,” or “No educated people hold that view”)

Getting to Know Each Other (5 min)

In this section, we will take less than a minute to share our names, where we are currently located, and 3-4 aspects of our identities that are important to us. These could be our gender pronouns, our occupation, our family status (e.g., husband, mother, etc.), our hometown, our favorite hobby, etc. There is no pressure to do so, but if you are online everyone is welcome to type in any, all, or none of these aspects of your identity into your Zoom nameplate (just right-click on your own image and click Rename).

Understanding Tensions Between Gun Rights and Gun Risks (20 min)

In this section, we will examine the arguments for and against gun regulations, which often revolve around concerns about gun rights and gun risks. We will each take 1-2 minutes to answer each of the questions below, without interruption or crosstalk.

1. What are the **strongest and weakest arguments for limiting restrictions** on gun possession and ownership? Why?
2. What are the **strongest and weakest arguments for increasing restrictions** on gun possession and ownership? Why?

After everyone has answered these questions, the group is welcome to take a few minutes for clarifying or follow up questions and responses. Feel free to share the reasons for why you have a particular orientation towards guns and to ask your fellow deliberators about their reasons. Continue exploring the topic as time allows.

Identifying, Evaluating, and Prioritizing Policies (20 min)

We will now identify, evaluate, and prioritize specific measures to take related to guns in America. We will each address the question below, and then together we'll explore our areas of agreement and disagreement. We can also generate additional ideas that may transcend and elicit more support than existing proposals.

1. **Who should be able to have guns?**
2. **What kinds of guns should they be able to have?**
3. **Under what conditions should they be able to have them?**
4. **Where should they be able to have them?**
5. **What are the main criteria you believe should be considered when making these determinations and evaluating gun policy reforms?**

In considering this question, we can refer to the combined gun policy spectrum below. Consider where you fall on each dimension of the spectrum, and why. To learn more about these and other gun policy options, these [NBC News](#) and [Constitutional Rights Foundation](#) articles are useful resources.

If there is strong disagreement in the group, try to explore the underlying reasons for the disagreement – are they based on different factual interpretations, different value emphases, or different life experiences? Perhaps you can agree on where precisely you disagree, which can be helpful. Alternatively, if there is widespread agreement in the group, try to dig deeper and examine the nuances of these policies – are there particular contexts, for example, where your agreement breaks down? Or perhaps your reasons for supporting particular policies are different? Exploring this complexity can be helpful as well.

The Gun Policy Spectrum

	Populations	Types	Requirements	Locations
1	Nobody	None	Never (they are not allowed to have them)	Nowhere
2	Military and police while on the job	Hunting Rifles	Thorough and Mandatory Training and Background Checks	Only in your home
3	Police while off duty (in addition to those in 2)	Handguns (in addition to those in 2)	Thorough and Mandatory Background Checks	Only out of your home for specified reasons
4	Hunters (in addition to those in 2-3)	Semi-Automatic Weapons (in addition to those in 2-3)	Limited and Mandatory Training and Background Checks	Teachers and school officials in schools (and 2-3)
5	Everyone 18+ without mental illnesses	High Capacity Ammunition Magazines (in addition to those in 2-4)	Limited and Optional Training and Background Checks	Concealed carry – with permit (and 2-4)
6	Everyone 18+	Automatic Weapons (in addition to those in 2-5)	Limited and Optional Background Checks	Open carry – with permit (and 2-5)
7	Everyone	All Kinds	None (no reqs. For having them)	Permitless carry (no restrictions)

Reflections (10 min)

While today's conversation is an important step in the journey, effectively balancing concerns about Second Amendment rights and the harmful effects of guns will take time and commitment. Please reflect on the insights from your discussion with your fellow participants today, and then answer one of the questions below without interruption or crosstalk. After everyone has answered, we can continue exploring additional questions as time allows.

