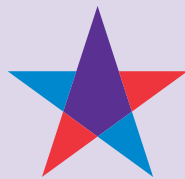


BRADY'S LEGISLATIVE BLUEPRINT FOR A SAFER AMERICA



BRADY
UNITED AGAINST GUN VIOLENCE

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FOREWORD

A LETTER FROM BRADY PRESIDENT KRIS BROWN

Dear Members of Congress,

At the beginning of each Congress, it is my distinct honor to share the legislative priorities of Brady and the nationwide coalition of gun violence prevention activists and survivors that we are privileged to lift up and represent. This Congress convenes at a pivotal moment in our nation’s journey towards “a more perfect union” and in our fight to free America from gun violence.

Over the last four years, we have made incredible progress in protecting Americans from the daily toll of gun violence. Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022, the first major gun violence prevention law in a generation, and approved historic funding for community violence intervention initiatives, research into the root causes of gun violence, and suicide prevention programs. The Senate confirmed a permanent Director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) — the only federal agency with jurisdiction over firearms and the gun industry. Most importantly, we had a presidential administration fully dedicated to ending this public health crisis. The Biden-Harris administration took unprecedented action to prevent gun violence, implementing dozens of life-saving executive orders, creating the first White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention, and lifting up the voices and stories of survivors across this country.

Today, our nation’s people are facing potential rollbacks to these life-saving laws and regulations that will lead to increased gun deaths and injuries across this country. It has never been more critical for our champions in Congress, members like you, to hold the line in defense of common-sense measures that save lives from preventable gun violence.

During the first Trump administration, firearm homicides skyrocketed by 34%, the largest increase in modern American history. Guns became the leading cause of death for American children and teens, for the first time exceeding deaths from cancer and car crashes. The policies of the Biden-Harris administration addressed these issues, resulting in a 50-year low in violent crime and the steepest decline in homicides in U.S. history.

Our nation may seem more divided than ever before, but the American people are united in their support of efforts, at every level and branch of government, to reduce gun violence. More than 80% of Americans believe gun violence is a major or moderate problem; 84% of voters, including 73% of Trump voters, support strengthening Brady Background Checks. A Fox News poll even found that more than 3 in 4 Americans — including half of gun-owning households — support universal background checks, extreme risk laws, and waiting periods before the transfer of firearms. Your constituents yearn for these life-saving changes and will wholeheartedly support your efforts to enact them.

Americans overwhelmingly support laws that prevent individuals who are a danger to themselves or others from obtaining firearms. The Brady Background Check system is well understood to be the only thing that stands in the way of a person with a violent criminal history from accessing a gun. That is why, even now, at the outset of the 119th Congress, there remains majority support for universal background checks and

other policies in the U.S. House of Representatives. If the Speaker puts the **Bipartisan Background Checks Act** up for a vote on the House Floor, it would pass. This is what the American public wants.

As such, we call on you, members of the 119th Congress, to protect the progress made and build upon these achievements where you can. Safeguard the regulations and laws that are proven to prevent gun violence, protect funding levels for the initiatives that enforce federal gun laws, and promote a culture of safe and responsible gun ownership.

As the oldest national organization dedicated to freeing America from gun violence, Brady knows those who side with public safety have two important roles: pushing for better laws and improving enforcement. This guide is intended to provide a deep dive on the policies that are so critical to saving lives. It can also be used as a handy and effective tool to quickly ascertain the relevant statistics, facts, and messaging about particular gun violence prevention policies. The actions you take as a member of Congress will reverberate for decades to come; lives literally hang in the balance.

Thanks for your commitment to better public safety policy. We look forward to working with you toward a better, safer, and more just America.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kris Brown', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kris Brown
Brady President

ABOUT BRADY

Brady is the nation's oldest gun violence prevention group, responsible for the 1994 bipartisan Brady Bill, which established our country's background check system for gun sales. But we know that changing laws alone won't end gun violence; we must also change hearts and minds. That's why we take a comprehensive, three-point approach to free America from gun violence: [change the laws](#), [change the gun industry](#), and [change the culture](#). We run a number of programs and initiatives that intersect policy reform, industry oversight, and culture change.

COMBATING CRIME GUNS

We run the country's most expansive program working to address the "supply side," or the gun industry actors that contribute to and profit from gun violence. We identify irresponsible gun stores that flood under-resourced communities with illegal firearms, and we provide policymakers and authorities with tools to reduce gun crime.

THIS IS OUR LANE

Led by renowned Johns Hopkins trauma surgeon and gun violence survivor Dr. Joseph Sakran, we mobilize doctors and healthcare professionals to use their voices and expertise to speak out and address gun violence as a public health issue.

BRADY GRASSROOTS

We mobilize our nationwide network of grassroots Brady chapters and our tens of thousands of activists across the country to advocate for state, local, and federal solutions to prevent gun violence.

END FAMILY FIRE

We bring gun owners into the conversation to reduce firearm injuries and deaths through End Family Fire, our national public education campaign with the Ad Council, to promote the role of secure firearm storage to prevent unintentional shootings, suicides, school shootings, and other tragedies that can result from unsecured weapons in the home.

SHOW GUN SAFETY

Our network of leading writers, producers, actors, and studio executives are incorporating our Show Gun Safety best practices into the biggest TV and movie hits, helping shift culture and promote positive norms around gun safety and responsible gun use.

TEAM ENOUGH YOUTH INITIATIVE

Our youth-led initiative, Team ENOUGH, was founded by Parkland survivors and educates and mobilizes young people to lead the movement against gun violence.

ABOUT BRADY'S LEGISLATIVE BLUEPRINT FOR A SAFER AMERICA

The Legislative Blueprint for A Safer America, or the “Brady Blueprint,” is designed as a reference for congressional offices looking for the most effective ways to ***understand, communicate, and advocate*** for policy solutions that will most meaningfully reduce America’s gun violence crisis. This Blueprint articulates, in sequence, the issue areas most relevant to the 119th Congress. While a given policy could address multiple forms of gun violence, this Blueprint is designed to match policy solutions with the type of gun violence for which evidence shows the greatest efficacy. In addition to providing solutions to various forms of gun violence, this guide provides relevant framing, messaging, statistics, and evidence that support each policy approach.

While the Brady Blueprint provides concrete focus areas for the 119th Congress, gun violence is a profoundly complex issue, and therefore the policies listed in this report are far from exhaustive.

OVERVIEW

Gun violence not only **kills more than 45,000 people and injures over 100,000 more every year** in America, it creates collective trauma, limits educational and social advancement, reduces economic output, and perpetuates cycles of violence and poverty. In short, gun violence infringes on Americans’ fundamental rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Protecting the American people’s lives, safety, and prosperity is among our elected representatives’ most important duties. Amid intensifying social and political division, members of the 117th and 118th Congresses took concrete steps to combat gun violence on a systemic level. Therefore, despite the immense obstacles ahead, the 119th Congress has an opportunity to protect and build on that progress, laying the foundations for lasting positive change. To assist, Brady has prepared this *Legislative Blueprint for A Safer America*, which is broken down into the following three priority areas.

PRIORITY AREAS

AREA 1: PROTECT PROGRESS AND BLOCK DANGEROUS POLICIES

It is paramount that lawmakers protect the progress that has been made to reduce gun violence and ensure it is not reversed or replaced by harmful policies and actions. Gun industry allies now control both chambers of Congress and the White House. Brady anticipates that they will capitalize on this new opportunity to roll back Biden-era executive actions addressing gun violence, pass dangerous legislation that will allow prohibited persons to access and carry firearms, and manipulate the budget and appropriations processes to benefit the gun industry. Standing united in opposition to these misguided attacks is vital to upholding existing protections and securing space to pass gun violence prevention laws in the future.

AREA 2: EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THE BRADY BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

The Brady Background Check system has successfully prevented over 5 million prohibited firearm purchases from taking place since its implementation — but gaps in the law have arisen over the years. The Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 took important steps to close some of those deadly gaps, but many persist. Expanding and strengthening this system is crucial to ensuring foundational support for all other gun laws.

AREA 3: ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE IN ALL OF ITS FORMS

The strategies, policies, and methods necessary to prevent the various forms of gun violence (ex. suicide, mass shootings, domestic violence, police violence, hate crimes) require an approach tailored to each of their root causes. Policymakers must also account for the ways in which gun violence impacts every community differently. Brady has cataloged policies and actions likely to have the greatest impact in reducing America's gun violence epidemic.

AREA 1

PROTECT PROGRESS AND BLOCK DANGEROUS POLICIES

The gun violence prevention movement faces major challenges ahead. For the first time since 2017, avowed gun industry allies maintain leadership of the House of Representatives, the Senate, and control the White House. Now, more than ever, the gun industry and its supporters in Congress are prepared and emboldened to overturn policies implemented to reduce gun violence and replace them with policies that will only worsen the gun violence crisis.

Blocking dangerous policies will require gun violence prevention advocates to employ a comprehensive approach. The gun industry and its congressional allies will attack from numerous angles, and our movement must be prepared to fight back.

