

Protect Children Not Guns 2009



**THIS IS HOW MANY SAFETY REGULATIONS
OUR GOVERNMENT IMPOSES ON THE PRODUCT
THAT KILLS MORE THAN 3,000 AMERICAN
CHILDREN AND TEENS A YEAR.**

Children's Defense Fund

Firearm Deaths Among Children and Teens Increase for Second Year in a Row: 3,184 in 2006

Almost nine children and teens die every day by gunfire—one every two hours and 45 minutes. After a decade of decline, the number of firearm deaths among children and teens increased for the second year in a row. According to the most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), a total of 3,184 children and teens died from gunfire in the United States in 2006, a 6 percent increase from 2005. A preschooler was killed by a gun every six days in 2006. Among children, the greatest increase in firearm deaths was among those under age 10. And 17,451 children and teens were victims of non-fatal firearm injuries in 2006, a 7 percent increase from 2005.

The daily news is a grim reminder of the devastating impact caused by our deadly romance with guns and violence. Evidence shows that increased availability of firearms is associated with higher rates of firearm homicides, suicides and accidental fatalities. The United States remains one of the few industrialized countries that place so few restrictions on gun sales. There are more than 270 million privately owned firearms in our country—the equivalent of nine firearms for every 10 men, women and children.

In these troubling economic times, more and more stories are emerging about individuals choosing gun violence to cope with their problems. The loss of lives has a tremendous ripple effect leading to emotional instability and trauma among survivors and leaving families and communities distressed and angry. Gun violence affects all of us by increasing health care costs, disrupting social services and decreasing national productivity.

What will it take for us to stop this senseless loss of young lives? We need to ensure that those we elect to public office enact legislation that will protect children by limiting the number of guns in our communities and controlling who can obtain firearms and the conditions of their use. Individuals and communities must act to end the culture of violence that desensitizes us—young and old—to the value of life.

We cannot allow these shots to go unheard. Our children and our society deserve better.

Key Findings of Child Gun Deaths

- **The number of children and teens in America killed by guns in 2006 would fill more than 127 public school classrooms of 25 students each.**
- **More preschoolers (63) were killed by firearms than law enforcement officers (48) killed in the line of duty.**
- **Since 1979, gun violence has ended the lives of 107,603 children and teens in America. Sixty percent of them were White; 37 percent were Black.**
- **The number of children and teens killed by guns since 1979 would fill 4,304 public school classrooms of 25 students each.**
- **The number of Black children and teens killed by gunfire since 1979 (39,957) is more than 10 times the number of Black citizens of all ages lynched throughout American history (3,437).**

The latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 3,184 children and teens died from gun-fire in the United States in 2006—one young life lost every two hours and 45 minutes, almost nine every day, 61 every week.

2,225 were homicide victims
763 committed suicide
196 died in accidental or undetermined circumstances

2,815 were boys
369 were girls

408 were under age 15
143 were under age 10
63 were under age 5

1,618 were White
1,441 were Black
678 were Latino*
77 were Asian or Pacific Islander
48 were American Indian or Alaska Native

More than five times as many children and teens—17,451—suffered non-fatal gun injuries.

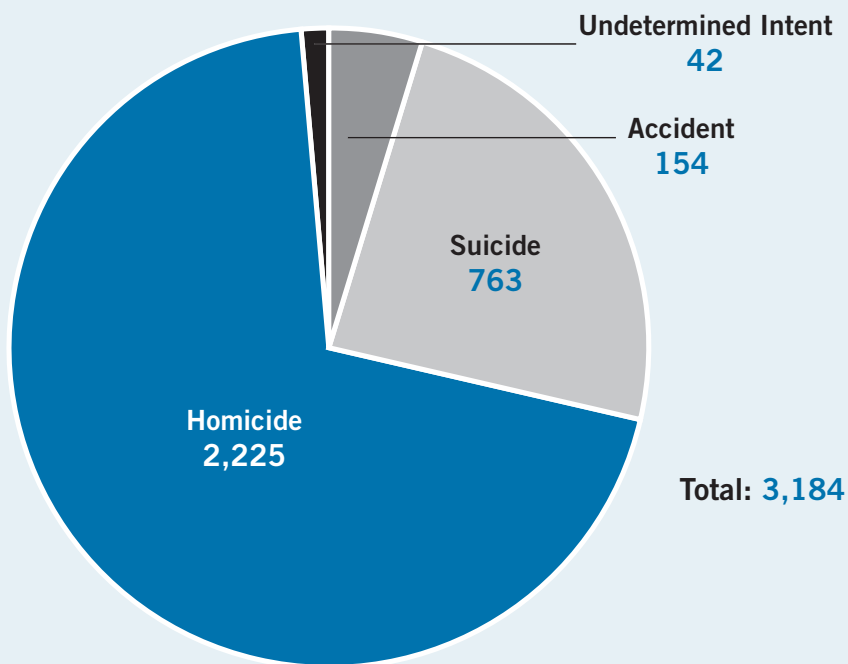
* Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin can be of any race; these 678 deaths are included in the four race categories.

Did You Know?

- 178 more children and teens died from firearms in 2006 than in 2005—the second annual increase in a row.
- 253 more children and teens died from firearm homicide in 2006 than in 2005.
- 170 more Black, 64 more Hispanic, and 3 more Asian and Pacific Islander children and teens died from firearms in 2006 than in 2005.
- More 10- to 19-year-olds die from gunshot wounds than from any other cause except motor vehicle accidents.
- Almost 90 percent of the children and teens killed by firearms in 2006 were boys.
- Black children and teens are more likely to be victims of firearm homicide. White children and teens are more likely to commit suicide.
- The firearm death rate for Black males ages 15 to 19 is more than four times that of comparable White males.
- A Black male has a 1 in 72 chance of being killed by a firearm before his 30th birthday; a White male has a 1 in 344 chance.
- Almost eight times as many White children and teens committed suicide by gun as Black children and teens.
- Males ages 15 to 19 are almost ten times as likely as females that age to commit suicide with a firearm.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, 2006

More than two-thirds of the firearm deaths of children and teens in 2006 were homicides; about one-fourth were suicides.