1. What was most meaningful or valuable to you during this deliberation?
2. Where are the areas of both agreement and disagreement in your group?
3. Have any new ways to think about this issue occurred to you as we have talked today? Any new ideas that might transcend our current way of conceiving of the problem and its potential solutions?
4. Was there anything that was said or not said that you think should be addressed with the group? Are there any perspectives missing from this conversation that you feel would be important to hear?
5. What did you hear that gives you hope for the future of conversations on issues related to gun policies?
6. Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the deliberation you just had?

About This Guide

Authors: Stephen Walker, Sandro Chumashvili, Carla Cole, Graham Bullock

Managing Editor: Sara Copic

Executive Editor: Graham Bullock

© Copyright 2024 Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative

The Deliberative Citizenship Initiative (DCI) is dedicated to the creation of opportunities for Davidson students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the wider community to productively engage with one another on difficult and contentious issues facing our community and society. The DCI regularly hosts facilitated deliberations on a wide range of topics as well as organizes training workshops for deliberation facilitators. To learn more about these opportunities, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org.

DCI Deliberation Guides

The DCI has launched this series of Deliberation Guides as a foundation for such conversations. They provide both important background information on the topics in question and a specific framework for engaging with these topics. The Guides are designed to be informative without being overwhelming and structured without being inflexible. They cover a range of topics and come in a variety of formats but share several common elements, including opportunities to commit to a shared set of Conversation Agreements, learn about diverse perspectives, and reflect together on the conversation and its yield. The DCI encourages conversations based on these guides to be moderated by a trained facilitator. After each conversation, the DCI also suggests that its associated Pathway Guide be distributed to the conversation's participants.

DCI Pathways Guides

For every Deliberation Guide, the DCI has also developed an associated Pathways Guide, which outlines opportunities for action that participants can consider that are related to the covered topic. These Pathways Guides reinforce the DCI's commitment to an action orientation, a key deliberative disposition. While dialogue and deliberation are themselves important contributors to a healthy democracy, they become even more valuable when they lead to individual or collective action on the key issues facing society. Such action can come in a range of forms and should be broadly understood. It might involve developing a better understanding of a topic, connecting with relevant local or national organizations, generating new approaches to an issue, or deciding to support a particular policy.

If you make use of this guide in a deliberation, please provide attribution to the Deliberative Citizenship Initiative and email dcid@deliberativecitizenship.org to tell us about your event. To access more of our growing library of Deliberation Guides, Pathway Guides and other resources, visit www.deliberativecitizenship.org/readings-and-resources.

