

## GUN VIOLENCE

### **SOME STATISTICS**

- Americans are 25 times more likely to be shot and killed than those who live in other developed countries.
- Every day, on average, 327 Americans are shot, and of those, on average, 117 will die.
- Since 2017, gun violence is the leading cause of the death of children (age 1-17).
- In 2022, American endured 645 mass shootings (defined as at least 4 people shot).
- Between 2015 and 2019, *on average per year*, 115,551 Americans were shot, 38,826 of whom died, 1,663 of whom were children. [Source of the above: Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence <bradyunited.org>. Retrieved 9/5/2024]
- “The United States, with less than 5 percent of the world’s population, has 46 percent of the world’s civilian-owned guns. [ . . . ] It ranks number one in firearms per capita [ . . . ] and also has the highest homicide-by-firearm rate of the world’s most developed nations.” [Source: Jonathan Masters, “U.S. Gun Policy: Global Comparisons.” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 6/10/2022 <cfr.org>. Retrieved 9/5/2024]

### **SOME RESPONSES TO THESE STATISTICS**

“After a surge in mass shootings, including a record 46 school shootings in 2022, an April 2023 Fox News poll found registered voters were "overwhelmingly" supportive of a range of gun restrictions. Measures supported by the majority of respondents included criminal background checks (87%), mental health evaluations of prospective gun owners (80%), a 30-day waiting period for every purchase (77%), and a law against civilian ownership of semi-automatic weapons (61%).

According to joint polls published by CNN and the SSRS Institute: 64% of Americans support stricter gun control laws, 36% oppose it. 54% of Americans believe that such laws will reduce the number of deaths and killings of citizens with firearms, and 58% believe that the government can take effective action to prevent mass shootings. 36% believe the presence of guns makes public places less safe.” [Source: “Public opinions on gun control in the United States.” Wikipedia. Retrieved on 9/4/2024]

## A QUESTION

*Since the great majority of American citizens have consistently supported broad gun-control legislation and continue to do so, why is such legislation absent?*

## SOME ANSWERS

1. “Because guns are fun, and control is not.” [Drew Magary, *GQ*, 8/7/2012]
2. “In 2016, the NRA [National Rifle Association] and three other big groups had almost five times as much cash as the six largest gun-control organizations.” And . . .
3. “Firearm owners are twice as likely as non-owners to petition their [Congressmen](#) and nearly five times as likely to donate to candidates or groups that share their views on guns, according to Pew Research Center, a think-tank.” [“Why isn’t America’s gun-control movement more effective?” *The Economist*, 6/10/2022]
4. “Criminals, by definition, do not obey the law. Gun control laws only affect law-abiding people who go through legal avenues to obtain firearms.” [NRA-ILA <nraila.org>]

## SOMETHING TO CONSIDER

**“Like most rights, the right secured by the Second Amendment right is not unlimited. . . . [It is] not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose.”**

**Antonin Scalia, author of the Supreme Court decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller*. 554 U.S. 570 (2008)**

In 1994 the “Federal Assault Weapons Ban” was passed by Congress. Several constitutional challenges to provisions of the ban were filed, but all of them were denied by the courts. In 2004, however, it [expired following its “sunset provision ”](#) and was not renewed by the Bush administration. Although President Bush publicly stated that he wanted to extend the ban, the Republican-led Congress stifled it. A study published in *The Journal of Trauma and Acute Care Surgery* [86: (1): 11-19] determined that “mass-shooting fatalities were 70% less likely to occur during the federal ban period” [1994-2004].

[The 2<sup>ND</sup> Amendment is not absolute. “The right to keep and bear arms” may be regulated by law in the interest of public safety.](#)

## THE LATEST MASS SHOOTING.

On Wednesday, September 4, 2024, yet another school shooting took place. This time it was at the Apalachee High School in Barrow County Georgia, located an hour outside of Atlanta. Two students both aged 14 years and two teachers were killed and nine others wounded in the school shooting. One suspect, a 14-year-old student, was alive and taken into custody following the gunfire. The weapon of choice was a “AR type rifle” was the 45th school shooting in the United States so far this year.

[Two students, two teachers killed in shooting at Georgia high school; 14-year-old charged as an adult \(nbcnews.com\)](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/second-students-2-teachers-killed-shooting-georgia-high-school-14-year-old-charged-adult-rcna123456)

**THE REACTION.** Among the usual thoughts and prayers, calls for more “good guys with guns” and increasing school security there was the numbed response by a public that is far too familiar with the dance of political speech and the death of children.

