

**TO:** Interested Parties

**FROM:** Giffords

**DATE:** **UPDATED -- August 4, 2019 (3:45pm ET)**

**RE:** **Background on Mass Shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio**

---

Nine people are dead and 26 people were injured after a mass shooting in [Dayton, Ohio](#), early this morning. Officers neutralized the lone suspect after he fired for less than a minute using a .223 caliber semi-automatic rifle capable of penetrating ballistic resistant vests typically worn by police and resulting in catastrophic wounds to victims. The shooter had additional magazines with him.

**"The screams, the cruisers, the chaos... when you hit the street you saw the bodies."** - Nikita Pappillion [[WLWT](#)]

**"It was like World War II. I just started crying and looking at all these people. That could have been us."** - Holly Redman [[New York Times](#)]

The incident took place within 13 hours of the shooting at a Walmart in [El Paso, Texas](#), where at least 20 people were killed and 26 more wounded. The shooter, a 21-year-old from Allen, Texas, approached the Walmart around 10:00 AM local time and reportedly began shooting a semi-automatic rifle outfitted with large capacity magazines. Those shot range from two years old to 82 years old.

**"I saw people crying: children, old people, all in shock... I saw a baby, maybe six to eight months old, with blood all over their belly. It was crying and crying. Fortunately it was still alive."** - Manuel Uruchurtu [[New York Times](#)]

**"There were about 20 children and adults, plus employees, hiding, all cramped like sardines. Most of us were desperate, some were on their phones. There were girls crying, people trying to talk to each other and women with babies in their arms."** - Brandon Chavez [[CNN](#)]

This weekend's mass shootings were not the only acts of gun violence this country experienced this weekend. Gun violence continues to harm communities on a regular basis, like in **Chicago where [three people were killed and an additional 37 were injured](#) in shootings across the city**, including [seven people](#) shot at Douglas Park. Just last week, [two people were shot](#) and killed in a Southaven, Mississippi Walmart, [three people were killed and 12 others wounded](#) by an active shooter at the Gilroy Garlic Festival in northern California, and [one man was killed and 11 others injured](#), when two gunmen opened fire at Brownsville, Brooklyn, block party attended by thousands last Saturday night.

Our team will continue to monitor this situation and provide updates as we learn more. In the meantime, the following experts are available for interviews. To arrange an interview, email [media@giffords.org](mailto:media@giffords.org).

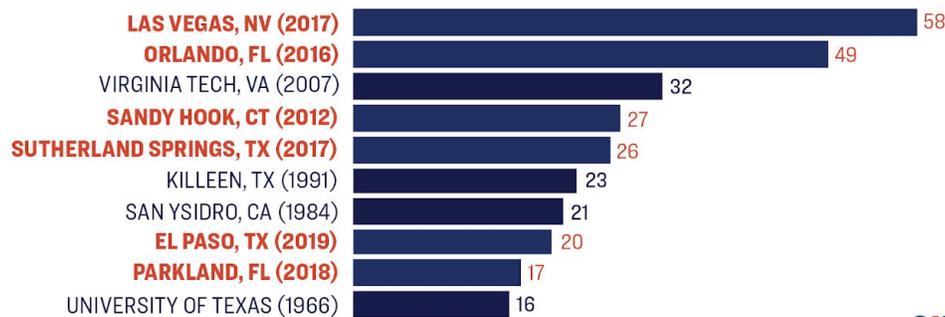
## Background on the Frequency of Mass Shootings in America

Tragically, according to the Gun Violence Archive, the mass shooting in Dayton, Ohio was the [253rd mass shooting so far this year](#). Two additional shootings happened in Chicago, Illinois on August 4 - one incident where 7 people were shot and another where one person was killed and four others injured.

The mass shooting at the Walmart in El Paso, Texas, marks the [250th mass shooting](#). With 20 people reported murdered, **the El Paso Walmart shooting would be the 8th deadliest mass shooting in US history**. Four of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in recent US history have happened in Texas: 26 people were shot and killed at the Sutherland Springs shooting in 2017, 23 people were shot and killed at the Killeen shooting in 1991, and 16 people were killed in the University of Texas Tower shooting.