States with the Most and Fewest Child and Teen Gun Deaths in 2006

The worst ten states accounted for 1,792—56.3 percent—of all firearm deaths among children and teens in 2006:

California (511)	Michigan (128)
Texas (237)	New York (115)
Florida (172)	Arizona (112)
Pennsylvania (159)	Ohio (106)
Illinois (154)	Louisiana (98)

The best eleven states accounted for 63 firearm deaths of children and teens in 2006:

Hawaii (1)	Maine (6)
New Hampshire (2)	Montana (6)
Vermont (4)	South Dakota (9)
Wyoming (4)	North Dakota (10)
Rhode Island (5)	West Virginia (10)
Delaware (6)	

Between 2005 and 2006, the number of children and teens killed by firearms increased in 29 states and decreased in 21 states and the District of Columbia.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 2004–2006

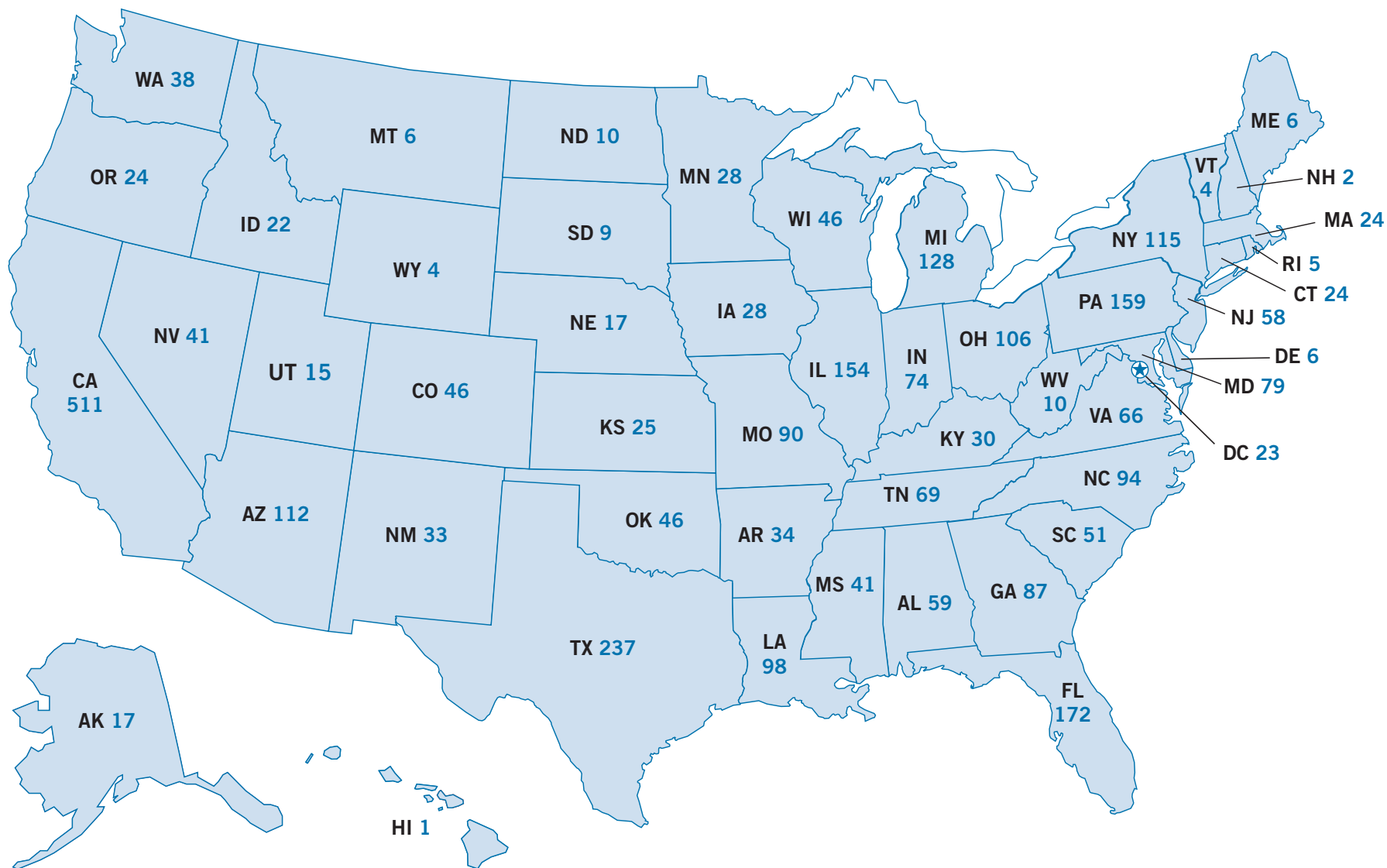
	Total*			Homicide*			Suicide			Accident			Undetermined Intent		
	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006	2004	2005	2006
Alabama	52	64	59	31	39	39	16	17	18	4	7	2	1	1	0
Alaska	22	13	17	7	5	5	15	8	9	0	0	3	0	0	0
Arizona	76	102	112	43	62	68	25	35	35	6	2	3	2	3	6
Arkansas	16	46	34	8	17	20	4	23	13	3	5	0	1	1	1
California	468	474	511	406	392	435	49	54	54	10	25	20	3	3	2
Colorado	48	44	46	23	19	22	24	20	19	1	4	1	0	1	4
Connecticut	11	10	24	9	7	20	2	2	4	0	1	0	0	0	0
Delaware	9	7	6	7	4	4	1	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
District of Columbia	40	26	23	39	26	22	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Florida	111	148	172	76	96	122	30	46	37	5	5	11	0	1	2
Georgia	89	80	87	57	54	60	27	21	18	4	5	5	1	0	4
Hawaii	0	2	1	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	16	16	22	3	5	5	10	9	15	3	2	2	0	0	0
Illinois	143	130	154	123	111	133	17	13	16	3	6	5	0	0	0
Indiana	56	62	74	33	41	51	19	18	18	4	1	4	0	2	1
Iowa	16	15	28	2	4	11	13	10	15	1	1	2	0	0	0
Kansas	26	18	25	13	11	9	12	4	14	1	3	2	0	0	0
Kentucky	40	36	30	18	17	11	20	16	14	2	2	4	0	1	1
Louisiana	88	110	98	54	67	75	25	30	14	8	12	8	1	1	1
Maine	10	1	6	0	0	3	10	1	3	0	0	0	0	0	0
Maryland	71	75	79	61	64	66	9	10	10	1	0	2	0	1	1
Massachusetts	32	27	24	26	26	21	6	0	3	0	1	0	0	0	0
Michigan	104	92	128	57	65	93	34	23	32	8	2	3	5	2	0
Minnesota	39	42	28	15	16	17	24	23	11	0	1	0	0	2	0
Mississippi	43	30	41	23	12	24	15	9	6	4	7	9	1	2	2
Missouri	61	73	90	38	44	63	21	16	19	2	10	7	0	3	1
Montana	12	18	6	1	2	0	10	15	4	1	1	2	0	0	0
Nebraska	15	19	17	4	3	9	9	15	8	2	1	0	0	0	0
Nevada	27	34	41	18	20	26	7	14	14	2	0	1	0	0	0
New Hampshire	4	1	2	1	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Jersey	48	45	58	41	40	54	7	4	2	0	1	2	0	0	0
New Mexico	28	25	33	11	11	15	17	12	18	0	2	0	0	0	0
New York	89	93	115	69	66	96	16	20	17	4	6	2	0	1	0
North Carolina	70	91	94	40	58	60	22	26	27	5	6	4	3	1	3
North Dakota	10	11	10	1	1	0	6	9	7	1	1	1	2	0	2
Ohio	80	118	106	46	78	72	28	28	29	5	12	5	1	0	0
Oklahoma	29	35	46	13	19	30	13	12	12	3	2	3	0	2	1
Oregon	21	17	24	12	2	11	6	12	13	3	3	0	0	0	0
Pennsylvania	132	138	159	87	99	121	39	32	30	5	4	8	1	3	0
Rhode Island	4	7	5	2	6	3	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	44	41	51	19	24	37	18	12	11	6	5	3	1	0	0
South Dakota	10	11	9	1	2	0	7	7	7	2	2	2	0	0	0
Tennessee	73	77	69	30	48	43	29	22	21	10	7	4	4	0	1
Texas	236	264	237	144	164	162	79	84	58	10	13	14	3	3	3
Utah	15	10	15	4	3	1	11	7	13	0	0	1	0	0	0
Vermont	3	3	4	0	1	1	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1
Virginia	76	79	66	50	54	40	21	22	21	4	1	3	1	2	2
Washington	49	44	38	18	20	13	27	21	19	4	1	3	0	2	3
West Virginia	12	19	10	4	9	4	8	9	5	0	0	1	0	1	0
Wisconsin	43	56	46	14	33	27	27	20	18	1	3	1	1	0	0
Wyoming	8	7	4	2	3	0	4	4	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
United States	2,825	3,006	3,184	1,804	1,972	2,225	846	822	763	143	173	154	32	39	42