So, let’s just look at the responses of four people. Their words convey their differing attitudes, philosophies and empathy about the now leading cause of the death of children in the United States.

### Donald Trump:

**What he has said:** On January 4, 2024, the first day of classes after a winter break, a 17-year-old gunman killed a sixth-grade student and wounded five other people at Perry High School near Des Moines, Iowa. The five people wounded include four students and one school administrator. The attack was the second school shooting of the year. Days later at a campaign rally Trump offered his condolences to the families and communities. But he went on offer this statement, “But we have to get over it. We have to move forward.”

About the Apalachee High School in Barrow County Georgia, he posted on truth social, “Our hearts are with the victims and loved ones of those affected by the tragic event in Winder, GA. These cherished children were taken from us far too soon by a sick and deranged monster.”

**Where he stands on guns:** Mr. Trump has vowed to rescind gun regulations enacted by the Biden administration, describing them as attacks on gun owners and manufacturers, and he has argued that mass shootings stem from mental health challenges.

[January 4, 2024 - One student killed, several wounded at Perry High School in Iowa, officials say | CNN](#)

### **J.D. Vance:**

**What he has said:** Commenting the day after the Georgia school shooting, at a campaign rally in Arizona, the Republican Vice-Presidential nominee, said that school shootings were simply a “fact of life.” “I don’t like that this is a fact of life,” Vance said at the Thursday rally. Suggesting that, “If these psychos are going to go after our kids, we’ve got to be prepared for it,” Vance said, bucking a question asked on gun control measures and instead championing efforts to spend more on school security. “We don’t have to like the reality that we live in, but it is the reality we live in. We’ve got to deal with it.”

**Where he stands on guns:** In June Vance had called gun violence in schools a “fake problem” and called an attempt to ban bump stocks, used in the Las Vegas shooting that killed 60, a “huge distraction.” He has argued that restrictions on firearm access would be ineffective in stopping school shootings and has instead called for stronger security measures. He supported abolishing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, which enforces firearms regulations.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2024/09/06/jd-vance-school-shootings/>

[JD Vance says school shootings are a "fact of life" \(msn.com\)](#)

### **Kamala Harris:**

**What she said:** It is just outrageous that every day in the United States of America, parents have to send their children to school worried about whether or not their child will come home alive," Harris said at an event in New Hampshire.

"It's a fight for something, not against something," Harris said. “Let us finally pass an assault weapon ban and universal checks and red flag laws." Harris also rejected the idea that supporting the Second Amendment and advocating for gun safety are contradictory, emphasizing the need for balanced regulations. "It's a false choice to be in favor of the Second Amendment or want to take guns away," Harris said. "I'm in favor of the Second Amendment and I know we need reasonable gun safety laws in our country."

“We have to end this epidemic of gun violence in our country once and for all. You know, it doesn’t have to be this way.”

**Where she stands on guns:** The vice president has pushed for a federal assault weapons ban. The last one expired in 2004, a decade after it was authorized by President Bill Clinton. The measure blocked the sale of 19 specific weapons that have the features of guns used by the military, including semiautomatic rifles and certain types of shotguns and handguns. Democratic efforts to resurrect it have been met with fierce Republican resistance. Ms. Harris also supports state-level red-flag laws, which allow courts to seize weapons from people they deem threats.

#### **Tim Walz:**

**What he said:** “I defend the Second Amendment,” Mr. Walz, the governor of Minnesota and Vice presidential nominee, said at a rally in Pennsylvania. “But our first responsibility is to keep our kids safe.” Earlier in the day, he framed the matter as a fight for freedom: “I say it as a gun owner, I say it as a veteran, I say it as a hunter, none of the things we’re proposing infringes on your Second Amendment right. But what does infringe upon this is our children going to school and being killed.”

**Where he stands on guns:** Mr. Walz has evolved on gun policy since he was elected in 2006 to represent a conservative-leaning House district in southern Minnesota. Once a strong supporter of gun rights who won high marks from the N.R.A., he later became a champion of bills to ban assault weapons and bump stocks.

[What the Harris and Trump Campaigns Said About the Georgia School Shooting - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](#)

[Kamala Harris Goes 'Off Script' in Remarks About Georgia School Shooting \(msn.com\)](#)