TRUMP ADMINISTRATION ROLLBACKS

The 117th and 118th Congresses made significant gains in addressing gun violence, including the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 — the first major gun violence prevention law in nearly 30 years — renewing the Undetectable Firearms Act, and authorizing historic levels of funding for gun violence prevention programs and research. The Biden-Harris administration also took bold action to end gun violence, including directing the Department of Justice to close numerous gaps in firearm regulation, appointing the first permanent Director of the ATF in more than six years, and taking decisive action to increase oversight of the firearms industry to stem the flow of crime guns.

As of this writing, we have already seen the first victims of the Trump administration rollbacks. On January 21, the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention went dark. Eliminating this office will negatively impact countless victims of gun violence across the country and will have real consequences for future victims of violence. Closing the office eliminates the coalesced federal response to gun violence, removes a key resource for survivors of gun violence and state and local governments, and dissolves the Gun Violence Emergency Response Team, which responds to acts of mass violence.

President Trump also has discretion to reverse many of the Biden-Harris administration’s historic and effective actions both with and without formal rulemaking or legislative action. On February 7, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order directing the Attorney General to review all firearm and firearm industry related policies, procedures, and administrative rules, “assess any ongoing infringements of the Second Amendment rights of our citizens,” and provide a “proposed plan of action” within 30 days. As of this writing, this plan has not yet been finalized.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

Presidential Discretionary Policies

- ATF’s “Zero Tolerance” policy:
 - Under this policy, ATF will revoke a gun dealer’s federal firearms license (FFL) if they willfully and egregiously violate the law, including selling guns to prohibited individuals, falsifying records, or failing to run background checks.
 - Under Zero Tolerance, ATF has successfully shut down about 650 rogue gun dealers that were fueling the criminal market.
 - Abolishing this policy will send a dangerous signal to gun dealers that they will get a free pass if they break the law.

- ATF’s gun violence data collection and sharing protocols:
 - Preventing ATF from coordinating with state and local officials to identify which dealers are supplying firearms recovered at crime scenes will hamper state investigations and prevent them from taking on gun trafficking rings
 - Stifling ATF’s capacity to share gun dealer inspection data with states that have their own gun dealer licensing systems will prevent states from efficiently using their resources to target problematic dealers.
 - Impeding the public release of firearm dealer inspection data will raise concerns about transparency at ATF, which is already among the most impenetrable federal agencies.
- This rule provided clarity to gun sellers and the industry about who needs to become licensed, and removing it would create confusion and critically undermine ATF’s ability to shut down gun trafficking rings and prevent the unlawful diversion of firearms to the black market.
- **Department of Justice “ghost gun” rule:** This rule cracked down on the unregulated market of dangerous, untraceable ghost guns.
 - Prior to the rule, ghost guns undermined all gun laws — they could be purchased without a background check, mailed directly to someone’s home, assembled in minutes, and could not be traced when found at a crime scene — making them the perfect gun for use in crime.
 - Reports of ghost guns used in crimes **increased by over 1000%** between 2017 and 2023.

Policies that Require Formal Rulemaking

- **Department of Justice “engaged in the business” rule (EITB):** This rule is based off of a definitional change in the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 (BSCA), which clarified who is considered to be “engaged in the business of dealing firearms” and therefore must obtain a federal firearms license — effectively expanding the number of gun sellers who must conduct background checks before transferring a firearm.
 - Prior to BSCA and EITB, approximately **one out of every five guns** were sold privately without a background check, and 80% of all firearms **purchased for criminal purposes** were obtained from private sellers.
 - Repealing this rule would be tantamount to *telling gun traffickers that it is time to reopen shop.*
- **2024 saw the first decrease** of untraceable firearms recovered in crime after a decade of exponential and deadly growth, a testament to this rule’s efficacy.
- Ghost gun makers claimed that law-abiding hobbyists were their target audience, but once the rule required their ghost gun kits to be sold with firearm background checks, their market share evaporated, leading to the closure of **Polymer80**, the largest manufacturer.
- Removing this rule would open the flood gates of illegal weapons, allowing gun traffickers, individuals with felony convictions, minors, domestic abusers, and even terrorists to access untraceable guns with a prepaid credit card and a P.O. Box number.
- **Department of Justice “stabilizing brace” rule:** This rule clarified that shoulder stocks marketed as so-called “stabilizing braces” transform pistols (including AR-15 and AK-47

pistols) into heavily-regulated short-barreled rifles (SBRs) when attached.

- Popularized during the **Prohibition Era** by gangsters and organized criminal syndicates, SBRs have the concealability and maneuverability of a pistol, but the firepower, accuracy, and lethality of a rifle.
- SBRs, like machine guns and silencers, have been heavily regulated under the **National Firearms Act of 1934** (NFA), the first-ever federal gun law, because they are dangerous and lack any legitimate lawful purpose, like self-defense or hunting.
- Purchasing a legal SBR today requires a background check, the submission of fingerprints and a photograph, and registration of the firearm, significantly reducing the chances that it would be used in crime.
- SBRs assembled with “stabilizing braces” have been used in multiple mass murders: nine people were killed and 27 other were injured outside a bar in **Dayton, OH** in just 32 seconds; 10 people were killed at a grocery store in **Boulder, CO**; five people were killed and 25 were injured at Club Q in Colorado Springs, CO; and six people — including three nine-year-olds — were killed at a school in **Nashville, TN**.
- Eliminating this rule would lead to a massive proliferation of unregulated SBRs and would prevent ATF from enforcing the NFA, a law which has been protecting Americans for over 90 years.
- **Department of Commerce “firearm export licensing” rule:** This rule increased safeguards and transparency for firearm exports to non-government entities in foreign countries.
 - This rule was implemented following a **report** that linked legally exported U.S. guns to higher rates of crime and violence across the world, including the **massacre of school**

children and political assassinations.

- This rule requires exporters to vet their customers and allows the State Department to review license applications to protect national security interests.
- Repealing this rule will result in American-made firearms ending up in the hands of international traffickers, human rights abusers, transnational criminal organizations, and even terrorist groups.
- It is impossible to talk about fentanyl trafficking or the immigration crisis without acknowledging the role of U.S. sourced firearms, which **empower criminal cartels** and result in the **displacement of millions of people** in South and Central America.

These federal rules and policies are critical to protect public safety at home and American national security interests abroad. Rescinding them would needlessly put lives at risk and endanger law enforcement and U.S. troops.

DANGEROUS GUN LOBBY PRIORITIES IN THE 119TH CONGRESS

The bottom line: Gun laws work. It is also true that the states with the weakest gun laws have the highest rates of gun death. For example, the five states with the strongest gun laws have a gun death rate that is 74% lower than the five states with the weakest gun laws. The problem is, as many **state legislatures** have worked to weaken their laws as states that have worked to pass life-saving policies. In doing the bidding of the gun lobby and industry, those states have eroded safety standards on purchasing, possessing, and carrying firearms and as a result, their gun death rates **have increased more than the national average.**

The gun lobby will work tirelessly with their allies in Congress to impose similarly permissive and dangerous firearms policies on the entire nation, gravely threatening public safety. Here is a list of

policies that have been publicly prioritized by the gun lobby and are most likely to be proposed at the federal level.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

National Permitless Concealed Carry

- The **Concealed Carry Reciprocity Act** would dramatically expand the number of people carrying concealed handguns **everywhere** in the United States, regardless of state law, and would disincentivize law enforcement from ensuring that individuals carrying concealed firearms are doing so legally.
 - This bill would establish a dangerous federal statutory framework that would force states with higher standards for concealed carry to allow nonresidents from states with lower (or no) standards, to carry concealed firearms within their borders regardless of state law.
 - States that do issue permits have very different standards for obtaining a concealed carry permit.
 - Many states, including Colorado, Michigan, and California, require safety courses and live-fire training before issuing a permit.
 - Some states, like New Jersey and New York, require multiple character references as part of the application process.
 - Some states require fingerprinting as part of their background check process.
 - Some states maintain tools for verifying the validity of a concealed carry permit at any time, but those tools may not be accessible by out-of-state law enforcement agencies.
 - Some states that have permit requirements also do not have uniform standards across the localities that issue them, and some issue permits that are easily forged, unlike state-issued driver's licenses with Real ID.
 - Some states have very few requirements.
- For instance, Indiana recently issued a concealed carry permit to a person who is **legally blind**.
 - While in-state concealed carry permit holders are exempt from the federal prohibition on carrying in school zones (within 1000 feet of a school) in the state in which they are licensed, this bill would allow individuals from states with weaker permit requirements, *or no permit requirements*, **to carry concealed firearms in school zones** when visiting other states.
 - This bill would allow nonresidents to carry concealed firearms in states where it would otherwise be illegal for them to even purchase or possess a firearm, either based on age or state-level prohibitors for criminal misconduct.
 - Under this bill, law enforcement agencies would be civilly liable for even attempting to detain an individual to determine whether they are lawfully carrying firearms, disincentivizing them from enforcing their own state's concealed carry laws or from arresting individuals who are in illegal possession of guns.
 - This bill requires law enforcement to know every other state's laws and be able to validate every other state's permits in order to determine whether someone could lawfully carry a concealed gun.
 - There are **29 states that do not require any permit whatsoever** to carry a concealed firearm in public.