*Total firearm deaths and homicide firearm deaths exclude firearm deaths by legal (police or corrections) intervention.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, data accessed January 2007, February 2008, and April 2009. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

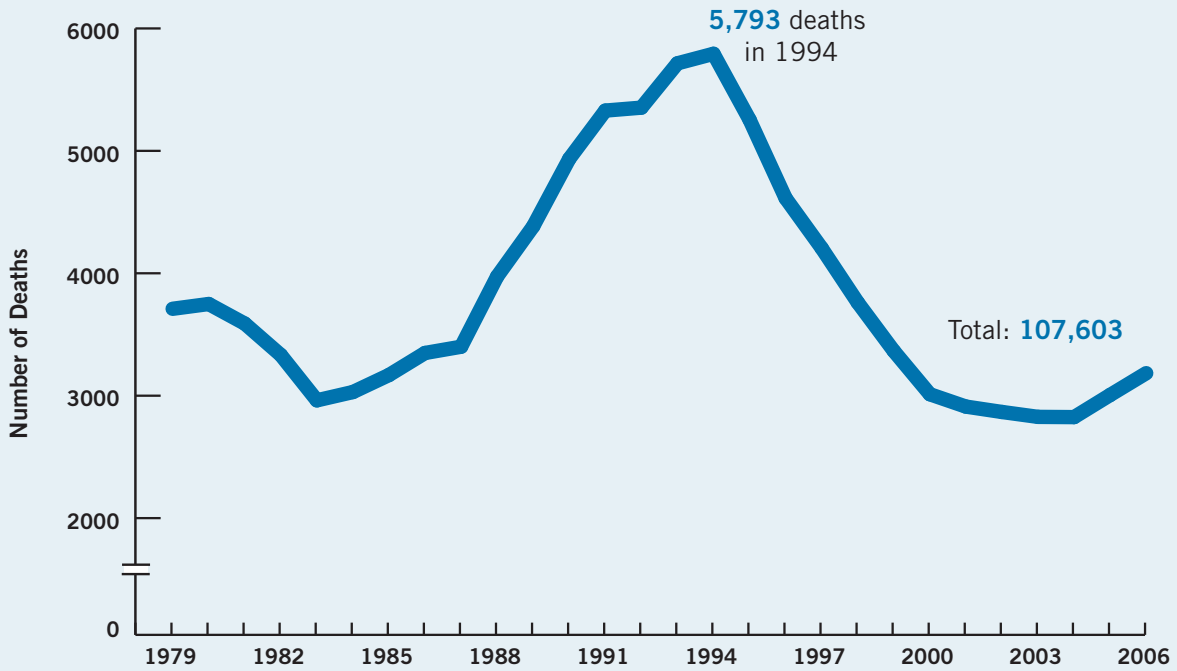
Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, 2006

United States Total: 3,184



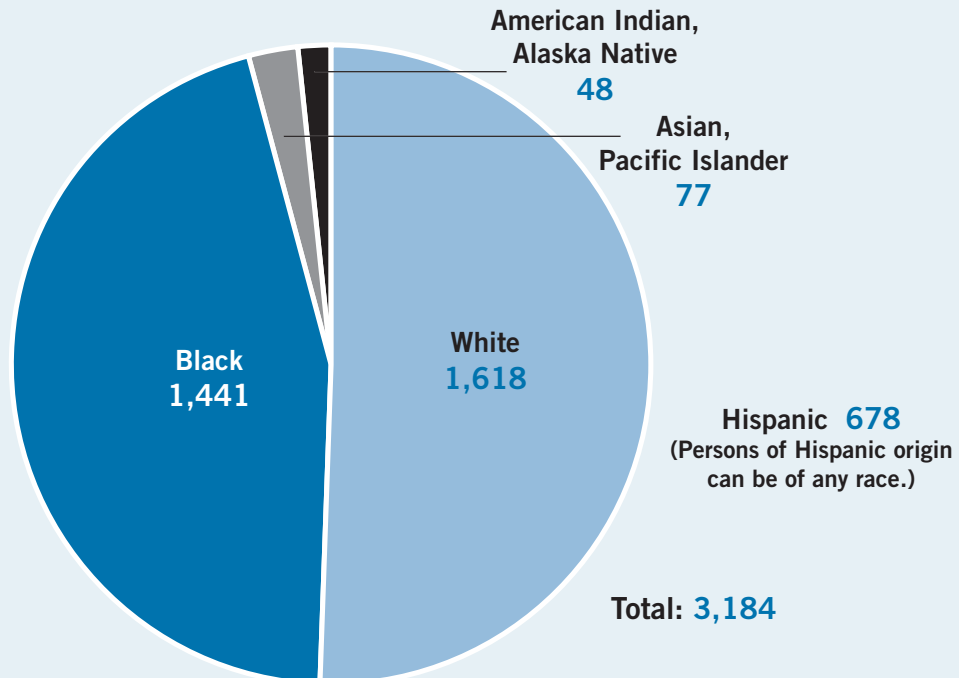
Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, 1979–2006

Between 1994 and 2004, the annual number of firearm deaths of children and teens decreased by more than 50 percent.



Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens by Race/Hispanic Origin, 2006

About half of the children and teens killed by firearms in 2006 were White; 45 percent were Black.



Step Up and Take Action: We Can Protect Children and Teens from Gun Violence if Everyone Helps!

It is time to confront America's deadly, historic romance with guns and violence and protect children from firearms in their homes, schools and communities. You can help by taking action today!

