

Decreasing Gun Violence through Community-based Prevention

Problem

Gun violence is a leading cause of death in Tennessee, and gun violence is increasing compared to other crime rates. Preventative community programming and data is needed to address Tennessean's safety.



Policy Concern

While HB 0380 would amend sections of the state code, there is no current legislation that details public health intervention in response to rising gun violence through youth employment programs, hospital-based violence intervention, gun safety programming through the department of health, and non-violent conflict resolution in schools so this bill would be adding to instead of amending current legislation.

TN Has a Gun Violence Problem

- In 2021, gunfire was the 10th leading cause of death in Tennessee, killing about 1,569 residents.⁵
- Currently our firearm death rate is the 10th highest in the U.S. and 53% (7.8 deaths per 100,000) higher than the national rate. That gap has grown over time.^{2,5}
- Gun violence is the number one killer of children in Tennessee, taking more lives than car accidents.⁴
- Almost half of adults (46%) in TN live in a household with a gun.³
- Since Jan. 1, there have been at least 13 mass shootings in Tennessee resulting in the deaths of 19 adults and 10 children, as well as bullet wounds for 45 additional adults and 4 children.¹
- Our homicide death rate is the 9th worst in the country, with 810 people dead, and a death rate of 12.2.²
- Just over half of firearm deaths were suicides, but homicides accounted for the most among zero to 35-year-olds and black Tennesseans.⁶
- Shooting deaths in the state have been rising for about a decade — largely driven by spikes in homicides. Those under 19 and black Tennesseans had the fastest growth in firearm death rates.⁶
- Over the same period, state crime data show a rise in offenses involving firearms — both fatal and non-fatal — while all other crime rates declined.⁶
- From the 2000s to the 2010s, firearm death rates rose in about three-quarters of the 80 counties with available data. The counties with the highest rates are mostly in West Tennessee.⁶

Why this matters

On October 3, 2015, 8-year-old MaKayla Dyer and her sister were playing with their new puppy outside their mobile home when their 11-year-old neighbor called to them from inside his home, asking if he could play with the puppy. MaKayla refused, so the 11-year-old boy retrieved his father's loaded shotgun, aimed it out the window and fired. MaKayla was struck in the chest, just below the heart. She died in the yard.⁴



Our Solution

We are in support of the reintroduction of the Firearm and Ammunition bill, HB 0380 (SB 0017) to create programs on violence interventions, youth employment programs, gun safety programs, training health personnel about having gun control conversations, and conflict resolution to reduce gun violence.



Organizations Supporting

Memphis Allies • John Hopkins Center for Gun-Violence Solutions • The Sycamore Institute • Everytown for Gun Safety • Health Alliance For Violence Intervention • Yale New Haven Hospital's Violence Prevention Center • Tennessee Firearm Safety Alliance • Voices for a Safer Tennessee • Safe Tennessee Project

¹Democrats, T. S. (2023, July 27). 29 people have died in mass shootings in Tennessee this year — already a record death toll in July. Medium. <https://tnsenatedems.medium.com/29-people-have-died-in-mass-shootings-in-tennessee-this-year-already-a-record-death-toll-in-july-241ac9e21eae>

²Fatal injury and violence data. (2023, May 18). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal/index.html>

³Gun Ownership in America. (2016). RAND Corporation Provides Objective Research Services and Public Policy Analysis | RAND. <https://www.rand.org/research/gun-policy/gun-ownership.html>

⁴Makayla's law. (2019, January 22). Safe Tennessee Project. <https://safetennesseeproject.org/makaylas-law-2/>

⁵Report: Firearms are leading cause of death in Tennessee kids - Tennessee lookout. (2023, August 15). Tennessee Lookout. <https://tennesseelookout.com/2023/08/14/report-firearms-are-leading-cause-of-death-in-tennessee-kids/>

⁶Spears, M. (2023, June 26). Firearm-related deaths in Tennessee. The Sycamore Institute. <https://www.sycamoreinstitutetn.org/firearm-related-deaths-tn/#:~:text=In%202021%2C%20gunfire%20was%20the,22%20of%20every%20100%2C000%20people.&text=It%20was%20the%20leading%20cause,higher%20than%20the%20national%20rate>

⁷Tennessee gun violence statistics. (n.d.). TN Under the Gun. <https://tnunderthegun.wixsite.com/tn-under-the-gun>

Learn more at: www.tnsafeguns.gov or call Laura Gibbs - 828-702-9855