Although shootings like ones in El Paso and Dayton are more likely to make national headlines, the most common types of mass shooting in the US are the result of domestic or interpersonal community violence.

## **6 OF THE DEADLIEST US MASS SHOOTINGS IN MODERN HISTORY HAVE HAPPENED IN THE LAST 10 YEARS**



**GIFFORDS**

## Background on Ohio Gun Laws

In 2017, Ohio had the nation's [22nd highest gun death rate](#). In Ohio, there are 13.7 gun deaths per 100,000 people every year. Ohio has enacted few laws to keep residents safe from gun violence. **Ohio received a D** on our [state gun law scorecard](#) and was ranked 22nd out of the 50 states on the strength of its firearm laws. Ohio does not require [background checks](#) prior to the transfer of a firearm between private parties; does not prohibit the transfer or possession of [assault weapons](#), [50 caliber rifles](#), or [large capacity ammunition magazines](#); does not restrict firearm access by people convicted of most [violent misdemeanors](#), including [domestic abuse](#) and hate crimes; does not require firearms dealers to

obtain a [state license](#); does not limit the [number of firearms](#) that may be purchased at one time; does not impose a [waiting period](#) on firearm purchases; does not regulate [ammunition sales](#); does not require residents to [safely store](#) firearms around children; does not allow [local governments to regulate firearms](#); and does not provide local governments with the [discretion to deny concealed weapons permits](#). In 2016, Governor John Kasich signed a [dangerous new law](#) that made it easier for dangerous people to carry loaded, concealed guns in school safety zones, libraries, and even childcare centers. Ohio moderately strengthened its gun laws in 2018 by expanding domestic violence protection orders to include dating partners. In 2019 the Ohio Legislature has been [considering a permitless carry bill](#) which would make it much harder for law enforcement to identify prohibited people who are illegally carrying guns in public and increase the risk that everyday disagreements will escalate into shootouts.

## **Background on Texas Gun Laws**

In 2017, Texas had the nation's [27th highest gun death rate](#). In Texas, there are 11.7 gun deaths per 100,000 people every year. Texas has enacted almost no laws to keep residents safe from gun violence. **Texas received an F** on our [state gun law scorecard](#) and was **ranked the 18th worst state for firearms laws**. Texas does not require [background checks](#) prior to the transfer of a firearm by an unlicensed person; does not prohibit the transfer or possession of [assault weapons](#), [50 caliber rifles](#), or [large capacity ammunition magazines](#); does not restrict firearm access by people convicted of [violent misdemeanors](#), many categories of [domestic abuse](#), and hate crimes; does not [limit the number of firearms](#) that may be purchased at one time; has not regulated [unsafe handguns](#); does not require firearm owners to [report lost or stolen firearms](#) to law enforcement; and has no significant regulation on [ammunition sales](#). Texas is a major source of gun [trafficking](#) to other states. In 2016, Texas [exported](#) the third largest number of crime guns among the states.

In 2015, Texas [passed](#) dangerous laws that allow guns on public [college and university campuses](#), and allow the [open carry](#) of firearms in public places. In 2017, Texas further weakened its gun laws by [removing school districts' authority to prohibit concealed carry permit holders from possessing firearms in vehicles in school parking lots](#). In 2019, Texas did not advance gun safety legislation, including bills that would have established an Extreme Risk law and expanded background checks.

## **Background on Assault Weapons and Large Capacity Magazines**

Assault weapons are a class of semi-automatic firearm specifically designed to kill humans quickly and efficiently. They are a relatively new class of weapon—during the 1980s, the gun industry sought to reverse a decline in consumer demand for guns by [developing and marketing new types of weapons based on high-powered military designs](#). Assault weapons are frequently the guns of choice for individuals who carry out horrific public attacks; a review of 62 mass shootings between 1982 and 2012 by Mother Jones found that [assault weapons were recovered in almost a quarter of them](#).

In 1994, Congress adopted the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which made it “unlawful for a person to manufacture, transfer, or possess” a semiautomatic assault weapon. The law was adopted with a sunset clause, however, and expired in 2004, despite overwhelming public support for its renewal. Thus, semi-automatic, military style weapons that were formerly banned under federal

law are now legal unless it is one of the [seven states or the District of Columbia](#) that have banned them.