1. Advocate and Support Common-Sense Gun Safety Measures

Stronger federal legislation could help protect more children from the all too often fatal effects of gun violence. Some measures that would help include the following:

- **Close the gun show loophole.** The Brady Law requires that federally licensed firearms dealers conduct background checks on every sale. However, a loophole in the law allows private dealers to sell firearms without a license and avoids the required background checks. Forty percent of all firearms in this country are purchased without a background check, including those bought at gun shows. Eighteen states require background checks for some categories of gun sales not covered by the Brady law; the other 32 states have no laws that affect the gun show loophole. Congress must enact legislation that closes the gun show loophole by requiring criminal background checks on those who purchase guns from unlicensed gun dealers.

Contact your elected officials to urge support for gun measures that protect children by closing the gun show loophole. Call your Members of Congress at (202) 224-3121 to urge passage of bipartisan companion bills now pending in both the House and Senate. These bills are S. 843, introduced by Sen. Lautenberg (D-NJ) and H.R. 2324, introduced by Rep. Castle (R-DE).

- **Strengthen the Brady background check system.** Beyond closing the gun show loophole, other measures would strengthen the Brady Law. The law includes a background check system, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System or NICS. This system offers important protection as evidenced by data showing that from 1994–2007, background checks prevented more than 1.6 million persons from purchasing firearms. Ways to strengthen this system include:
 - (1) Requiring states to provide more information to the FBI's national database on prohibited persons, e.g., convicted felons, persons with a domestic violence protective order against them, and persons with mental illness who are determined to be a danger to self or others. According to the FBI, by the end of FY 2008, 17 states had submitted fewer than ten names based on mental illness exclusions to the database.
 - (2) Extending background checks to cover all purchases of firearms, as has been done in California, for example.
 - (3) Closing the terrorist loophole. Being on the federal terror watch list alone does not preclude a person from purchasing a firearm.
- **Reinstitute the assault weapons ban.** The Assault Weapons Ban, signed into law in 1994, banned 19 types of semi-automatic military style guns and certain kinds of ammunition, but it expired in 2004. According to the Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence, the ban reduced the incidence of assault weapons use in crime by 66 percent between 1995 and 2001. There is no current pending federal legislation that would reinstate the ban.

2. Remove Guns from Your Home

A study in the November 2004 *American Journal of Epidemiology* reported that, regardless of storage practice, type or number of domestic firearms, the presence of guns increases the risk of homicide and suicide in the home. The vast majority of firearms used in accidental shootings of children and teens come from the victim's home or the home of a relative or friend. A study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* in August 2004 concluded that state safe gun storage laws helped achieve an 8.3 percent decrease in suicide rates among youth ages 14 to 17 years.

There are more than 270 million privately owned firearms in the United States, which is the equivalent of nine firearms for every ten men, women and children in this country. Removing guns from the home is one of the best ways to protect children and teens from gun deaths.

3. Mobilize Support in Your Community to Protect Children from Gun Violence

As individuals and with fellow community members, you can educate others about the crisis of gun violence facing our children and teens. Parents and family members who face such losses can use their grief and anger to work with concerned community residents to broaden public understanding and increase political support for stronger gun control laws.

- Organize groups of influential community leaders to see and hear first-hand the effects of gun violence. Ask your local hospital to arrange visits with medical staff who can share their experiences helping gun violence victims and their families. Invite members of the media to publicize the event.
- Urge local newspapers and radio and television stations to publish and broadcast photographs of children and teens killed in your community.
- Encourage your place of worship to read the names of children killed by guns in your community and publish their photos in the congregational bulletin.
- Write a letter to the editor or an opinion column about the senseless loss of young lives to gun violence and what can be done to stop the killings.
- Remember that there are many groups working to reduce the tragedies of young deaths from guns. Go to www.childrensdefense.org/violenceresources to learn more about national, state and local organizations that you can join to help make a difference!

4. Stress Nonviolent Values and Conflict Resolution

We live in a society where family violence is epidemic, child abuse and neglect are widespread, and children are constantly exposed to television programming crammed with scenes of brutality. Concerned parents—working with schools, community groups and faith congregations must organize nonviolent conflict resolution support groups. Excellent resources include Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith's violence-prevention curriculum for grades K through 5, *PEACEZONE* (<http://www.researchpress.com>); the Massachusetts Medical Society's *Recognizing and Preventing Youth Violence* (<http://www.massmed.org/violence>), and SafeStart Center's *Healing the Invisible Wounds: Children's Exposure to Violence* (<http://www.safestartcenter.org>). The Educators for Social Responsibility website (<http://www.esrnational.org>) and the Association for Conflict Resolution (<http://acrn.org/resources/index.htm>) both provide comprehensive lists of educational resources for conflict resolution.

5. Refuse to Buy or Use Products for Children and Teens That Glamorize Violence

Our culture frequently glamorizes guns and violence in movies, television, music and on the Internet. Many shows targeted at children commonly have violent themes and language. Protest and refuse to

buy or use products that glamorize or make violence socially acceptable or fun. Turn off violent programming and read or play with your children instead. Talk to them about the importance of rejecting violence as a cultural and personal value.

6. Provide Children and Teens Positive Alternatives to the Streets Where They Can Feel Safe and Protected

Gangs, drugs and guns are available to many children seven days a week, 24 hours a day. We must offer positive alternatives and role models to children during after-school hours, weekends and summers. We need to open our congregational, school and community doors and engage them in purposeful activities. Check CDF's website at www.childrensdefense.org/freedomschools for more information about the CDF Freedom Schools® reading and enrichment model program, which includes nonviolence training and conflict resolution.

A Deadly Stretch for Chicago's Children

In Chicago, parents and police are escorting students in high-risk housing projects to and from school in a program dubbed Operation Safe Passage. It began in 2008 after gang violence in the city escalated.

“Way too many children are living in fear and saying ‘if I grow up’ instead of ‘when I grow up,’” former Chicago Public Schools Chief Arne Duncan told AFP News in April 2008. “I got a letter from a second grader who said her goal in life is to be able to walk to the corner store safely.”

Considering gun death statistics for the city, it's not a ridiculous goal. During just one weekend in April 2008, 13 Chicago children were among 36 shooting victims, and two others were stabbed. NPR reported in May 2009 that a month before the school year ended, 36 students had been killed topping the number of students slain in both the 2007–2008 and 2006–2007 school years. One of those killed was Alex Arellano, a shy 15-year-old who was brutally beaten, burned and shot in the head. Like many gunshot victims in Chicago, it is suspected that his brutal murder was gang-related, although Alex had no criminal record or known gang affiliation.

The report noted that many officials said the slayings aren't getting the attention they deserve because the victims are minorities. Chicago Police Superintendent Jody Weis explained that part of the problem is young people resorting to violence and weapons to solve any type of conflict. He said the police work constantly to keep violence out of the schools but admitted sometimes disagreements begin at school and then are finished off-campus.

After seven people were killed in a 24-hour period, one local priest had had enough. Rev. Michael Pflieger of St. Sabina's Church began flying the American flag upside down to draw attention to the recent gun violence in his South Side community. Although he has received death threats and much criticism, Rev. Pflieger said the flag will stay until something is done to stop the killings.