Notes

- ¹ Saul Cornell and Nathan DeDino, “A Well Regulated Right: The Early American Origins of Gun Control,” *Fordham L. Rev.* 73 (2004): 487, https://heinonline.org/hol-cgi-bin/get_pdf.cgi?handle=hein.journals/flr73§ion=27.
- ² “Guns.” Gallup.com, 2023. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1645/Guns.aspx>.
- ³ “United Against Gun Violence.” Brady United. Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.bradyunited.org>.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*
- ⁵ “Guns.” Gallup.com, 2023. <https://news.gallup.com/poll/1645/Guns.aspx>.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁹ USAFacts. “US Gun Deaths.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://usafacts.org/data/topics/security-safety/crime-and-justice/firearms/firearm-deaths/>; National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. “Newly Released Estimates Show Traffic Fatalities Reached a 16-Year High in 2021.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.nhtsa.gov/press-releases/early-estimate-2021-traffic-fatalities>.
- ¹⁰ Everytown Research & Policy. “Gun Death vs. Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths Since 1999.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://everytownresearch.org/graph/gun-death-vs-motor-vehicle-accident-deaths-since-1999/>; Violence Policy Center. “Gun Deaths Compared to Motor Vehicle Deaths,” May 6, 2015. <https://vpc.org/regulating-the-gun-industry/gun-deaths-compared-to-motor-vehicle-deaths/>; Everytown Research & Policy. “Gun Death vs. Motor Vehicle Accident Deaths Since 1999.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://everytownresearch.org/graph/gun-death-vs-motor-vehicle-accident-deaths-since-1999/>.
- ¹¹ Gramlich, John. “What the Data Says about Gun Deaths in the U.S.” *Pew Research Center* (blog), April 26, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/04/26/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>.
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ McGough, Matt, Krutika Amin, Nirmita Panchal, and Cynthia Cox Published. “Child and Teen Firearm Mortality in the U.S. and Peer Countries.” *KFF* (blog), July 18, 2023. <https://www.kff.org/mental-health/issue-brief/child-and-teen-firearm-mortality-in-the-u-s-and-peer-countries/>.
- ¹⁴ Katherine Leach-Kemon, Rebecca Sirull, and Scott Glenn. “On Gun Violence, the United States Is an Outlier.” Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, October 31, 2023. <https://www.healthdata.org/news-events/insights-blog/acting-data/gun-violence-united-states-outlier>.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁷ *Ibid.*
- ¹⁸ Giffords. “Statistics.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-violence-statistics/>.
- ¹⁹ The Heritage Foundation. “How Does an Armed People Secure a Free State?” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.heritage.org/the-essential-second-amendment/how-does-armed-people-secure-free-state>.
- ²⁰ Nelson Lund and Adam Winkler. “Interpretation and Debate: The Second Amendment.” National Constitution Center. Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/amendments/amendment-ii/interpretations/99>.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² *Ibid.*
- ²³ *Ibid.*
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*
- ²⁵ Justice Stevens,. *District of Columbia v. Heller* (Stevens, J., dissenting), U.S. (U.S. Supreme Court 2008). <https://www.law.cornell.edu/supct/html/07-290.ZD.html>.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*
- ²⁷ Steven Calabresi. “On Originalism in Constitutional Interpretation.” National Constitution Center. Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://constitutioncenter.org/the-constitution/white-papers/on-originalism-in-constitutional-interpretation>.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*