**ONLY 24% OF
AMERICANS ARE IN
FAVOR OF ALLOWING
PEOPLE TO CARRY
CONCEALED GUNS
WITHOUT A PERMIT.**

- Permitless carry laws are dangerous and are associated with higher levels of gun deaths and violent crime. In states that have adopted them, such laws have been associated with a **13% increase in firearm homicides and a 29% increase in violent gun crime.**
- In **16 of the 20 states** that enacted permitless carry between 2015 and 2022, there were more non-suicide shooting deaths in the period after the laws took effect than in an equivalent time period before.
- Not only do such laws lead to an increase in interpersonal violence, but they are also associated with a nearly **13% increase in officer-involved shootings of civilians.**
- Law enforcement officials across the country have consistently opposed permitless carry laws, including those in **Texas, Ohio, Louisiana, and West Virginia.**
- Only **24% of Americans** are in favor of allowing people to carry concealed guns without a permit.
- This legislation would prevent states from meaningfully or effectively regulating who can carry concealed handguns in public and dramatically undermines law enforcement's ability to enforce laws in service of public safety.
- Congress regulated silencers under the 1934 National Firearms Act (NFA) along with machine guns, sawed-off shotguns, and short-barreled rifles, as they were the preferred tools of organized crime and lacked legitimate uses for self-defense or hunting.
- Purchasing a legal silencer today requires a background check, fingerprinting, submission of a photograph, a \$200 transfer tax, and registration of the silencer.
- This legislation would remove silencers from the list of items considered "firearms" under the National Firearms Act. As a result, private transfers of silencers would no longer be subject to a background check, making them far easier to obtain and divert to the criminal market.
- **Because the NFA works, silencers are not often used in crimes,** but when they do, the results are deadly. The nation witnessed how dangerous silencers are during the **mass shooting in Virginia Beach in 2019,** where workers in a municipal building were unaware that someone was committing a mass murder despite the shooter firing dozens of rounds in their immediate proximity. Without the NFA, events like the Virginia Beach shooting would become even more common.
- Just **18% of Americans** favor changing the law to let people buy gun silencers more quickly and without paying a fee, while almost 70% oppose.

Deregulating Silencers

- Another top priority for the gun industry is the **Hearing Protection Act,** which would deregulate firearm silencers, also known as "suppressors," which are devices that muffle the sound of a gun when it is fired.
- In the wrong hands, silencers are incredibly dangerous, as they make it more difficult for law enforcement or bystanders **to respond to gunfire.**

Weaponizing the Appropriations Process

- Gun industry allies in the 119th Congress will seek to defund gun violence prevention efforts by cutting off resources to key programs and agencies, as well as adding policy riders to block federal funds for preventing gun violence, including:
 - Zeroing out funding for the Center on Injury Prevention, firearm injury and mortality

prevention research, Community Violence Intervention programs, and suicide prevention programs.

- Slashing the ATF and FBI budgets, as well as prohibiting funds from being used for state extreme risk protection order (“red flag”) laws, enforcement of reporting of multiple sales of long guns, firearm relinquishment and ATF firearm retrieval programs, and many more.
- Let us be clear — members of Congress who seek to affect these changes, despite overwhelming evidence that they will harm public safety and endanger law enforcement, will do so not out of some desire to protect the rights of gun owners, but simply at the bidding of their friends in the gun industry.
- Gun violence prevention champions in Congress must fight to protect funding for the agencies and programs that are vital to addressing gun violence and prevent the addition of harmful policy riders.

AREA 2

EXPAND AND STRENGTHEN THE BRADY BACKGROUND CHECK SYSTEM

The critical underpinning of all gun violence prevention laws is the Brady Background Check system. Without this foundation, no other gun laws can properly function. By all accounts, the Brady Background Check system has been extremely successful since Jim and Sarah Brady led its bipartisan passage through Congress in 1993. To date, it has prevented over 5 million unlawful gun transactions. In 2020 alone, an average of more than 1,000 prohibited gun transactions were prevented every single day.

As technology has evolved, businesses and individuals have exploited dangerous loopholes in the background check system for profit, in large part due to the rise of gun shows and websites that facilitate private sales online. When the 117th Congress passed the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 (BSCA), and when ATF subsequently clarified what it meant to be “engaged in the business,” they updated the requirements of who must register as a licensed firearms dealer (FFLs) and run a background check before any firearm sale or transfer. This narrowed the “private sale loophole” and is expected to ensure that more firearm transfers are subject to background checks. Furthermore, BSCA mandated enhanced background checks for individuals under the age of 21, which blocked nearly 900 illegal gun purchases as of September 2024 that would not have been previously stopped.

However, there remains work to be done. The “engaged in the business” rule narrowed the private sale loophole, but private individuals are still

able to sell or transfer firearms without federally-mandated background checks. This “private sale” loophole allows for thousands of firearms to be sold to unknown individuals annually, which is why it is vital to implement universal Brady Background Checks. Additionally, a licensed dealer may transfer a gun to an over-21 buyer after three business days, even if the background check has not yet been completed to determine whether that buyer is legally eligible to purchase a gun. This deadly gap in the background check system, known commonly as the “Charleston loophole,” has allowed prohibited people to acquire firearms at an alarming rate: In just 2020 and 2021, at least **11,500 firearms** were transferred to purchasers later determined to be prohibited.

Closing these dangerous loopholes is overwhelmingly popular and must be a priority in working toward a safer future. The Brady Background Check system works, but we must expand background checks to cover every gun transaction, and we must further ensure that the system has adequate time to complete a background check before an individual can take possession of a firearm. Congress should immediately consider measures to expand and strengthen the nation’s background check system to guarantee that our gun laws rest on a strong foundation.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

Enact Universal Brady Background Checks

- Under federal law, only licensed firearms dealers are required to perform background checks prior to transferring a gun. Prior to the passage of the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, approximately **one out of every five guns** was sold privately without a background check, and 80% of all firearms purchased for

criminal purposes were obtained from private sellers.

- Background checks work. Gun homicide rates were cut nearly in half in the decades since the Brady Bill was passed, falling an astonishing 41% from 1993 to 2018.
 - All other gun-related crimes dropped substantially as well; assaults, robberies, and sex-related offenses were nearly 75% lower in 2023 than in 1993. A pervasive myth perpetuated by the gun lobby is that “criminals don’t follow the law.” This fundamentally ignores that the background check system regularly prevents hundreds of thousands of prohibited purchasers from acquiring guns every year.
 - In fact, the overwhelming majority of guns recovered in crime in states that have expanded background check requirements come from states that have not, further highlighting the need for federal action.
 - Between 2022 and 2023, over 61.3 million Brady Background Checks were processed by the FBI, ensuring lawful firearms transactions.
 - States that require background checks on all handgun sales have seen less than half as many mass shooting incidents as states without that expanded requirement, as well as 35% fewer gun deaths per capita.
- Without background checks, it is impossible to keep guns out of the hands of prohibited individuals, such as domestic abusers, individuals with felony convictions, and fugitives from justice.
- Unlicensed dealers who do not conduct background checks are the largest source of firearms that are illegally trafficked into

communities. From 2017 to 2021, unlicensed dealers were the source of over 68,000 illegally trafficked firearms – or more than half of all firearms identified as having been trafficked.

- We need to expand background checks to cover all gun transactions so that prohibited purchasers cannot elude the vetting process by turning to private sellers.

Fix the Deadly Charleston Loophole

- In 2015, a “default proceed” transfer enabled a white supremacist and prohibited individual to purchase a firearm and massacre nine Black parishioners at the Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, South Carolina, exposing an area of weakness in our federal gun laws now commonly referred to as the “Charleston loophole.”
- During a background check, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) issues one of three directives to gun dealers (FFLs) who initiate a background check: proceed, delayed, or denied.
- Under current federal law, if a NICS background check for an individual above the age of 21 is not finished and remains “delayed” after three business days since initiation, the FFL may proceed by default, thereby transferring a gun to a purchaser whom NICS has not affirmatively cleared.
- More than 60,000 firearms have been sold to prohibited purchasers since 2008 because of the Charleston loophole.
- The number of delayed background checks not addressed by NICS until the third business day has been as high as 600 in a 24-hour period. This leaves little to no time for external agencies to respond to a NICS request for essential information about a potential

purchaser before guns can be transferred by default.

- The **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act** now provides NICS up to 10 business days to complete background checks on individuals under the age of 21 before a gun can be transferred if there is a potentially disqualifying juvenile record. However, this only applies to individuals under the age of 21 and only in cases where records may apply to a prohibiting offense committed as a juvenile.

