Interpersonal gun violence in Connecticut disproportionately affects underserved communities of color in urban areas, with young black men being particularly vulnerable. Though black men make up less than 6% of Connecticut’s population, they account for more than 53% of the state’s gun homicide victims. In fact, black men ages 18–35 are almost 39 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than white men in Connecticut.

Moreover, in recent years, Connecticut has seen an increase in interpersonal gun violence, with cities experiencing particularly high gun homicide rates. From 2014 to 2017, the state’s gun homicide rate increased by nearly 30%.

Interpersonal gun violence, as well as the staggering number of suicides and unintentional shootings, impose massive human, moral, and fiscal costs on the state. More can and must be done to prevent these costly tragedies.

TALLYING THE NUMBERS

The hundreds of shootings that occur each year in Connecticut are a serious drain on the state’s economy. Based on the expenses we can directly measure, including healthcare costs ($23 million per year), law enforcement and criminal justice expenses ($41 million per year), costs to employers ($3 million per year), and lost income ($363 million per year), the initial price tag of gun violence in Connecticut is over $430 million per year. Much of this tab is picked up by the public. Up to 85% of gunshot victims, for example, are either uninsured or on some form of publicly funded insurance. Additionally, law enforcement efforts are funded entirely by taxpayer dollars. As a result, the direct annual cost of gun violence to Connecticut taxpayers totals at least $90 million.

$430+ MILLION TOTAL DIRECTLY MEASURABLE COSTS
WE'RE ON A MISSION TO SAVE LIVES

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. Founded in the wake of a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco, in 2016 the Law Center joined with former Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords to form a courageous new force for gun safety that stretches coast to coast.

CONTACT US
media@giffords.org

REDUCING GUN VIOLENCE

There is much work to be done. Fortunately, a number of proven solutions exist that would reduce gun violence in Connecticut, including imposing design safety standards on handguns and increasing investment in proven community violence intervention strategies. The investment required to implement these lifesaving solutions is minuscule compared to the yearly cost of gun violence in the state.

When the reduced quality of life attributable to pain and suffering ($767 million) is considered, the overall estimate of the economic cost of gun violence rises to $1.2 billion per year. While this number is staggering, it actually understates the true cost of gun violence in Connecticut because it doesn’t include significant, yet difficult-to-measure costs, including lost business opportunities, lowered property values, and reductions in the tax base.

1. Fatal firearm injury data came from the CDC’s WISQARS Fatal Injury Reports (www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html). Nonfatal firearm injuries came from the Connecticut State Department of Public Health Hospitalization Statistics Portal (https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Health-Information-Systems—Reporting/Hisrhome/Hospitalization-Statistics) and an estimation tool which creates a ratio of the national incidence of nonfatal shootings, sourced from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System’s Firearm Injury Surveillance Study (NEISS-FISS), and the number of fatal shootings that Connecticut experienced in a given year, sourced from WISQARS. NEISS-FISS data is available at www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/series/198#studies.

2. Estimates of the cost of gun violence in Connecticut were created using a model of the cost of gun violence published in 2012 by economists at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE). This model can be found at www.pire.org/documents/gswcost2010.pdf. All cost estimates were adjusted to 2016 dollars.

LEARN ABOUT CONNECTICUT’S GUN LAWS:

lawcenter.giffords.org/CT