-
- ²⁹ Ammo.com. “Most Gun-Friendly States in 2024.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://ammo.com/articles/most-gun-friendly-states>.
- ³⁰ Trace, Riane Roldan, and Alain Stephens. “Here’s Everything You Need to Know about Texas Gun Laws.” The Texas Tribune, August 6, 2019. <https://www.texastribune.org/2019/08/06/texas-gun-laws/>.
- ³¹ The Heritage Foundation. “How Does an Armed People Secure a Free State?” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.heritage.org/the-essential-second-amendment/how-does-armed-people-secure-free-state>.
- ³² Prochko, Austin. “Armed Populace Serves as Check on Government Overreach.” Texas Public Policy Foundation, June 21, 2022. <https://www.texaspolicy.com/armed-populace-serves-as-check-on-government-overreach/>.
- ³³ The Heritage Foundation. “Data Visualization: Defensive Gun Uses in the U.S.,” March 12, 2024. <https://datavisualizations.heritage.org/firearms/defensive-gun-uses-in-the-us>; Lott, John. 2023. “FBI Data on Active Shootings is Misleading.” RealClearPolitics. https://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2023/08/31/fbi_data_on_active_shootings_is_misleading_149699.html.
- ³⁴ Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. “Gun Threats and Self-Defense Gun Use.” <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/hicrc/firearms-research/gun-threats-and-self-defense-gun-use-2/>.
- ³⁵ Mallory Falk. “Here Are The New Texas Gun Laws Going Into Effect On Sept. 1.” Houston Public Media, August 30, 2021. <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/news/politics/2021/08/30/407291/here-are-the-new-texas-gun-laws-going-into-effect-on-sept-1/>.
- ³⁶ Gun Facts. “Guns and Crime Prevention,” September 18, 2013. <https://www.gunfacts.info/gun-policy-info/guns-and-crime-prevention/>.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. “States With Permissive Gun Laws Have Higher Mass Shooting Rates,” March 7, 2019. <https://www.publichealth.columbia.edu/news/states-permissive-gun-laws-have-higher-mass-shooting-rates>.
- ³⁹ Ibid.
- ⁴⁰ Joslyn Law Firm. “Comparing Gun Control Measures to Gun-Related Homicides.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.criminalattorneycincinnati.com/comparing-gun-control-measures-to-gun-related-homicides-by-state/>.
- ⁴¹ Ibid.
- ⁴² Kyle Murdoch and Jim Kessler. “The Two-Decade Red State Murder Problem – Third Way.” Third Way, January 27, 2023. <https://www.thirdway.org/report/the-two-decade-red-state-murder-problem>.
- ⁴³ Michael Richey. “Unveiling the Truth: Criminals Ignore Gun Laws - Exploring the Impact on Public Safety.” *Carry Texas* (blog), June 9, 2023. <https://carry-texas.com/concealed-carry-in-texas/unveiling-the-truth-criminals-ignore-gun-laws-exploring-the-impact-on-public-safety>.
- ⁴⁴ Sarah Logemann. “G-NS: A Resource for Generous Dialogue about Gun Violence.” Geneva Press. 2018.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Ibid.
- ⁴⁷ “Firearms and Assault: ‘Guns Don’t Kill People, People Kill People.’” NJCRS Virtual Library, 1990. <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/firearms-and-assault-guns-dont-kill-people-people-kill-people-gun>.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ “Guns Don’t Kill People, People Kill People.” In *Wikipedia*, March 7, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Guns_don%27t_kill_people,_people_kill_people&oldid=1212409164.
- ⁵⁰ <https://journalistsresource.org/economics/unemployment-property-crime-burglary/>
- ⁵¹ News. “Unemployment Associated with Increase in Violence Early in COVID-19 Pandemic.” UC Davis Health, ary 2022. <https://health.ucdavis.edu/news/headlines/unemployment-associated-with-increase-in-violence-early-in-covid-19-pandemic/2022/01>.
- ⁵² National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. “Reducing Racial Inequality in Crime and Justice: Science, Practice, and Policy,” 2023. <https://nap.nationalacademies.org/download/26705>.
- ⁵³ Elisa Jacome. “How Better Access to Mental Health Care Can Reduce Crime.” Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research (SIEPR), July 2021. <https://siepr.stanford.edu/publications/policy-brief/how-better-access-mental-health-care-can-reduce-crime>; Violence and Mental Health: Opportunities for Prevention and Early Detection:

Proceedings of a Workshop. National Academies Press (US), 2018.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK488196/>.

⁵⁴ Noah Atchison. "Community Organizations Have Important Role in Lowering Crime Rates." Brennan Center for Justice, April 20, 2018. <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/community-organizations-have-important-role-lowering-crime-rates>;

Center for American Progress. "Community-Based Violence Interventions: Proven Strategies To Reduce Violent Crime," June 15, 2022.

<https://www.americanprogress.org/article/community-based-violence-interventions-proven-strategies-to-reduce-violent-crime/>.

⁵⁵ The Recovery Village. "Drugs, Crime, and Violence: Exploring the Connections," May 8, 2022.

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/drug-addiction/drugs-crime-violence-exploring-connections/>.

⁵⁶ Sarah Logemann. "G-NS: A Resource for Generous Dialogue about Gun Violence." Geneva Press. 2018.

⁵⁷ Everytown Gun Law Navigator. "Gun Law Navigator: Mental Illness." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://everytownresearch.org/navigator/states.html>.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Everytown Gun Law Navigator. "Gun Law Navigator: Mental Illness." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://everytownresearch.org/navigator/states.html>.

Rajeev Ramchand and Lynsay Ayer. "Is Mental Illness a Risk Factor for Gun Violence?" RAND, April 15, 2021.

<https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mental-illness-risk-factor-for-gun-violence.html>.

⁶¹ Rajeev Ramchand and Lynsay Ayer. "Is Mental Illness a Risk Factor for Gun Violence?" RAND, April 15, 2021.