Legislative References:

Bills introduced in the 118th Congress that would improve and expand the firearm background check system include:

- **H.R. 1302** and **S. 598**: Gun Records Restoration and Preservation Act
- **H.R. 715**: Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2023
- **H.R. 2403**: Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2023
- **S. 494**: Background Check Expansion Act
- **S. 1116**: Background Check Completion Act of 2023

During the 118th Congress, ATF finalized the **“engaged in the business” rule**, which clarified who is considered to be “engaged in the business of dealing firearms” and must therefore register for a federal license — effectively expanding the number of gun sellers who must conduct background checks before transferring a firearm.

The 117th Congress strengthened the background check system by passing the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022**, which enacted under-21 enhanced background checks and redefined who is “engaged in the business of dealing firearms.”

The House of Representatives also passed the **Bipartisan Background Checks Act of 2021** and the **Enhanced Background Checks Act of 2021**, both with bipartisan support.

AREA 3

ADDRESS GUN VIOLENCE IN ALL OF ITS FORMS

It is difficult to fully grasp the complexity of gun violence in this country. Every single day in America, gun violence claims new victims and creates hundreds of survivors. Their lives, and the lives of those close to them, will never be the same. Likewise, gun violence indirectly impacts millions of people in our most vulnerable and under-resourced communities by perpetuating cycles of violence, poverty, and trauma.

We at Brady know that gun violence survivors' voices and leadership will always guide the gun violence prevention movement's moral and strategic compass. Brady is an organization founded on the idea that, by lifting up survivors and amplifying their voices, we can help policymakers understand the consequences of inaction. It is for these reasons that survivors sit in leading roles across Brady, and it is why we will continue to prioritize the voices of survivors in every aspect of our fight to end gun violence. Each survivor's story is unique, as is the pain they live with. While common threads necessarily emerge among their circumstances, there is no single remedy that will prevent all gun violence.

Suicide, the disproportionate impact of daily violence in Black and brown communities, domestic violence, mass shootings, and every other form of gun violence require individualized approaches because the root causes of such violence differ. In order to find real solutions to these varying problems, policymakers must account for the ways in which gun violence impacts every community differently. If we as a nation are able to do that in a meaningful way, we will

undoubtedly reduce gun deaths and injuries while also resolving intersecting issues such as economic injustice, of which gun violence is both a cause and a symptom.

Acknowledging again that the solutions listed below are nonexhaustive, Brady has cataloged policies and actions that would likely have the greatest impact in reducing America's gun violence epidemic. Recognizing both political and practical realities, we know that not all of the needed legislative reforms are achievable in the immediate term. However, it is important that we continue to lay the groundwork for future progress. Brady will continue to support gun violence prevention champions in Congress and will be available as a resource as they seek to implement these policies.

Note: The policies and actions outlined below are organized by the various forms of gun violence and have been left intentionally unsequenced.

TREAT GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EPIDEMIC

It is indisputable that American gun violence is a public health epidemic. Despite rapid advances in medical technology and a heightened awareness of the gun violence crisis in communities across the country, gun injuries and deaths persist in both rural and urban areas. On June 25, 2024, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy declared that **American firearm violence is a public health crisis**, paving the way for future federal action to reduce gun violence.

In order to fully understand the scope of the problem and to identify the best policy solutions to prevent these injuries and deaths, we must treat gun violence as a public health epidemic and provide sufficient funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institute of Health (NIH) to conduct thorough, evidence-based research on the issue.

FIREARM INJURY IS THE LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH IN THE UNITED STATES FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- In 2023, more than 46,000 people were shot and killed in the United States — an average of more than 128 people every day, 8 of whom were children and teens.
- Firearm injury is the leading cause of death in the United States for children and teens. Nearly twice as many children are killed by guns than by cancer in the United States.
- Suicide by firearm accounts for more than 50% of all suicide deaths.
- Americans are killed with guns at 26 times the rate of other high-income countries.
- According to the CDC, gun deaths cost the American economy more than \$1 trillion in 2021 and 2022.
- Many survivors of gun violence shoulder burdensome and ongoing medical costs beyond those directly related to the shooting, such as mental health issues and other health complications, for years after a shooting.
- For people who survive shooting injuries, direct health care costs are roughly \$30,000 in just the first year alone — more than a fourfold increase from baseline costs compared to peers who were not shot.
- Workers who survive firearm injuries experience a 40% increase in pain disorders, a 51% increase in psychiatric disorders, and an 85% increase in substance use disorders.

Legislative References:

Bills introduced in the 118th Congress include:

- **H.R. 2390** and **S. 1026**: Gun Violence Prevention Research Act 2023
- **H.R. 9253**: National Gun Violence Research Act
- **H.R. 5010**: Recognizing Gun Violence As a Public Health Emergency Act

DISPROPORTIONATE IMPACT OF GUN VIOLENCE IN COMMUNITIES OF COLOR

Although suicide rates are rising among Black and Latine Americans, most gun violence impacting these communities today is still interpersonal. While the gun violence rates among Black and Latine Americans are often used to demonize those communities, gun homicide's disproportionate impact on communities that have been marginalized and criminalized for decades, if not centuries, is not evidence of deficiency in Black and brown individuals, but rather the predictable result of inequality mixed with lax gun laws. And **the numbers are staggering**: homicides account for more than 80% of gun deaths among Black Americans, who are nearly 10 times more likely than white Americans to die by gun homicide. The gun homicide rate for Hispanics is nearly double that of their white peers. The largest share of these killings occurs in metropolitan communities; **nearly 90% of gun homicides occur in such areas.** More than 54% of Americans know someone

who has been shot; however, that figure is nearly 60% for Black adults — the highest rate of any demographic in the United States.

Children in communities of color face these devastating impacts to the same degree as adults. Black children and teens are nearly 10 times more likely than white children and teens to die by gun homicide. Native American/Alaska Native children and teens also die from gun homicide at higher rates than white children. Furthermore, firearm suicide has sharply increased among youth of color in recent years, more than doubling among Black, Latine, and Asian teenagers — and increasing by a staggering 88% for young Native Americans.

The repercussions in communities of color stretch well beyond the victims of gun violence themselves. Communities burdened by fear, omnipresent shootings, and limited resources are often forced to prioritize what resources they do have toward meeting immediate needs, such as physical safety, instead of addressing quality of life issues that could actually address some of the root causes of gun violence, such as investment in collective spaces. Communities most impacted by gun violence also bear numerous societal costs: depressed property values, lower rates of home ownership, fewer new retail and service businesses, diminished educational and economic opportunities, and lack of access to health care, healthy food, and social opportunities. All of these effects then become root causes themselves, creating unending cycles of gun violence perpetuated by “solutions” that often rely on over-policing and over-incarceration. In order to address community violence, we must break these cycles.

Addressing community violence requires a two-pronged approach. We must address the root causes of interpersonal violence — the “demand side” — or the impetus of violence will remain uninterrupted. We must also address the unfettered flow of guns into impacted communities — the “supply side” — or efforts at violence intervention

will be unable to overcome the readily-available means of violence.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

Demand-side Approach: Community-Based Solutions

- The majority of gun homicides occur in metro areas, and the majority of community gun violence occurs in very small, largely disenfranchised areas.
- Black men, who make up just 7% of the U.S. population, account for nearly 66% of all gun homicide victims, and gun violence alone shortens Black men’s life expectancies by more than four years.
- From 2018 to 2023 the per capita firearm death rate for Hispanic people increased over 31%, increasing more than two times faster than the national average.
- Being exposed to firearm violence — being shot, shot at, or witnessing a shooting — doubles the probability that a young person will commit violence in the next two years.
- Community violence intervention and interruption (CVI) programs approach violence reduction from a public health perspective, working to reduce violence — specifically gun violence — through measurable tactics.
- Communities have seen dramatic decreases in violence after funding CVI programs, including hospital-based intervention programs.
- Cure Violence, a model implemented in Baltimore, Chicago, New York City, and Philadelphia, has resulted in at least a 30% decrease in shootings and killings. Another 25 cities saw reductions in shootings and killings as high as 73%.

- Sacramento’s Advance Peace program saw a **22% reduction in gun homicides and nonfatal shootings across its sites**. For every dollar the city spent on Advance Peace, it saved between \$18-\$41 in anticipated costs.
- Other analyses of CVI programs across the country yield similarly positive results about the effect of such programs on rates of gun violence, including: CeaseFire (**Chicago**, **Philadelphia**, and **Boston**); Save Our Streets (**Brooklyn**); and Safe Streets (**Baltimore**).
- Gun violence imposes enormous fiscal costs on all communities and taxpayers. According to the CDC, fatal gun violence cost the American economy more than **\$1 trillion in 2021 and 2022**. That’s over one trillion dollars without even considering nonfatal gun violence.
- Losses in revenue and productivity due to the effects of gun violence are estimated to cost private employers **\$535 million** per year nationwide.
- While this Blueprint reflects Brady’s role as subject matter experts on gun violence, evidence shows that many issues intersect with gun violence. A successful demand-side approach will recognize that many of the underlying root causes of gun homicide stem from systemic racism. As such, efforts to reduce racism in other spheres — including education, healthcare, and social mobility — can bolster communities and reduce violence.