Former Schools Chief Arne Duncan, now U.S. Secretary of Education, acknowledged that the root causes of the violence—social inequality, poor parenting, gangs and drugs—are complex but had no doubt that getting guns off the streets would dramatically reduce the rising death toll.

The Toll of Gun Violence on New Orleans' Katrina's Children: An Absence of Protective Functions

By Julia Cass

Jay Miles' T-shirt shop tells the terrible tale of youth shot down in New Orleans. So much of his business comes from producing T-shirts commemorating murdered youth—60 percent he says—that he has a large loose-leaf binder of possible designs titled “Rest in Peace (R.I.P.)” Miles, who grew up in a housing project on New Orleans' West Bank, said he decided to open a shop there after he went into the city to buy a T-shirt for a friend who had been murdered. “The line was out the door.” Now, he says, there are ten such T-shirt businesses in New Orleans.

In early February 2009, Miles produced a T-shirt for Kenneth Davis Jr., an 18-year-old high school senior shot twice in the back of the head in his girlfriend's backyard in a public housing complex. It read: “*Now that my soul must rest, remember me at my best. Lil Kenneth.*” In the middle of the shirt are four photographs of Kenneth at various ages, including one when he was a chubby baby, set against a sky-blue background with small white doves along the border. A 19-year-old has been charged with his murder but the motive is unclear—possibly turf related. “Black children killing Black children. You don't need a reason anymore,” Kenneth's mother said before bursting into tears.

Kenneth Davis Jr. was the 13th homicide in New Orleans during the first month of the New Year. Despite a decline in 2008, from 210 to 179 murders, New Orleans still has one of the highest—if not the highest—murder rate in the country, with approximately 65 murders per 100,000 people. (The shifting population since Katrina makes exact comparisons difficult.) Some 25 of the 2008 victims were 18 or younger, including three 15-year-olds. The motives most commonly cited are “unknown,” “argument” or “ongoing dispute.” Many of the victims, perhaps as many as 80 percent, according to the *Times-Picayune's* veteran police reporter, are said to be “in the life” of the streets.

Peter Scharf, a criminologist at Tulane University, also believes that the murder rate is a “child effect. I think there is an experience of childhood that is really different in some of our neighborhoods. There is an absence of protective factors,” he said. Too many young, unprepared parents; already poor schools recovering from Katrina; employers and other positive influences and opportunities scarce or not in the picture at all. Some children are essentially self-raised and create their own mini-cultures, which affect other young people. “Our children are at great developmental risk and this means further problems down the line.”

The dysfunction of the city's criminal justice system before and after Katrina—in 2006 there were 161 murders and just two murder trials—intensified both the fear of coming forward as a witness and the cycle of violent revenge. In many murders in poor neighborhoods, “the whole community knows who did it but it's never solved in court,” said John C. Raphael Jr., pastor of a Baptist church in New Orleans' Central City neighborhood, who has led anti-crime rallies. For every murder of a young man, he sees two potential killings that can follow. Street associates of the victim may exact revenge on the presumed killer, or they may kill a friend of the victim who witnessed the murder even if he didn't talk to police. “They all live in the same community.”

Raphael, a former policeman, said that many young men in Central City “don't believe they will live to adulthood. As young kids, they've heard gunfire and seen dead bodies. They're afraid but they can't escape, so they harden themselves to survive.” On New Year's Day, he went to the scene of the homicide to plant an ENOUGH! sign and talk to young people. “There was a huge pool of blood. Very thick. Kids were standing there pointing, ‘That's where he got shot!’” Raphael borrowed a hose and broom and swept the blood into a drain while trying to explain it all. “The kids become numb to what should be emotionally disturbing and accept it as a norm, as the community does.”

Between 1979 and 2006, the yearly number of firearm deaths of White children and teens decreased by about 40 percent, but deaths of Black children and teens increased by 55 percent.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Race/Hispanic Origin 1979–2006

	Total	Black	White	American Indian, Alaska Native*	Asian, Pacific Islander*	Hispanic**
1979	3,710	929	2,700	—	—	—
1980	3,749	944	2,739	—	—	—
1981	3,589	944	2,569	49	27	—
1982	3,332	811	2,450	55	23	—
1983	2,962	739	2,155	42	25	—
1984	3,030	716	2,238	44	32	—
1985	3,169	850	2,241	42	36	—
1986	3,349	938	2,337	43	31	—
1987	3,400	1,117	2,199	28	54	—
1988	3,974	1,458	2,405	76	53	—
1989	4,384	1,694	2,563	50	76	—
1990	4,935	2,047	2,753	47	87	748
1991	5,329	2,297	2,878	60	91	883
1992	5,353	2,359	2,834	55	105	924
1993	5,715	2,600	2,925	51	139	977
1994	5,793	2,559	3,024	75	135	993
1995	5,254	2,153	2,898	73	130	1,005
1996	4,613	1,976	2,475	64	98	817
1997	4,205	1,687	2,357	59	102	748
1998	3,761	1,416	2,197	60	88	661
1999	3,365	1,301	1,934	57	73	605
2000	3,012	1,149	1,762	44	57	568
2001	2,911	1,128	1,695	49	39	518
2002	2,867	1,112	1,639	52	64	581
2003	2,827	1,172	1,554	50	51	553
2004	2,825	1,149	1,568	57	51	574
2005	3,006	1,271	1,624	51	60	614
2006	3,184	1,441	1,618	48	77	678
Total	107,603	39,957	64,331	1,381	1,804	12,447

* Data for American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander not available for 1979–1980.

** Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race. Hispanic data not available prior to 1990. For 1990 to 1996, a small number of states with small Hispanic populations did not include Hispanic identifiers in their reporting to the federal government.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, and April 2009.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Since 1979, more than 2,500 preschool-age children have been killed by firearms—the equivalent of more than 100 elementary school classrooms.

Firearms Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age, 1979–2006

	Under 1	Ages 1–4	Under 5	Ages 5–9	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Under 20
1979	12	97	109	157	447	2,997	3,710
1980	16	90	106	131	435	3,077	3,749
1981	16	99	115	123	438	2,913	3,589
1982	15	99	114	142	402	2,674	3,332
1983	11	72	83	108	379	2,392	2,962
1984	15	88	103	124	469	2,334	3,030
1985	8	96	104	120	470	2,475	3,169
1986	11	82	93	110	453	2,693	3,349
1987	8	77	85	126	484	2,705	3,400
1988	10	91	101	124	523	3,226	3,974
1989	16	105	121	138	555	3,570	4,384
1990	16	87	103	121	560	4,151	4,935
1991	12	93	105	94	613	4,517	5,329
1992	12	105	117	111	665	4,460	5,353
1993	14	102	116	141	700	4,758	5,715
1994	13	94	107	105	657	4,924	5,793
1995	8	97	105	107	640	4,402	5,254
1996	11	77	88	95	509	3,921	4,613
1997	9	75	84	107	438	3,576	4,205
1998	5	78	83	96	430	3,152	3,761
1999	8	65	73	80	335	2,877	3,365
2000	13	46	59	70	304	2,579	3,012
2001	11	70	81	79	254	2,497	2,911
2002	10	61	71	71	274	2,451	2,867
2003	8	48	56	63	259	2,449	2,827
2004	7	51	58	61	239	2,467	2,825
2005	7	62	69	62	273	2,602	3,006
2006	6	57	63	80	265	2,776	3,184
Total	308	2,264	2,572	2,946	12,470	89,615	107,603