[Research](#) examining the effect of the federal assault weapons ban on high-fatality mass shootings (six or more deaths) found that the number of high-fatality mass shootings fell by 37% and the number of people dying in such shootings fell by 43%, compared with the 10-year period before the ban. But after the ban lapsed in 2004, the numbers shot up again—an astonishing 183% increase in high-fatality mass shootings and a 239% increase in deaths during such shootings.

Similarly, large-capacity magazines, some of which can hold up to 100 rounds of ammunition, significantly increase a shooter's ability to injure and kill large numbers of people quickly because they enable the individual to fire repeatedly without needing to reload. A [review of mass shootings](#) between 2009 and 2017 found that shootings involving large-capacity magazines resulted in twice as many fatalities, with 14 times as many injuries per incident on average, compared to those without. Even after removing the October 2017 shooting in Las Vegas, large-capacity magazines still resulted in nearly twice as many fatalities and six times as many injuries during this time frame. Another analysis of [mass shootings between 1982 and 2012](#) found that large-capacity ammunition magazines were recovered in 50% of incidents.

Currently, nine states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws banning large capacity ammunition magazines. Although large capacity ammunition magazine bans are often enacted in conjunction with assault weapon bans, they can also be enacted as a stand-alone law. Large capacity ammunition magazine bans reduce the capacity, and thus the potential lethality, of any firearm that can accept a large capacity ammunition magazine, including a firearm that is not an assault weapon. [Crime data](#) also suggests that a ban on large capacity magazines would have a greater impact on gun crime than a ban on assault weapons alone.

## **Background about Hate-Fueled Gun Violence**

Violent extremists and hate groups often use firearms as tools of violence and intimidation. In recent years, mass shootings at a gay nightclub in Orlando, a historic African-American church in Charleston, and a Sikh temple in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, were among the deadliest hate crimes ever committed in the United States, and among the deadliest mass shootings in our nation's history. The disturbing scenes playing out in the streets of Charlottesville in the summer of 2017 were yet another instance of the hate that plagues our communities every day.

Between 2010 and 2014, roughly 43,000 hate crimes were committed in the United States involving the use or threatened use of a gun. Since 2014, hate crime incidents across the US have become more numerous and more violent. The Southern Poverty Law Center has tracked a 17% increase in the number of active hate groups since 2014, with rising hate crime rates driven largely by rising rates of violent hate and a record high number of active hate groups in 2018.

From 2016 to 2017, there was a [16% increase in hate crimes against black Americans and a 24% increase in hate crimes against Hispanic and Latino Americans](#). Police departments in numerous major cities have reported significant spikes in hate crimes, including New York City, which reported a 24% increase in hate crimes in 2016 followed by an additional 28% increase in 2017. Since 2014, the number of active anti-Muslim hate groups has increased *four-fold*, coinciding with a nearly 600%

increase in hate crimes targeting the American Muslim community. The Anti-Defamation League has also reported a “significant, sustained increase in anti- Semitic activity since the start of 2016.”

While most U.S. states (and federal law) prohibit convicted domestic violence misdemeanants from acquiring guns, individuals convicted of violent hate crime misdemeanors remain eligible to keep and purchase guns in the majority of the country.

## **Background about the Increased Risk of Violence Among Young Adults**

The shooter in Dayton was 24 years old. The shooter in El Paso was 21 years old. The shooter in Gilroy, California, was 19 years old. Young adults are at an [elevated risk of committing gun violence](#). Individuals age 18 to 20 comprise only four percent of the population but commit [17 percent of gun homicides](#). Based on [data from the FBI](#), 18- to 24-year-olds also account for a disproportionate percentage of arrests for homicide and violent crime in general.

Young adults ages 18 to 25 also experience the highest rates of serious mental illness, and suicide attempts that result in death or treatment in a hospital peak between ages 16 and 21. It is well-documented that the biological processes that take place during late adolescence and young adulthood predispose individuals to riskier and less controlled behavior.

Following the shooting in Parkland, Florida, in 2018, [four states tightened minimum age laws](#), specifically addressing the [ability of people under 21 to access firearms](#): California, Florida, Vermont, and Washington.