Legislative References:

Bills introduced in the 118th Congress that would address these issues include:

- **H.R. 5003** and **S. 2638**: Break the Cycle of Violence Act

- **H.R. 4283**: Gun Violence Prevention and Safe Communities Act of 2023
- **S. 1447**: Bipartisan Solution to Cyclical Violence Act of 2023

The 118th and 117th Congresses provided necessary funding for CVI programs through the appropriations process.

The 117th Congress also provided historic levels of funding for CVI programs with the passage of the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022**, and the House passed the **Break the Cycle of Violence Act** with bipartisan support.

Supply-side Approach: Gun Industry Oversight and Accountability

- Guns do not simply appear out of thin air into communities disproportionately impacted by gun violence — cities like Oakland, Baltimore, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. — unlawful, irresponsible, and negligent gun industry business practices sustain and feed the black market.
- The majority of the cities most impacted by gun violence have few, if any, federal firearms licensees (FFLs) within their city limits. Instead, FFLs that are the sources of crime guns to these places typically sit outside the communities in less diverse and more affluent suburbs.
- Almost all guns are produced in licensed manufacturers’ factories. Generally, manufacturers sell to distributors, who sell

to dealers, who sell to the public.

- The majority of gun dealers won't sell a single crime gun in any given year; it is a small number of dealers whose negligent practices filter guns directly into the criminal market.
- Only 5% of licensed dealers sell about 90% of crime guns.
- Gun dealers are not required by law to follow such common-sense business practices as locking up inventory or performing background checks on employees. ATF issues safety and security guidance to dealers, but compliance is entirely voluntary. The impact of this lack of standards and oversight is enormous.
- Tens of thousands of guns are trafficked across state lines every year, often from states with weak laws to states with much stronger laws:

88% of crime guns traced in New Jersey come from other states;

87% of crime guns traced in New York come from other states; and

81% of crime guns traced in Massachusetts come from other states.

- Between 2004 and 2023, nearly 370,000 firearms were reported lost or stolen just from licensed gun dealers.
- Congress has shielded bad actors in the gun industry from public scrutiny.

- Crime gun tracing — the method for identifying a gun's sequence of ownership from manufacture to first retail sale — not only allows law enforcement to link suspects with firearms in criminal investigations, but can be used to identify which dealers are selling the most guns that are delivered to the criminal market.
- Beginning in 2003, Congress included policy riders in annual appropriations bills (known as the Tiahrt Amendments) which ATF has interpreted to prevent public disclosure of trace data maintained at the National Tracing Center.
- There is insufficient oversight of gun dealers by ATF, the only federal agency with such authority. ATF has an internal goal of inspecting each federally licensed firearms dealer (FFL) at least once every three to five years, which means the Bureau should inspect at least 20% of gun dealers annually — an undertaking which, unfortunately, it has long failed to accomplish.
- A 2004 report from the Justice Department's Office of the Inspector General (OIG) found that ATF inspected only 4.5% of dealers each year. By 2019, the inspection rate had reached 10% — still well below 20% — but, faced with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, it dropped precipitously back down to 4.5%, rising slightly to 6.6% of FFLs in 2023.
- Prior to implementation of the "zero tolerance" policy for dealers that egregiously break the law, ATF repeatedly failed to hold rogue gun dealers responsible, regularly downgrading penalties for dealers that break the law.

- ATF for many years had consistently fallen short in enforcing the law against the gun industry, primarily because the gun lobby tied the agency's hands behind its back by denying it funding and hamstringing its leadership.
- In 2022, Steve Dettelbach became the first Senate-confirmed director to lead the agency since 2015 and just the second Senate-confirmed director in the agency's history. This confirmation represented an essential step toward modernizing the agency and robustly enforcing the nation's gun laws to address gun trafficking and reduce gun violence.
- Also in 2022, for the first time in U.S. history, the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act** established firearms trafficking and straw purchasing as enforceable federal crimes with clear penalties for convicted offenders.
- These are crucial steps toward stemming the steady flow of guns into communities, but they are just first steps; Congress must take action to hold negligent dealers accountable by taking a supply-side approach.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that would place appropriate checks on the gun industry and remove its special protections exacerbating the epidemic of gun violence. Some of these bills included:

- **H.R. 4184** and **S. 2048**: Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act of 2023

- **H.R. 1302** and **S. 598**: Gun Records Restoration and Preservation Act
- **H.R. 8764** and **S. 5209**: Clean Hands Firearm Procurement Act
- **H.R. 974** and **S. 118**: ATF Improvement and Modernization Act of 2023
- **H.R. 3863** and **S. 1826**: Keeping Gun Dealers Honest Act of 2023
- **H.R. 2753**: Firearms Retailer Code of Conduct Act of 2023
- **H.R. 8991**: Firearm Destruction Licensure Act of 2024
- **H.R. 2418**: Gun Trafficker Detection Act
- **H.R. 8990**: ATF DATA Act
- **S. 1737**: Responsible Firearms Marketing Act

With its passage of the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act**, the 117th Congress took steps to address the supply side of community violence by including in the bill anti-gun trafficking provisions from the **Prevent Gun Trafficking Act** and by expanding the scope of individuals who deal in firearms to obtain a federal license.

In the 117th Congress, the House passed the **Protecting Our Kids Act**, which included provisions to define and clarify the crimes of gun trafficking and straw purchasing.

GUNS AND SUICIDE

Firearm suicides, which represent the greatest share of gun violence deaths in the United States, affect every American community. An average of **74 people** die by suicide with a gun every day, accounting for approximately **56% of all gun deaths**. From 2016 to 2020, more than 6,100 children and teens died by firearm suicide.

It is critically important to address the use of firearms for suicide because of its relative lethality. Firearms are extremely lethal compared to other common methods of attempting suicide; **less than 10% of all suicidal acts are fatal**, but about **90% of suicidal acts with a firearm result in death**. A “second chance” is an important factor in suicide prevention efforts, as **9 in 10 individuals who survive an attempt will not go on to die by suicide**.

The U.S. veteran community is at an even greater risk for firearm suicide. In 2020, **the suicide rate for veterans was 57% greater than for non-veteran U.S. adults**. Between 2001 and 2020, the **veteran suicide rate increased by 56%**, compared to a 16% increase within the non-veteran population and a 24% increase within the U.S. adult population over the same period. On average, **more than 16 veterans die by suicide in the U.S. each day**. Not only do veterans die from suicide at a higher rate than non-veterans, but they are also **more likely to die by firearm suicide specifically**: 71% of veterans who died by suicide died by firearm suicide in 2020, compared to 50% for non-veterans. **Suicide was the second leading cause of death** for veterans aged 18–44 in 2021, and veterans under 34 had a higher rate of suicide than all other veteran age groups.

While many aspects of suicide prevention lie outside traditional gun violence prevention work — like removing stigmas and misconceptions

about suicide or improving access to mental and behavioral health care — there is one thing that we can address head-on to decrease the likelihood of death for those experiencing suicidal ideation: reducing access to lethal means. **Access to a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide death for adolescents by 3-4 times**. By limiting or delaying that access, many suicides could be prevented. We have focused below on two policy areas that will address firearm suicide: extreme risk laws and secure storage.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

Extreme Risk Laws

- Extreme Risk Laws — sometimes called “red flag laws” or Extreme Risk Protection Order laws (ERPOs) — are a tool that temporarily separates individuals who are in crisis or who may otherwise be a risk to themselves or others from firearms through a court order, without criminal charges or a permanent prohibition.
- **Twenty-one states and Washington, D.C.**, currently have versions of Extreme Risk Laws on the books.
 - In the wake of the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, FL, 12 states — including five with Republican governors — and the District of Columbia passed Extreme Risk Laws.
- Extreme Risk Laws are particularly well-suited for preventing suicide. **A study of Connecticut’s ERPO law** found that nearly half of the state’s issued risk orders resulted in the provision of mental health treatment to people needing it — and that for every 10 to 20 orders issued, at least one suicide was prevented.
- Indiana’s ERPO law was associated with a 7.5% reduction in firearm suicides in the 10

years following its enactment, and one suicide was averted for approximately every 10 guns removed.