<https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/essays/mental-illness-risk-factor-for-gun-violence.html>;

Prevent Firearm Suicide. "Statistics." Accessed March 22, 2024. [https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/about-](https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/about-firearm-suicide/statistics/)

[firearm-suicide/statistics/](https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/about-firearm-suicide/statistics/);

Prevent Firearm Suicide. "Societal Level: Extreme Risk Laws." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://preventfirearmsuicide.efsgv.org/interventions/societal/>.

⁶² The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. "Mental Illness and Gun Violence." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://efsgv.org/learn/learn-more-about-gun-violence/mental-illness-and-gun-violence/>.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ "Federal Assault Weapons Ban." In *Wikipedia*, March 20, 2024.

https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Federal_Assault_Weapons_Ban&oldid=1214719939.

⁶⁶ "High-Capacity Magazine." In *Wikipedia*, December 18, 2023. [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=High-](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=High-capacity_magazine&oldid=1190477790)

[capacity_magazine&oldid=1190477790](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=High-capacity_magazine&oldid=1190477790).

⁶⁷ Nicole Narea. "Nashville Shooting: Could an Assault Weapons Ban End US Mass Shootings?" Vox, April 11, 2023.

<https://www.vox.com/politics/2023/3/28/23660290/louisville-shooting-biden-assault-weapon-ban>.

⁶⁸ Everytown. "Prohibit Assault Weapons." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://www.everytown.org/solutions/assault-weapon-ban/>.

⁶⁹ NCJRS Virtual Library. "Controlling Assault Weapons Would Not Reduce Crime." Accessed March 22, 2024.

[https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/controlling-assault-weapons-would-not-reduce-crime-gun-](https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/controlling-assault-weapons-would-not-reduce-crime-gun-control-p-67)

[control-p-67](https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/controlling-assault-weapons-would-not-reduce-crime-gun-control-p-67).

⁷⁰ Ennis, Scott. 2013. Disabled Americans for Firearms Rights.

<https://www.cga.ct.gov/asafcrconnecticut/tmy0128/Scott%20Ennis%20-%20New%20London%20CT1.pdf>.

⁷¹ Berman, Mark, and Todd C. Frankel. "High-Capacity-Magazine Bans Could Save Lives. Will They Hold up in Court?" Washington Post, March 27, 2023. [https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2023/high-](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2023/high-capacity-magazine-ban-legal-challenges/)

[capacity-magazine-ban-legal-challenges/](https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/interactive/2023/high-capacity-magazine-ban-legal-challenges/).

⁷² Matthew Larosiere. "Losing Count: The Empty Case for 'High-Capacity' Magazine Restrictions." Cato Institute, July 17, 2018. [https://www.cato.org/legal-policy-bulletin/losing-count-empty-case-high-capacity-magazine-](https://www.cato.org/legal-policy-bulletin/losing-count-empty-case-high-capacity-magazine-restrictions)

[restrictions](https://www.cato.org/legal-policy-bulletin/losing-count-empty-case-high-capacity-magazine-restrictions).

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. "Universal Background Checks." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://efsgv.org/learn/policies/universal-background-checks/>.

⁷⁶ Everytown Gun Law Navigator. "Background Checks." Accessed March 22, 2024.

<https://everytownresearch.org/navigator/states.html>.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ The Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence. “Universal Background Checks.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://efsgv.org/learn/policies/universal-background-checks/>; “The Effects of Background Checks,” January 10, 2023. <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/background-checks.html>.

⁷⁹ David Sherfinski. “NRA Head Wary on Background Checks, Wants Better Instant Check System - Washington Times.” *Washington Times*, January 31, 2013. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/31/nra-head-argument-against-gun-show-loophole-overbl/>.

⁸⁰ NRA-ILA. “Background Checks.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.nraila.org/get-the-facts/background-checks-nics/>.