## **Policy Recommendations for the U.S. Senate and President Trump**

1. **Universal background checks** -- A [universal background checks law](#) would ensure that people prohibited from purchasing firearms cannot do so through an unregulated sale from an unlicensed or online seller or at a gun show. Closing this background check loophole is critical to making sure criminals and other dangerous people do not have access to firearms. It is also a policy that [97%](#) of Americans support. The House of Representatives passed [H.R. 8](#), the Bipartisan Background Checks Act, over 150 days ago; the Senate should immediately pass this bill.
2. **Extreme Risk Protection Order laws** -- Extreme Risk Protection Order (ERPO) laws enable family members and law enforcement to petition a court for a temporary order prohibiting a person from purchasing or possessing firearms. These [orders](#) are sought when the individual demonstrates behaviors that indicate they may be a danger to themselves or others. Countless shootings have demonstrated that people who do not fall within existing categories of prohibited people can still pose significant threats to themselves and public safety. In many cases, people close to a mass shooter had observed clear warning signs of violence but were unable to act to keep him from accessing weapons. Congress should pass legislation to incentivize states to pass these laws and help states to effectively implement them by providing grant funding. The Extreme Risk Protection Order Act ([H.R.1236/S. 506](#)) would provide grants to states which enact extreme risk laws.

3. **Ban large capacity ammunition magazines** -- Large capacity ammunition magazines, some of which can hold up to 100 rounds of ammunition, significantly increase a shooter's ability to injure and kill large numbers of people quickly because they enable the individual to fire repeatedly without needing to reload. They are frequently used in mass shootings. Congress should ban magazines that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. Legislation pending in the House and Senate would do just this ([H.R. 1186/S. 447](#)).
4. **Regulate assault weapons like machine guns** -- Assault weapons have become the weapon of choice for mass shooters because of their capacity to inflict mass casualties in a short period of time, even when compared with other modern firearms. To minimize the risk that these weapons will end up in the hands of the next mass shooter, Congress should [regulate semiautomatic assault weapons under the National Firearms Act \(NFA\)](#)-- the same way that gun machine guns are regulated-- and consider banning the future sale and production of assault weapons. Congress should pass legislation ([H.R. 1296/S. 66](#)) that would prohibit the future manufacture and sale of assault weapons coupled with legislation ([H.R. 1263](#)) which would require any semiautomatic rifle that has the capacity to accept a detachable magazine to be regulated under the NFA.
5. **Federal funding for gun violence research** -- Gun violence is a public safety threat that has significant public health implications. The gun lobby has effectively prevented our federal research institutions from studying gun violence for over twenty years, but federal funding from Congress can change that by investing in federal research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and National Institutes of Health (NIH). The [House Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill for 2020](#) allocated \$50 million of funding for gun violence research at CDC and NIH, and the Senate should immediately pass legislation with similar funding for gun violence research.
6. **Prevent hate crime offenders from having access to guns** -- Hate and bigotry have motivated some of [the deadliest mass shootings](#) in our nation's history. In too many cases, the presence of a firearm turns bigoted threats into deadly assaults. And yet, in most states, people who have been convicted of violent hate crimes would pass a background check to acquire a weapon. In recent years, the number of active hate groups in the US has reached an [all-time high](#), while violence against our nation's African American, Latinx, Jewish, Muslim, and LGBTQ minorities have [all increased](#). The Disarm Hate Act ([H.R. 2708/S. 1462](#)) would prohibit people convicted of violent hate crimes from acquiring or possessing firearms after conviction.

**Related:** [Policy Recommendations for Texas](#)

## **Research, Data & Related Studies**

### **Gun Violence in America**

- [136,000](#) Americans are shot each year—over 1.2 million in the past decade.

- Nearly [two-thirds of all gun deaths are gun suicides](#), and one-third of gun deaths are gun homicides.
- Americans are [25 times](#) more likely to be killed in a gun homicide than people in other high-income countries.
- Americans are [11 times](#) more likely to be killed by a gun than people in other high-income countries.
- Across 29 high-income countries, [93% of children](#) ages 0 to 14 years killed with guns are from the United States.
- In US states with high gun ownership, firearm homicide rates are [36 times higher](#) than in other high-income countries and firearm suicide rates are 15 times higher.