- Extreme Risk Laws can also be used to prevent mass shootings. In the first three years of California's ERPO law, there were at least 58 instances of orders being used to remove firearms from individuals threatening mass shootings. In at least 21 of these cases, none of the threatened shootings had occurred, and none of the risk order subjects were subsequently linked to homicides or suicidal acts.
- A 2022 study of ERPO cases from six states found that 10% were filed for mass casualty/mass shooting threats, which was also the most common type of threat involved; 20% involved threats against K-12 schools; and 65% of the order subjects who made multiple victim/mass shooting threats had access to a firearm.
- The study also found that ERPOs were frequently used to prevent an individual threatening multiple victim crimes/mass shootings from purchasing or possessing a firearm. ERPOs prevented a number of respondents threatening maximum casualty massacres — only about half of whom indicated they had access to a firearm — from easily acquiring guns, highlighting the crucial role these orders can play in preventing credible threats from escalating to actual violence.
- A June 2022 national poll found that 72% of likely voters support ERPO laws, including 76% of Independents and 57% of Republicans.
- Family Fire is a shooting involving an improperly stored or misused gun in the home that results in death or injury. Unintentional shootings, suicide, and many intentional shootings are all forms of family fire.
- Every day, eight children and teens are unintentionally injured or killed by family fire. At least 4.6 million children live in a home with at least one unlocked, loaded firearm.
- Over 75% of school shootings are facilitated by kids having access to unsecured and/or unsupervised guns at home.
- Nearly 80% of the guns used in pediatric suicide attempts belonged to a family member.
- Suicide by firearm accounts for more than 50% of all suicide deaths, and attempted suicide by gun results in death in approximately 90% of cases.
- Secure storage saves lives. Firearm owners who keep their guns locked or unloaded have been found to be at least 60% less likely to die from firearm-related suicide than those who store their firearms unlocked and/or loaded.
- Keeping guns locked and unloaded has been found to have a protective effect against unintentional shootings and suicide, reducing the odds of death by 73%. Storing ammunition separately from a firearm reduces the risk of an unintentional shooting among youth by 61%.
- A significant majority (70%) of parents believe their children cannot access the guns they keep in their homes, but more than a third of teenagers say they could gain access to a loaded firearm kept in the home in less than

SECURE STORAGE AND ENDING FAMILY FIRE

OVER 75% OF SCHOOL SHOOTINGS ARE FACILITATED BY KIDS HAVING ACCESS TO UNSECURED AND/OR UNSUPERVISED GUNS AT HOME.

five minutes.

- Even modest approaches that motivate households to safely store guns could **reduce youth firearm deaths by up to 32%**.
- Secure storage can also prevent guns from entering the illegal market. Gun thefts from cars, homes, and gun dealers are a large source of black-market guns.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that would expand ERPOs and secure storage. Some of these bills included:

- **H.R. 660** and **S. 173**: Ethan’s Law
- **H.R. 768** and **S. 247**: Extreme Risk Protection Order Expansion Act 2023
- **H.R. 816** and **S. 246**: SECURE Firearm Storage Act
- **H.R. 2770**: Prevent Family Fire Act of 2023
- **H.R. 3018**: Federal Extreme Risk Protection Act 2023
- **H.R. 4965**: Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act
- **H.R. 8877**: SAFES Act
- **H.R. 1145**: Safe Guns, Safe Kids Act
- **H.R. 8719**: Secure Storage Information Act of 2024

In the 117th Congress, the House took steps to address the issue of secure storage by passing the following bills, all with bipartisan support:

- **The Federal Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2021**, which included the **Extreme Risk Protection Order Act of 2021**.
- The **Protecting Our Kids Act**, which included the **Kimberly Vaughan Firearm Safe Storage Act**, **Ethan’s Law**, and the **Safe Guns, Safe Kids Act**.

TAKE ON THE GUN INDUSTRY

The gun industry’s ability to supply the criminal gun market through irresponsible business practices and then benefit from unprecedented federal and state legal protections gained from a quarter century of lobbying and backroom deal-making is one of the major causes of American gun violence.

For example, in 2003, the NRA worked with U.S. Representative Todd Tiahrt (R-KS) to **insert language into a government funding bill** that restricted the ATF from publicly releasing firearms trace data, thereby hiding from policymakers and the public crucial information about the true origins of guns used in the commission of crimes. These so-called “Tiahrt Amendments” have since been used to shield the most negligent gun dealers from all manners of scrutiny, including preventing the public from learning almost anything about the roughly **5% of licensed firearms dealers responsible for the sale of 90% of crime guns**. Two years later, the gun industry scored another major victory, to the detriment of all Americans, with the passage of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act (PLCAA), a law drafted in reaction to litigation by cities and individuals to address the firearm industry’s dangerous business practices. PLCAA has been interpreted by some courts as providing these businesses with unheard-of

protection from civil liability, undermining victims of gun violence, and removing key incentives for the industry to adopt life-saving business practices.

In April 2022, **Brady released a groundbreaking report** analyzing the largest collection of trace data seen by the public in over 20 years. The report, which contained trace data from the state of Pennsylvania, found that the aforementioned trend of a vast majority of crime guns being traced to a small minority of FFLs remains true: 50% of the crime guns in the database that traced back to in-state dealers were sold by just 1% of the state's licensed sellers. This data demonstrates that upstream oversight of gun manufacturers, distributors, and the small number of dealers responsible for selling firearms that are diverted to the illegal market can have an outsized impact on gun violence. However, without a repeal of the Tiahrt Amendments, we will never have a truly comprehensive understanding of how crime guns spread around the country, nor who is most responsible for supplying the endless flow of weapons — knowledge vital to reducing gun trafficking and the suffering that follows its deadly products into our biggest cities and our smallest towns.

The unique protections afforded to the gun industry shield it from the oversight to which every other American industry is subject, running counter to what is widely considered a fundamental principle of the United States: that no one is above the law. We must end special treatment and ensure a level playing field by taking on the gun industry, removing its special protections, and ensuring transparency.

Note: You will find redundancies in this section that were referenced in our supply-side strategies for combating community violence. Because these

approaches are inextricably linked, we feel the redundancies are appropriate and necessary.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- The gun industry, which continues to profit from the proliferation of firearms in America's most vulnerable communities, has operated with near impunity for too long. The gun industry is not above the law.
- **A small minority of irresponsible gun dealers profit** from dangerous business practices and have no accountability to their victims. No other American industry enjoys such protection from fundamental principles of civil justice.
- The gun industry must be held accountable for its role in driving America's gun violence epidemic.
- Trace data used to be publicly accessible, pulling back the curtain on the negligent and irresponsible dealers who divert guns into the illegal market, but the **Tiahrt Amendments** have blocked ATF from releasing that data, shielding the industry.
- PLCAA has allowed firearm companies to profit from supplying guns to the illegal market with little concern for the consequences. This protection makes victims of gun violence second-class citizens, interfering with every American's right to seek civil justice in the courts.

Legislative references:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that would place appropriate checks on the gun industry and remove its special protections that exacerbate the epidemic of gun violence. Some of these bills included:

- [H.R. 4184](#) and [S. 2048](#): Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act of 2023
- [H.R. 1302](#) and [S. 598](#): Gun Records Restoration and Preservation Act
- [H.R. 8764](#) and [S. 5209](#): Clean Hands Firearm Procurement Act
- [H.R. 3863](#) and [S. 1826](#): Keeping Gun Dealers Honest Act of 2023
- [H.R. 974](#) and [S. 118](#): ATF Improvement and Modernization Act of 2023
- [H.R. 2753](#): Firearms Retailer Code of Conduct Act of 2023
- [H.R. 8990](#): ATF DATA Act
- [H.R. 8991](#): Firearm Destruction Licensure Act of 2024
- [S. 1737](#): Responsible Firearms Marketing Act

With the passage of the [Bipartisan Safer Communities Act](#), the 117th Congress took steps to address the supply side of community violence by including in the bill anti-gun trafficking provisions from the [Prevent Gun Trafficking Act](#) and by expanding the scope of individuals who deal in firearms to obtain a federal license.

GHOST GUNS

[Ghost guns](#) are previously unregulated and untraceable firearms that anyone can buy and build without a background check or any other requirements under federal or state law for traditional firearm transactions. Most ghost guns are constructed by individuals using “unfinished” frames or receivers, which are the parts of the firearm housing the critical components of the firing mechanism — and, because of this, the parts of a gun regulated by federal law.

Once assembled, ghost guns look, feel, and function exactly like traditional guns — whether a handgun or assault weapon — and are just as deadly and dangerous in the wrong hands. These guns create a dangerous and challenging problem for law enforcement officers, who are unable to trace ownership of the weapons due to their lack of serial numbers — a “feature” that has succeeded in making them an all-too-frequent weapon of choice for crime.

In 2022, the Department of Justice, under President Biden, amended ATF regulations to clarify that the [federal definition of firearms encompasses unfinished frames and receivers](#), making them subject to the same federal laws and regulations as all other commercially made firearms. This means they must be serialized, licensed, and sold by a federally licensed dealer with a background check at the first commercial point of sale. Prior to 2022, if a frame or receiver had been “unfinished” to even a minute degree, it was completely unregulated and available for sale at any online or physical retailer. Now, those “unfinished” frames and receivers are legally no different from other firearms. [2024 saw the first decrease](#) of untraceable firearms recovered in crime after a decade of exponential and deadly growth, a testament to this rule’s efficacy.