⁸¹ David Sherfinski. “NRA Head Wary on Background Checks, Wants Better Instant Check System - Washington Times.” *Washington Times*, January 31, 2013. <https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2013/jan/31/nra-head-argument-against-gun-show-loophole-overbl/>.

⁸² Brad Plumer. “Obama Wants Universal Background Checks for Gun Buyers. Is That Feasible?” *Washington Post*, January 16, 2013. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2013/01/16/obama-wants-universal-background-checks-for-guns-would-it-work/>.

⁸³ Giffords. “Maintaining Records.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-sales/maintaining-records/>.

⁸⁴ Brown, Kim Parker, Juliana Menasce Horowitz, Ruth Igielnik, J. Baxter Oliphant and Anna. “America’s Complex Relationship With Guns.” *Pew Research Center’s Social & Demographic Trends Project* (blog), June 22, 2017. <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2017/06/22/americas-complex-relationship-with-guns/>.

⁸⁵ Giffords. “Maintaining Records.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://giffords.org/lawcenter/gun-laws/policy-areas/gun-sales/maintaining-records/>.

⁸⁶ U.S. Senator John Thune. “Thune Joins Colleagues in Introducing Legislation to Block Taxpayer-Funded Gun Registries Lawmakers Offer ‘GRIP Act’ in Continued Effort to Protect Gun Owners’ Privacy Rights.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.thune.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2021/3/thune-joins-colleagues-in-introducing-legislation-to-block-taxpayer-funded-gun-registries-lawmakers-offer-grip-act-in-continued-effort-to-protect-gun-owners-privacy-rights>.

⁸⁷ Suci, Peter. “Joe Biden’s Big Mistake: Building a Gun Ownership Database?” Text. *The National Interest*. The Center for the National Interest, November 12, 2021. <https://nationalinterest.org/blog/buzz/joe-bidens-big-mistake-building-gun-ownership-database-196261>.

⁸⁸ NRA-ILA. “Waiting Periods.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://www.nraila.org/get-the-facts/waiting-periods/>.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Luca, Michael, Deepak Malhotra, and Christopher Poliquin. “Handgun Waiting Periods Reduce Gun Deaths.” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 114, no. 46 (November 14, 2017): 12162–65. <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1619896114>.

⁹¹ Anestis, Michael D., and Joye C. Anestis. “Suicide Rates and State Laws Regulating Access and Exposure to Handguns.” *American Journal of Public Health* 105, no. 10 (October 2015): 2049–58. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2015.302753>.

⁹² Rob Yates. “Constitutional Carry - What Is It, Why We Need It, and What You Can Do about It - Libertarian Party of North Carolina,” April 10, 2023. <https://www.lpnc.org/constitutional-carry-what-is-it-why-we-need-it-and-what-you-can-do-about-it>.

⁹³ NRA-ILA. “Concealed Carry | Right-to-Carry.” NRA-ILA. Accessed March 23, 2024. <https://www.nraila.org/get-the-facts/right-to-carry-and-concealed-carry/>.

⁹⁴ America First Policy Institute. “What Is Constitutional Carry? State Legislation: Permitless Carry,” November 29, 2022. <https://americafirstpolicy.com/issues/20221129-what-is-constitutional-carry-state-legislation-permitless-carry>.

⁹⁵ Giffords. “The Truth About Permitless Carry,” February 8, 2023. <https://giffords.org/report/the-truth-about-permitless-carry/>.

⁹⁶ Violence Policy Center. “Concealed Carry Killers.” Accessed March 22, 2024. <https://concealedcarrykillers.org/>.

⁹⁷ Giffords. “The Truth About Permitless Carry,” February 8, 2023. <https://giffords.org/report/the-truth-about-permitless-carry/>.

⁹⁸ “Concealed Carry.” In *Wikipedia*, March 21, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Concealed_carry&oldid=1214832918.

⁹⁹ New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. Bruen. Accessed March 23, 2024.

https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf

¹⁰⁰ “Understanding the Supreme Court’s Gun Control Decision in NYSRPA v. Bruen | League of Women Voters,” July 12, 2022. <https://www.lwv.org/blog/understanding-supreme-courts-gun-control-decision-nysrpa-v-bruen>.