### Gun Violence in Ohio

- In 2017, Ohio had the 22nd highest gun death rate among the states.
- Gun violence poses a serious public safety risk to residents of Ohio, over [1,400 of whom die from gun violence](#) each year. Someone is killed with a gun every six hours in Ohio.
- [Gun violence has a disproportionate impact on urban communities of color](#). Black men make up less than 7% of Ohio's population, but account for nearly 64% of the state's gun homicide victims. In Ohio, black men ages 18–24 are nearly 32 times more likely than white men the same age to be murdered with a gun.
- Exposure to gun violence can cause lasting trauma in young people, leading to PTSD, chronic stress, and decreased future earnings. From 2013 to 2017, 1,488 people under age 25 were killed with a gun in Ohio. [Guns are the second-leading cause of death for Ohio children ages 1–17](#).
- Ohio continues to grapple with a gun violence crisis that [costs the state \\$2.7 billion each year](#) in directly measurable costs. Gun violence costs Ohio taxpayers over \$540 million annually. Research confirms that reducing shootings improves local economies.

### Gun Violence in Texas

- In 2017, Texas had the 27th highest gun death rate among the states. Although thousands of [crime guns from other states](#) are brought into Texas each year, nearly 85% of Texas crime guns were originally sold in the state.
- Gun violence poses a serious public safety risk to the people of Texas, [claiming the lives of 3,139 Texans each year](#) and wounding even more. Texas has also experienced a sharp increase in violence in recent years—according to CDC data, the state's gun murder rate spiked by 23% between 2014 and 2016 alone.

- [Gun violence has a disproportionate impact on urban communities of color](#). Black and Hispanic men make up less than 25% of Texas’s population, but account for nearly 63% of the state’s gun homicide victims. In Texas, black men ages 18–24 are nearly 11 times more likely than white men the same age to be murdered with a gun.
- From 2013 to 2017, 3,137 people under age 25 were killed with a gun in Texas. [Guns are the third-leading cause of death for Texas children ages 1–17](#).

## **Statements from Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords**

**August 4, 2019**: “I have no more words. I only have anger. **President Donald Trump and Majority Leader Mitch McConnell must call the Senate back from August recess immediately. We cannot afford to wait another day for lawmakers to address this horrific national public safety threat.**

“In less than one minute, one man with a gun murdered 9 people and injured 16 others. This is not normal. The shootings that happened this weekend—the shootings that happen every single day in America—are not normal. No other country in the world comes close to experiencing the level of gun violence our families and communities suffer.

“The defenders of the status quo—advocates of the firearms industry and the politicians paid to defend it—will tell you that horrific acts of violence like this are beyond our control. This could not be further from the truth. Every day we fail to take action, we choose this fate. Every day politicians fail to acknowledge and act upon this crisis, they allow the gun violence epidemic to continue.

“It’s been 158 days since the US House of Representatives passed the Bipartisan Background Checks Act. How many more lives will be lost before Majority Leader McConnell and President Trump take the next steps to sign that lifesaving legislation into law?”

**August 3, 2019**: “Our families should not be afraid to run errands on a Saturday afternoon. We should not be afraid to attend festivals or block parties or concerts. We should not be afraid to worship or to go to school. But that’s not the America we’re living in today. We can change this, but first our lawmakers must take action to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people.

“My heart is with the victims, their families, and the entire El Paso community. No community should have to reckon with a tragedy of this scale. The reality that it keeps happening is horrifying. It’s heartbreaking, but we must remember it’s not inevitable. The fact that our nation’s leaders continue to fail to protect us should outrage us all. It’s time to bring this crisis to an end. The time for action is now.”

###

***Giffords** is a nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives from gun violence. Founded by former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords and her husband, Navy combat veteran and retired NASA astronaut Captain Mark Kelly, Giffords inspires the courage of people from all walks of life to make America safer.*

*For over 25 years, the legal experts at [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](#) have been fighting for a safer America by researching, drafting, and defending the laws, policies, and programs proven to save lives from gun violence.*