Without question, this rule change was a crucial step in the right direction and represented an urgently needed counter to the proliferation of ghost guns — but much more still needs to be done. There is still ambiguity about which parts are regulated under the new definition, and the industry is predictably working hard to circumvent the rule change by taking advantage of that lack of clarity and lack of enforcement. The rule is, as of this writing, under consideration by the Supreme Court, and President Trump could reverse it altogether. The rule also does not address the hundreds of thousands of ghost guns already in circulation that are wreaking havoc on public safety and undermining the efforts of law enforcement and community groups to curb gun violence.

Furthermore, the rule does not address 3D-printed firearms, an emerging threat to public safety that has been sensationalized in the wake of the murder of UnitedHealthCare's CEO in December 2024.

A 3D-printed gun is any firearm that incorporates 3D-printed components or is assembled completely from 3D-printed parts. Firearm export laws prohibit the open publishing of the blueprints necessary for their construction; however, these blueprints are accessible from companies that only distribute to U.S.-based purchasers and may also be found on the dark web. Congress must take steps to address this emerging threat.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- Ghost guns were conceived to undermine all existing gun laws and were intentionally marketed as such.
- Constructing these untraceable weapons is easier than ever with YouTube tutorials available that explain step-by-step exactly how to put one together. As of December 2021, the top five YouTube instructional videos on ghost guns had been viewed more than three million times.

- These weapons have been linked nationwide to homicides, suicides, school shootings, mass shootings, robberies, the shooting deaths of law enforcement officers, and acts of domestic violence.
- The use of ghost guns in U.S. crimes has risen more than 1,000% since 2017.
- From 2016 through 2020, law enforcement officers attempted to trace more than 23,906 ghost guns from potential crime scenes, and ATF was able to trace fewer than 1% back to an individual purchaser.
- Prior to 2022, an individual did not need a background check to purchase a ghost gun kit or parts, which allowed countless prohibited and dangerous individuals to purchase and build their own firearms.
- In 2022 alone, over 25,000 ghost guns were recovered across the country.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that would address the threat of ghost guns and other untraceable firearms. Some of these bills included:

- **H.R. 4679** and **S. 2652**: Ghost Guns and Untraceable Firearms Act of 2023
- **S. 1819**: 3D-Printed Gun Safety Act of 2023

GUNS AND DOMESTIC/INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE

In a country where one-third of women and one-quarter of men are victims of physical violence at the hands of an intimate partner at least once in their lifetime, the issue of domestic violence cuts across racial, gender, economic, sexual, generational, and religious divides. Every year, 556 women are killed by a husband or male dating partner with a gun — an average of one woman every 15 hours. The mere presence of a firearm is a key factor in the all-too-common transformation of abusive partners into killers; women of any race or ethnicity are five times more likely to be killed by an abusive intimate partner when a gun is present during an incident of domestic violence, and Native American and Black women face particularly high rates of intimate partner homicide. Intimate partner gun violence is not limited to fatal interactions. Abusers frequently use firearms to intimidate, silence, threaten, and harass their partner. These traumatic events leave survivors with emotional, and sometimes physical, scars from a time when a person they loved hurt them.

Before the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act of 2022 (BSCA), federal law only subjected individuals who were married to, lived with, or had a child in common with a domestic violence victim to the provision prohibiting individuals with misdemeanor domestic violence convictions from possessing firearms (commonly known as the “boyfriend loophole” or “dating partner loophole”). The BSCA updated this language to include dating partners convicted of misdemeanor domestic violence, prohibiting them from possessing guns for five years — provided they are not convicted of another violent crime during that period.

However, remaining legislative loopholes continue to put vulnerable populations in danger.

Domestic violence records are much less likely to be detected by a background check due to inadequate reporting of domestic violence convictions by states. Furthermore, abusers can currently access firearms through private sales, which are not subject to Brady Background Checks. The consequences of these loopholes extend beyond the home, affecting all of us: Between 2014 and 2019, 60% of targeted mass shooting events either involved domestic violence attacks/violence against women or were perpetrated by someone with a history of such behavior.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- In 2020, at least 562 women were killed by a husband or male dating partner with a gun, meaning a woman was killed by an intimate partner with a gun an average of every 15 hours.
- The mere presence of a firearm is a key factor influencing the process that turns abusive partners into killers. A male abuser’s direct access to a gun dramatically increases — by more than 1,100% — the likelihood that the intimate partner violence he commits will become fatal.
- Black women are disproportionately the victims of fatal domestic violence with firearms, accounting for 30% of women shot and killed by a husband or intimate partner in 2020.
- Just in 2016, more than 4.5 million women in America were threatened by a domestic abuser with a firearm.
- A U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment study found that 41% of people who carried out a mass attack between 2016 and 2020 had a history of domestic violence.
- Inadequacies in the available records allowed domestic abusers to pass background checks

JUST IN 2016, MORE THAN 4.5 MILLION WOMEN IN AMERICA WERE THREATENED BY A DOMESTIC ABUSER WITH A FIREARM.

and obtain guns at least **6,700 times** between 2006 and 2015.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced to address the intersection of intimate partner violence and firearm violence. Some of these bills included:

- **H.R. 905** and **S. 321**: Strengthening Protections for Domestic Violence and Stalking Survivors Act 2023
- **H.R. 6405** and **S. 3303**: Lori Jackson-Nicolette Elias Domestic Violence Survivor Protection Act
- The 117th Congress took several important steps to address this issue by reauthorizing the Violence Against Women Act and by partially closing the “dating partner loophole” in the **Bipartisan Safer Communities Act**.

decades. Furthermore, the profound psychological harm and loss of life, coupled with the broad, varied, long-lasting, and understudied ripple effects of these events, make it abundantly clear that mass shootings do not only devastate survivors, their families and friends, and their communities, but the country as a whole.

Weapons of war, including military-style assault weapons with large-capacity magazines (LCMs) known for their ability to exact maximum destruction and casualties, are most often the firearms of choice for mass shooters. From the tragic shooting that killed 20 students and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary in 2012 to the massacres in Buffalo, NY, and Uvalde, TX, that left 31 dead a decade later, easy access to these uniquely lethal weapons and LCMs has proven a tragically consistent factor in mass shootings.

We do not need to speculate whether the easy availability of such firearms creates opportunities for **radicalized individuals** to inflict **mass damage** on the **public**; it has never been a question of if it will happen, but when it will happen — again. Such weapons have no place on America’s streets.

MASS SHOOTINGS

Mass shootings are an American epidemic that no other high-income nation experiences at remotely the same level. Hundreds of incidents occur each year; since 2019, our country has suffered **more mass shootings** than there are days in the year, and in 2023, saw nearly **two mass shootings per day**. Mass shootings account for only a small proportion of shooting victims in the U.S. every year, but their frequency has grown substantially in the last two

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- **Assault weapons are consistently used in the deadliest mass shootings in America**, allowing for the most violence inflicted in the shortest amount of time.
- Between 2010 and 2024, the fourteen deadliest mass shootings involved assault weapons and large-capacity magazines.

- Six times as many people are shot when an assault weapon is used compared to other types of weapons, and five times as many people are shot when shooters use a large-capacity magazine.
- The only functional difference between an AR-15 and a military-issue M4 is that the latter can shoot automatically or in burst-fire mode. The AR-15 was chosen as the platform for the U.S. military in part because it could shoot through both sides of a standard-issue helmet at 500 yards.
- Between 1976 and 2018, state laws banning LCMs were associated with 38% fewer fatalities and 77% fewer nonfatal injuries. Between 1990 and 2017, mass shootings involving LCMs resulted in a 62% higher average death toll than those without.
- During the decade that the 1994 federal assault weapons ban was in effect, gun massacres (defined as six or more people shot and killed) fell by 37%, and the number of people dying from gun massacres declined 43%.
 - In the decade after the ban expired, the U.S. experienced a 183% increase in such massacres and a 239% increase in fatalities.
- After the federal assault weapons ban was adopted, the share of assault weapons recovered as crime guns decreased by up to 40% across several major cities. Nine years after the federal assault weapons ban went into effect, the share of assault weapons traced to crimes decreased by 70%.
- The expiration of the assault weapons ban in 2004 quickly led to 37% of police agencies noting a rise in criminal use of such firearms; 38% also reported a similar jump in criminal use of large-capacity magazines.

- A U.S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center report found that 73% of mass attacks in public spaces from 2016 through 2020 involved firearms. Crucially, it also found that more than 83% of the attacks involving firearms were fatal, compared to fewer than half of those that did not involve firearms.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced that ban or regulate assault weapons and large-capacity magazines. Some of these bills included:

- H.R. 698 and S. 25: Assault Weapons Ban 2023
- H.R. 8600 and S. 3369: GOSAFE Act
- H.R. 625 and S. 298: Keep Americans Safe Act
- H.R. 2870: Raise the Age Act of 2023
- S. 14: Age 21 Act

In the 117th Congress, the House passed both the Assault Weapons Ban of 2022 and the Keep Americans Safe Act with bipartisan support.