¹⁰¹ “GOA Celebrates Massive ‘Right to Bear Arms’ SCOTUS Victory.” Accessed March 23, 2024.

<https://www.gunowners.org/goa-celebrates-massive-right-to-bear-arms-scotus-victory/>.

¹⁰² Finerty, Margaret. “The Supreme Court’s Bruen Decision and Its Impact: What Comes Next?” New York State Bar Association, August 9, 2022. <https://nysba.org/the-supreme-courts-bruen-decision-and-its-impact-what-comes-next/>.

¹⁰³ In the majority opinion Justice Clarence Thomas writes, “When the Second Amendment’s plain text covers an individual’s conduct [here the right to bear arms], the Constitution presumptively protects that conduct. The government must then justify its regulation by demonstrating that it is consistent with the Nation’s historical tradition of firearm regulation.” In a decision mostly considered an Originalist application, the original meaning of the law and the historical application were used to strike down New York’s gun law. The Second Amendment and its historical applications were viewed as more lenient than the New York laws and a mix of precedent and original meaning were used as grounds to strike down the laws. In a dissenting opinion, Justice Stephen Breyer argued that more specific historical evidence would be needed to strike down the law and that in our current climate, state legislatures ought to have the right to make their own judgments about the best way to address gun violence and that this decision would make it harder for them to do so. Breyer employs a mix of contention with Thomas’ original meaning in this context and the Living Constitutionalist’s need for the applications of the Constitution to evolve to meet the needs of the present day. For more, see the [court’s decision](#), [this article](#) by Andrew Willinger, and [this article](#) published by the League of Women Voters.

¹⁰⁴ NRA-ILA. “Why Gun Control Doesn’t Work.” NRA-ILA. Accessed March 23, 2024. <https://www.nra.org/why-gun-control-doesn-t-work/>.

¹⁰⁵ Moody, Carlisle E., and John R. Lott. “Do Right-to-Carry Concealed Weapons Laws Still Reduce Crime?” SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY, May 20, 2021. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3850436>.

¹⁰⁶ NRA-ILA. “Why Gun Control Doesn’t Work.” NRA-ILA. Accessed March 23, 2024. <https://www.nra.org/why-gun-control-doesn-t-work/>.

¹⁰⁷ RAND. “Effects of Concealed-Carry Laws on Violent Crime,” January 10, 2023.

<https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/analysis/concealed-carry/violent-crime.html>.

¹⁰⁸ Clifton Parker. “Right-to-Carry Gun Laws Linked to Increase in Violent Crime, Stanford Research Shows.”

Stanford News (blog), November 14, 2014. <https://news.stanford.edu/2014/11/14/donohue-guns-study-111414/>.

¹⁰⁹ Donohue, John J., Abhay Aneja, and Kyle D. Weber. “Right-to-Carry Laws and Violent Crime: A Comprehensive Assessment Using Panel Data and a State-Level Synthetic Control Analysis.” Working Paper. Working Paper Series. National Bureau of Economic Research, June 2017. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w23510>.

¹¹⁰ Center for American Progress. “Fact Sheet: Weakening Requirements to Carry a Concealed Firearm Increases Violent Crime,” October 4, 2022. <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/fact-sheet-weakening-requirements-to-carry-a-concealed-firearm-increases-violent-crime/>.

¹¹¹ FutureofWorking.com. “14 Arming Teachers Pros and Cons - Should Teachers Be Armed?,” May 12, 2019.

<https://futureofworking.com/14-arming-teachers-pros-and-cons-should-teachers-be-armed/>.

¹¹² Everytown Research & Policy. “Arming Teachers Introduces New Risks Into Schools.” Accessed March 23, 2024.

<https://everytownresearch.org/report/arming-teachers-introduces-new-risks-into-schools/>.