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, and April 2009.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Since 1979, more than 107,000 children and teens have been killed by firearms; 56 percent have been homicides and 31 percent have been suicides. Since 1994, the annual number of accidental firearm deaths of children and teens has declined 70 percent.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 1979–2006

	Total*	Homicide*	Suicide	Accident	Unknown
1979	3,710	1,651	1,220	726	113
1980	3,749	1,743	1,214	689	103
1981	3,589	1,660	1,213	604	112
1982	3,332	1,498	1,207	550	77
1983	2,962	1,238	1,150	504	70
1984	3,030	1,289	1,114	552	75
1985	3,169	1,322	1,256	519	72
1986	3,349	1,513	1,293	472	71
1987	3,400	1,573	1,281	467	79
1988	3,974	1,953	1,387	543	91
1989	4,384	2,367	1,380	567	70
1990	4,935	2,852	1,476	541	66
1991	5,329	3,247	1,436	551	95
1992	5,353	3,336	1,426	501	90
1993	5,715	3,625	1,460	526	104
1994	5,793	3,579	1,565	512	137
1995	5,254	3,249	1,450	440	115
1996	4,613	2,836	1,309	376	92
1997	4,205	2,562	1,262	306	75
1998	3,761	2,184	1,241	262	74
1999	3,365	1,990	1,078	214	83
2000	3,012	1,776	1,007	193	36
2001	2,911	1,771	928	182	30
2002	2,867	1,830	828	167	42
2003	2,827	1,822	810	151	44
2004	2,825	1,804	846	143	32
2005	3,006	1,972	822	173	39
2006	3,184	2,225	763	154	42

Total **107,603** **60,467** **33,422** **11,585** **2,129**

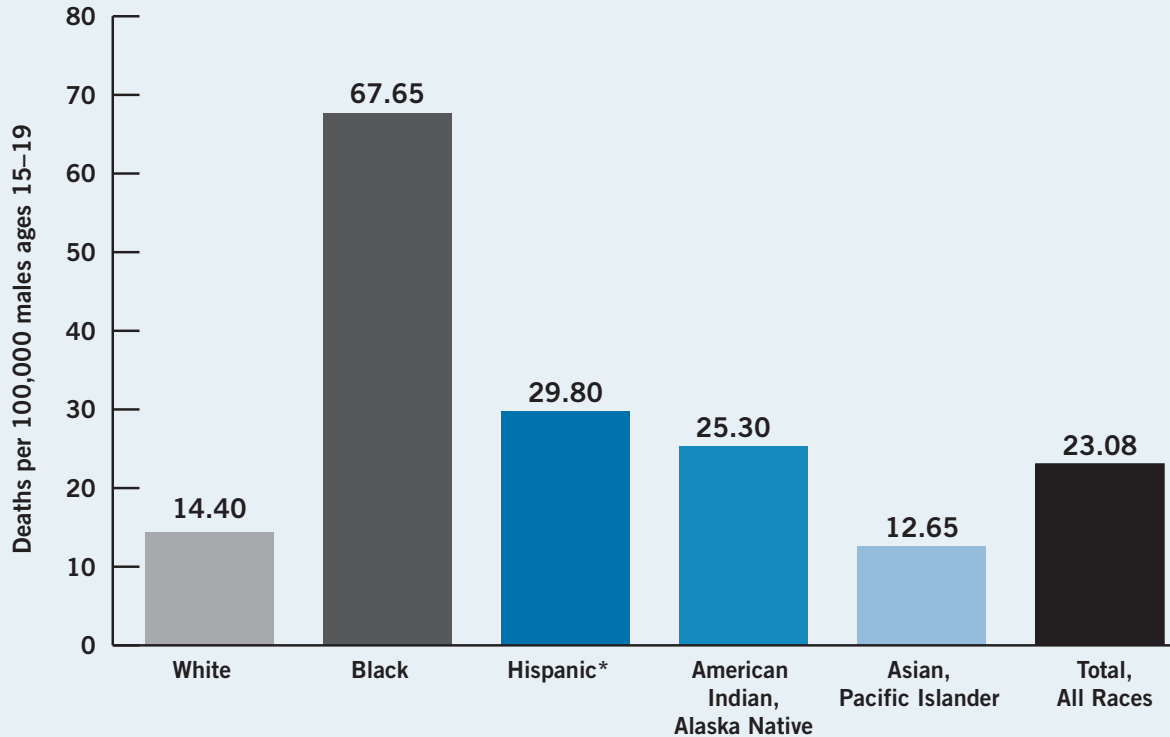
*Total firearm deaths and homicide firearm deaths exclude firearm deaths by legal (police or corrections) intervention.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <<http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, and April 2009.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Firearm Death Rates of Males Ages 15–19 by Race and Hispanic Origin, 2006

Black males ages 15 to 19 are almost five times as likely as their White peers and more than twice as likely as their Hispanic peers to be killed by firearms.



* Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed April 2009.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

There were more White than Black children and teens killed by firearms in 2006, except among the youngest children.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age, Manner, and Race/Hispanic Origin, 2006

	Under Age 1	Ages 1–4	Ages 5–9	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Total under age 20
All Races	6	57	80	265	2,776	3,184
Accident	0	13	18	23	100	154
Suicide	0	0	0	62	701	763
Homicide	6	42	62	175	1,940	2,225
Undetermined intent	0	2	0	5	35	42
White	2	27	52	167	1,370	1,618
Accident	0	4	13	16	60	93
Suicide	0	0	0	57	583	640
Homicide	2	22	39	90	702	855
Undetermined intent	0	1	0	4	25	30
Black	4	29	22	90	1,296	1,441
Accident	0	8	3	6	37	54
Suicide	0	0	0	2	82	84
Homicide	4	20	19	81	1,167	1,291
Undetermined intent	0	1	0	1	10	12
American Indian, Alaska Native	0	0	1	5	42	48
Accident	0	1	1	0	2	
Suicide	0	0	0	2	23	25
Homicide	0	0	0	2	19	21
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Asian, Pacific Islander	0	1	5	3	68	77
Accident	0	1	1	0	3	5
Suicide	0	0	0	1	13	14
Homicide	0	0	4	2	52	58
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hispanic*	1	12	11	61	593	678
Accident	0	2	0	2	19	23
Suicide	0	0	0	8	81	89
Homicide	1	10	11	50	484	556
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	1	9	10

*Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <<http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>>, accessed April 2009. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

How Long Will It Take Our Nation to Protect Its Children from Gunfire?