NATIONAL SECURITY

America's arms sales should serve its national security interests, not endanger them. Yet, the ease with which gun traffickers can access a firearm poses a serious threat to American national security. The catalog of firearms available to American and international consumers is incredibly diverse and includes firearms specifically designed for offensive operations.

Changes to the firearms export regime implemented by the first Trump administration will further degrade U.S. national security interests abroad by directly exporting America's gun violence epidemic. These types of arms are used around the world to suppress political opposition, murder civilians, and terrorize peaceful governments, and cartels and terrorist organizations can exploit weak governments to get guns delivered to them. The first Trump administration also rescinded the ban on overseas silencer sales, which had been instituted to prevent terrorist groups from killing American soldiers with them.

Furthermore, semi-automatic firearms, including assault weapons, that were once under State Department and congressional review for export licensing have been transferred to the Commerce Department's control, removing key oversight and human rights considerations, including Congress' ability to prevent the approval of export licenses. The Biden administration took steps to address this by having the Department of Commerce implement a "firearm export licensing" rule, which increased safeguards and transparency for firearm exports to non-government entities in foreign countries. This rule was implemented following a report that linked legally exported U.S. guns to higher rates of crime and violence across the world, including the massacre of schoolchildren and political assassinations. It requires exporters to vet their customers and allows the State Department to review license applications to protect national security interests.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- Ongoing trends in cross-border gun trafficking continue to present a threat to U.S. security interests.
 - About 500,000 American-manufactured

firearms are trafficked into Mexico every year, many of which will move further into Central and South America, fueling drug cartels and other criminal syndicates.

- The firearm homicide rate in Mexico is now four times that of the United States', and about 70% of the firearms recovered in crime there come from the U.S.
- From 2017-2021, gun retailers in seven states — Texas, Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Ohio, and New Mexico — accounted for 76% of all international crime guns traced to a buyer.
 - Florida and Texas were among the top five source states for Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean, Central America, and outside North America.
- American guns are incredibly attractive to transnational criminal organizations, not only because they are the most advanced firearms and accessories available, but also because they are easily accessible.
 - A single .50 caliber rifle, a favorite of cartels, can pierce armored vehicles and down helicopters — crippling a law enforcement operation.
 - Just the knowledge that these weapons are in the hands of cartels is enough to potentially dissuade law enforcement from confronting these criminal organizations.
- Conversations on the flow of undocumented immigrants or illegal drugs from Mexico and beyond cannot be had without discussion about the role of American guns.
 - While some may decry asylum seekers coming to our southern border, it should be noted that many of these individuals are fleeing political and criminal violence made possible by American guns.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, numerous bills were introduced to address the rise of gun trafficking and national security threats. Some of these bills included:

- H.R. 2909 and S. 1319: Preventing Illegal Weapons Trafficking Act of 2023
- H.R. 1830: Closing the Loophole on Interstate Firearm Sales Act
- H.R. 2418: Gun Trafficker Detection Act
- S. 2794: Stopping the Fraudulent Sales of Firearms Act
- S. 2926: Stop Arming Cartels Act of 2023

POLICE VIOLENCE

Police violence is the unlawful, unnecessary, or disproportionate use of force by law enforcement. Because police violence is often facilitated by the direct use, threat, or perceived threat of firearms, police violence is gun violence. The prevalence of police violence is exacerbated by deeply rooted racism in American culture, the shocking militarization of police, insufficient police training and dangerous policing tactics and policies, and extreme barriers to transparency and accountability. People of color — especially Black, Latine, and Native American people — are much more likely than white people to be killed by police. Furthermore, police violence undermines the overall effort to combat gun violence by furthering distrust in communities that sorely need effective policing. As we work to tackle the gun violence epidemic in America, we cannot ignore police violence or its devastating effects.

Like all gun violence, there is no easy solution, no simple remedy, no one piece of legislation that will end systemic racism in policing overnight and establish the essential reform, transparency, and accountability needed in communities across the country. In line with this, changes to policing must include each of these four elements: reallocation and reassessment of resources and authority from police to other services and organizations; reform of police practices; mandated transparency; and mechanisms to ensure accountability and justice.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- The presence of armed officers can quickly escalate a crisis. In worst-case scenarios, officers will use force on a person in crisis, unnecessarily and unjustly killing or seriously injuring someone who simply needed the care and support of social service professionals.
- The U.S. suffers a disproportionate amount of police violence. In 2021, there was an average of two arrest-related deaths in the U.S. every day.
- An interaction with a police officer in the U.S. is 10 times more likely to end in death than in the United Kingdom.
- There is no standard in policing that affects more lives than the standard for the use of deadly force. We must adhere to human rights standards and establish clear and strict conditions for federal law enforcement officers to meet before exercising deadly force.
- Federal law has enabled the militarization of police by transferring excess military equipment from the armed forces to state and local law enforcement. We must limit this transfer of battlefield equipment to the civilian agencies and departments tasked with keeping our communities safe.

- People of color, those with disabilities, gender nonconforming individuals, the formerly incarcerated, those with uncertain immigration status, and people experiencing homelessness encounter disproportionately high levels of police contact that is inherently influenced by deep-rooted bias and stigma.
- The communities most impacted by gun violence are also most likely to be victims of police violence. At the same time, many in these communities decry ineffective policing and demand a new vision for public safety that will reduce gun homicide. Since many local violence intervention programs work to decrease rates of violence and homicides by addressing their underlying causes, reallocating portions of police funding into these programs could serve the dual purpose of preventing gun violence.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, several bills were introduced to address the issue of police violence, including **H.R. 8525**: the George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2024.

HATE CRIMES

A hate crime is a crime motivated by **prejudice against core aspects of a person's identity**, such as race, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. As prosecutors must prove this specific motivation of bias in court, **hate crimes are much more difficult to charge and prosecute.**

Our country has been devastated by heinous, hate-motivated shootings. In 2023, three Black people were targeted and killed in a racially motivated shooting at a Dollar Store in Jacksonville, FL. The shooter used racial slurs, left behind racist writings, and drew numerous swastikas on his firearm. In

2022, a gunman killed 10 people and injured three others, the majority Black, at a supermarket in Buffalo, NY. The shooter admitted to having white supremacist motivations in targeting a primarily Black community. Later that year, a gunman killed five people and injured more than 20 others at an LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs on the eve of Transgender Remembrance Day. In 2021, a man shot and killed eight people including six Asian women, in a shooting spree targeting multiple spas in Atlanta. Tragically, the list does not end there, with hate-motivated attacks at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston, NC, Pulse nightclub in Orlando, FL, and a Walmart in El Paso, TX.

Easy access to guns allows hate to become deadly, and we must do more to keep our most at-risk communities safe. Congress should act to close this loophole and withhold firearm access from all individuals convicted of violent hate crimes.

KEY FACTS AND MESSAGING

- In 2023, **more than 11,400 hate crime offenses** were reported to the Department of Justice, over half of which were motivated by racism.
- In 2020, **hate crimes reached their highest levels** in more than a decade.
- Over **100,000 hate crime offenses were reported** to the FBI between 2011 and 2023; however, like cases of domestic violence, such incidents are vastly underreported, further highlighting the need for action on this issue.
- **A recent assessment by the Department of Homeland Security** ranks white supremacist groups as the greatest terrorist threat to Americans at home.
- Individuals with prior hate crime misdemeanor convictions are at an increased risk for future violence and firearm-related crimes, and

the distinction between being convicted of a misdemeanor or a felony may not be entirely reflective of the crime committed or the potential danger to society.

- There is no better predictor of future violence than past violence, and individuals who exercise violence on the basis of hate present a clear danger to society.
- Only a handful of states have passed laws that prohibit those convicted of a bias-motivated misdemeanor from buying guns.

Legislative References:

In the 118th Congress, the Disarm Hate Act ([H.R. 5435](#) and [S. 2776](#)) was introduced to address the intersection of hate crimes and gun violence.

CONCLUSION

There is no single panacea to saving lives from the epidemic of American gun violence. The responsibility to act is shared among our elected leaders, our communities, and ourselves. As we saw in the 117th and 118th Congresses, pragmatic action is possible. The 119th Congress can take a leading role by protecting the progress made over the last four years, enacting life-saving laws, and fully funding key agencies tasked with upholding the law, as well as intervention and research programs that can break cycles of violence in communities across the nation.

We are at a pivotal moment in time, but we cannot give up in the face of difficulty. The American people have made it clear that this problem can no longer be ignored, and we at Brady are committed to working with you to ensure that critical changes and comprehensive solutions are delivered to the American people.

From our earliest days, it has been Brady's solemn duty to ensure that future generations will not live in fear of gun violence, and toward that end, we are committed to supporting our champions in the 119th Congress. Lives are at stake, and it is in our hands.



***FREEING AMERICA FROM
GUN VIOLENCE***