Ten Years Since Columbine: Selected Incidents of Shootings Since 1999

April 20, 1999 – Students Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold killed 15 students and a teacher and wounded 23 others before killing themselves at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado.

July 29, 1999 – A day trader killed his wife, their two children, and nine other people during a day-long shooting rampage in Atlanta, Georgia, that ended when he took his own life.

February 29, 2000 – A 6-year-old boy shot and killed a 6-year-old girl at an elementary school in Mount Morris Township, Michigan, with a .32 caliber handgun.

March 10, 2000 – A 19-year-old shot and killed two students as they were leaving a high school dance in Savannah, Georgia.

March 5, 2001 – A 15-year-old randomly fired a .22 caliber handgun at his high school in Santee, California. He reloaded at least four times, killing two and injuring 13.

May 15, 2001 – A 16-year-old sophomore wielded a gun and held an English class hostage in Ennis, Texas. He released 17 of the hostages, then killed a girl and himself. He had been upset over his relationship with the girl.

January 24, 2002 – Two men opened fire in a sandwich shop in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, gunning down an 8-year-old girl and two others. All three victims died.

October 2002 – John Allen Muhammad and 17-year-old Lee Boyd Malvo randomly selected victims in sniper-style shootings in Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C., using a Bushmaster XM-15 semi-automatic assault rifle. Over a three-week period, they killed ten and wounded three, including a 13-year-old boy.

April 14, 2003 – Four boys aged 15–19 opened fire in a New Orleans high school gym with an AK-47, killing one student and injuring three others.

April 24, 2003 – A 14-year-old student fatally shot the principal of Red Lion Area Junior High in Red Lion, Pennsylvania, then committed suicide. The shootings took place when students were gathering in the cafeteria.

September 24, 2003 – A 15-year-old student opened fire at Rocori High School in Cold Spring, Minnesota, killing two students.

March 17, 2004 – A 13-year-old student shot and killed himself in a Joyce, Washington, classroom in front of 20 other students. The boy had a .22-caliber rifle hidden in a guitar case and pulled it out during the class.

March 14, 2005 – A man fired 22 rounds during a church service in Brookfield, Wisconsin. Seven people were killed, including the minister and his son; four others were wounded.

March 21, 2005 – Ten people were killed and seven injured in a rampage by a high school student on the Red Lake Indian Reservation in Minnesota.

October 2, 2006 – A truck driver walked into a one-room Amish schoolhouse in Nickel Mines, Pennsylvania, with a shotgun, a semi-automatic handgun, and 600 rounds of ammunition, selected all the female students and shot them execution-style, killing five and seriously wounding five others. The man then shot himself.

In the one month between March 5 and April 5, 2009, 16 shootings involving multiple deaths occurred, taking the lives of 85 people including 18 children and teens while 14 soldiers died in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

February 12, 2007 – A teen opened fire inside a mall in Salt Lake City, Utah, killing five people before being shot and killed by police.

April 16, 2007 – A student killed 32 students and faculty and wounded 15 more at Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia, before killing himself.

May 22, 2007 – In Moscow, Idaho, a man who belonged to the Aryan Nations shot 200 rounds from two military-style semiautomatic weapons, killing his wife, a police officer, and a church sexton, and wounding two other police officers and a college student, before killing himself. The shooter had been granted a concealed weapons permit, despite a domestic violence conviction and an extensive criminal record.

August 4, 2007 – Three Delaware State University students were shot and killed execution-style in Newark, New Jersey. The three friends were forced to kneel against a wall behind an elementary school and were shot in the head.

September 21, 2007 – A freshman at Delaware State University in Dover shot and wounded two other students at a campus dining hall. One student subsequently died.

February 8, 2008 – A female student killed herself and two others in a classroom at Louisiana Tech in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

February 24, 2008 – A man entered a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, and began shooting. He killed five students and wounded 16 before killing himself.

March 10, 2009 – A man killed 10 people, including his mother, grandmother and other family members, as well as an 18-month-old baby and her mother, and injured an additional three people. The shooting spree spread through multiple towns in Geneva and Coffee Counties in Alabama, ending when the gunman killed himself during a shootout with police. The gunman, armed with a SKS assault rifle, an AR-15 assault rifle and a handgun, taped together ammunition magazines to reload faster and fired over 200 rounds during the massacre.

April 3, 2009 – A man shot and killed 13 people and wounded four more before killing himself in Binghamton, New York.

April 4, 2009 – A man armed with multiple guns, including an assault rifle, ambushed police when they responded to a domestic disturbance call in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, shooting and killing three officers immediately.

Source: Excerpted and adapted from Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, "Mass Gun Violence in the United States Since 1997" (April 2009), at <http://www.bradycampaign.org/facts/highprofile/>.

In 2006 alone, the 3,184 children and teens killed by firearms nearly equaled the total number of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq since the war started and were more than five times the number of American combat fatalities in Afghanistan.

How to Stop the Deaths?

U.S. Soldiers Killed in Action

Revolutionary War, 1775–1783	4,435
War of 1812, 1812–1815	2,260
Mexican War, 1846–1848	1,733
Civil War (Union Forces), 1861–1865	140,414
Spanish-American War, 1898	385
World War I, 1917–1918	53,402
World War II, 1941–1945	291,557
Korean War, 1950–1953	33,741
Vietnam War, 1961–1973	47,424
Persian Gulf War, 1990–1991	147
Military fatalities by hostile action in Afghanistan (through September 5, 2009)	569
Military fatalities by hostile action in Iraq (through September 5, 2009)	3,460

Persons Killed in the Terrorist Attacks on 9/11 **2,927**

U.S. Firearm Deaths

Firearm deaths in America since 1968 when Dr. King and Robert Kennedy were assassinated	1,234,510
Child and teen firearm deaths since 1979	107,603
Children and teens killed by firearms in 2006	3,184

Source: U.S. Department of Defense, Office of the Secretary of Defense, Statistical Information Analysis Division, "Principal Wars in Which the United States Participated: U.S. Military Personnel Serving and Casualties," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/WCPRINCIPAL.pdf>, "Operation Enduring Freedom: Military Deaths, October 1, 2001 through September 5, 2009," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/oefdeaths.pdf>, and "Operation Iraqi Freedom: Military Deaths, March 19, 2003 through September 5, 2009," at <http://siadapp.dmdc.osd.mil/personnel/CASUALTY/oif-deaths-total.pdf>; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Vital Statistics of the United States, various years; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>.

Almost 1 in 5 high school students surveyed in 2007 admitted carrying a weapon; one-third brought the weapon to school. One in 18 high school students reported staying home from school because they felt unsafe at school or going to or from school.

Risk Behaviors of High School Students, 2007

	Race/Ethnicity				Grade			
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	9	10	11	12
Carried a weapon	18.0%	18.2%	17.2%	18.5%	20.1%	18.8%	16.7%	15.5%
Carried a gun	5.2	4.3	6.2	6.2	5.2	5.5	4.6	5.0
Carried a weapon to school	5.9	5.3	6.0	7.3	6.0	5.8	5.5	6.0
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	7.8	6.9	9.7	8.7	9.2	8.4	6.8	6.3
In a physical fight	35.5	31.7	44.7	40.4	40.9	36.2	34.8	28.0
Injured in a physical fight	4.2	3.0	5.3	6.3	5.6	3.7	3.5	3.3
In a physical fight on school property	12.4	10.2	17.6	15.5	17.0	11.7	11.0	8.6
Did not go to school because felt unsafe at school or on way to/from school	5.5	4.0	6.6	9.6	6.6	5.4	4.7	4.8

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Surveillance Summaries, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2007," *MMWR*, Vol. 57, No. SS-4 (June 6, 2008), Tables 7, 9, 13, 15, and 17.

Data on Firearms

The data used in this report are from the vital statistics systems. The basic information (without individual identification) comes from death certificates. The states collect the information and send it on to the National Center for Health Statistics, which then compiles all the data to produce national numbers. Every death is included in the vital statistics system.

Another source of data for some firearm deaths is law enforcement reports of murders. There is a national system that collects these data—the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system, which dates back to the late 1920s—but this system is not complete. Not all law enforcement agencies participate in this system, and coverage varies from year to year. About one-third of the population is not covered by this system. Further, the UCR system does not cover all firearm deaths: suicides, accidental deaths and undetermined cause deaths are not included. A comparison of this system with the vital statistics system shows that UCR includes between 75 and 80 percent of the firearm homicides of children and teens.

The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) is the source of the number of non-fatal firearm injuries. These data are collected by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and processed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data are collected from a sample of emergency rooms representative of the nation as a whole. No state-level data are available through this system.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts a survey of the risk behaviors of high school students. Among the pieces of information collected are: carried a weapon, carried a gun, was threatened with a weapon on school property, and did not go to school because felt unsafe at school or on the way to/from school. There are two parts to this survey: a national component and a state component; 39 states and the District of Columbia participated in the 2007 survey.

Selected Resources for Advocates

For information about federal policy:

Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence	www.bradycampaign.org/
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence	www.csgv.org/
Campaign to Close the Gun Show Loophole	www.campaigntoclosethegunshowloophole.org/

To locate or contact an advocacy group in your state or community:

Million Mom March Chapters	www.millionmommarch.org/
States United to Prevent Gun Violence	www.supgv.org/
Protest Easy Guns	protesteasycguns.com/

For information about gun laws in your state:

Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence	www.stategunlaws.org/
Legal Community Against Violence	www.lcav.org/

For information about what states and cities across the nation are doing to reduce gun violence:

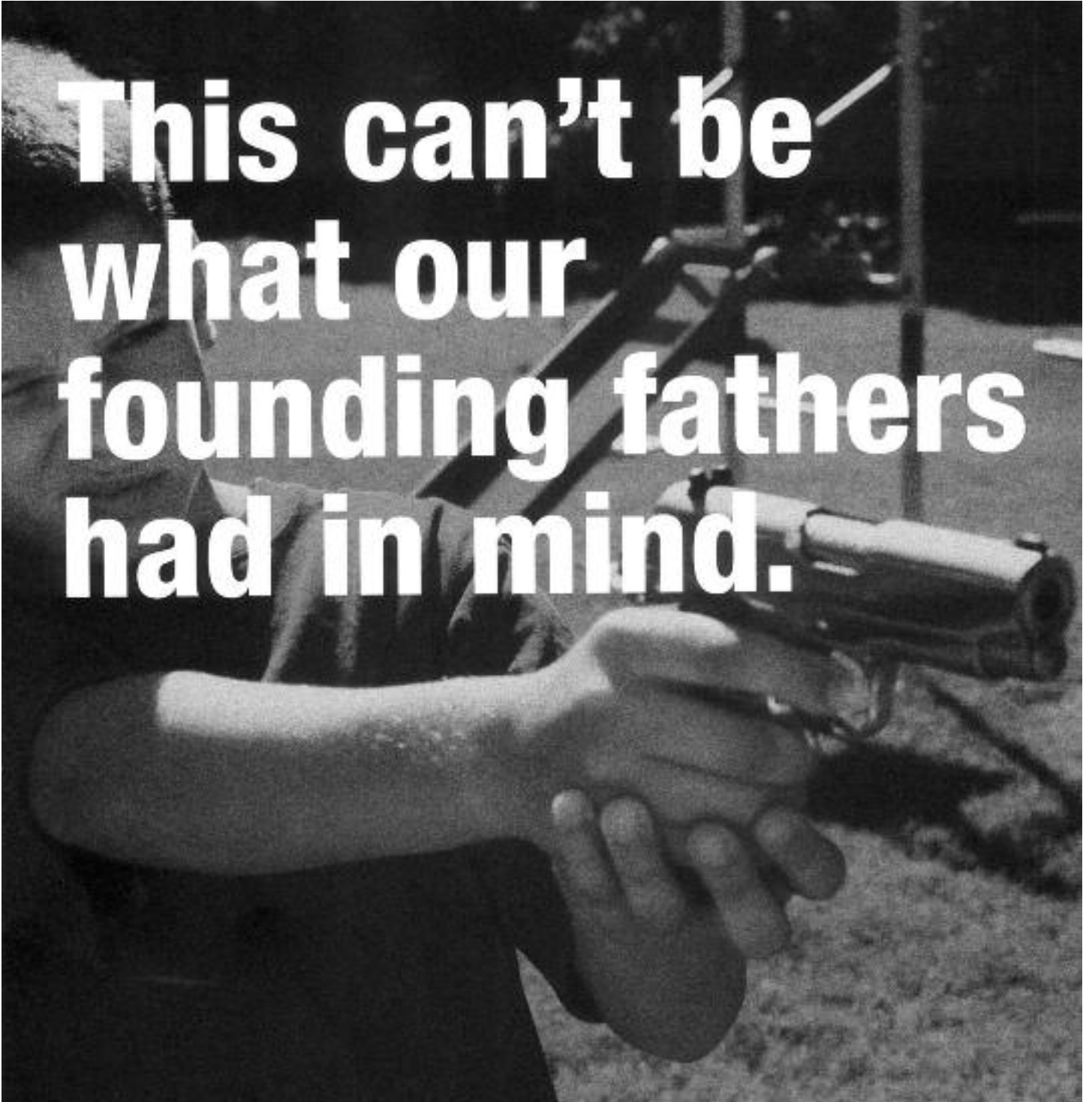
Mayors Against Illegal Guns	www.mayorsagainstillegalguns.org/html/local/local.shtml
Campaign to Close the Gun Show Loophole	www.campaigntoclosethegunshowloophole.org/

To keep up with the news about gun violence:

Gun Policy News	www.gunpolicy.org/
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For other organizations and links, please go to www.childrensdefense.org/violenceresources

**This can't be
what our
founding fathers
had in mind.**



DEAR LORD
BE GOOD TO ME
THE SEA IS SO
WIDE AND
MY BOAT IS
SO SMALL



Children's Defense Fund