

## Campaign to Keep Guns Off Campus

### More Guns – More Gun Deaths and Injuries

#### Guns in the home

Studies show that whenever guns are introduced into an environment, the result is more gun deaths and injuries. The environment that has been studied the most is the home.

One study<sup>1</sup> found that the presence of a gun in the home increased the risk of homicide of a family member by a factor of three and the risk of suicide by a factor of five. Another study<sup>2</sup> found that a gun in the home was 22 times more likely to be used to shoot a family member than a criminal intruder. During the study period, for each time a gun in the home was used in self defense or a legally justifiable shooting, there were 7 homicides or attempted homicides of a family member, 11 suicides or attempted suicides by a family member, and 4 unintentional shootings of a family member.

If guns made us safer, then one thing is clear. States with the highest rates of gun ownership would have the fewest number of gun deaths and injuries. But this conclusion is contradicted by the facts.

According to a 2003 study<sup>3</sup> by the Harvard School of Public Health, the firearm death rate of children age 5-14 was 6 times higher in the five states with the highest rates of gun ownership compared to the five states with the lowest rates of gun ownership. In the 10-year period covered by the study (1988-1997), 704 children age 5-14 died from firearm-related deaths in the high gun ownership states compared to 123 in the low gun ownership states, even though the populations of the two groups were approximately the same. On the other hand, non-gun homicides and non-gun suicides in the high gun states and low gun states were roughly the same.

Overall, children age 5-14 who live in the high gun ownership states are 7 times more likely to die from a gun suicide, 3 times more likely to die from a gun homicide, and 16 times more likely to die from an unintentional shooting.

Variable	States with the Highest Rates of Gun Ownership	States with the Lowest Rates of Gun Ownership	Ratio of Mortality Rates
Population	23 Million	22 Million	
Suicides			
No. Gun Suicides	153	22	6.7
No. Non-gun Suicides	69	82	0.8
Homicides			
No. Gun Homicides	298	86	3.3
No. Non-gun Homicides	143	110	1.3
Unintentional Deaths	253	15	16.3
Total Gun Deaths	704	123	5.7

High gun ownership states: Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas, and West Virginia.

Low gun ownership states: Hawaii, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Delaware.

#### Guns and Suicide

A more recent study<sup>4</sup> by the Harvard School of Public Health compared gun suicides with non-gun suicides in the 15 states with the highest rates of gun ownership with the 6 states with the lowest rates of gun ownership (using only 6 states such that the populations of both groups would be approximately the same). During the five year period 2001-2005 there were approximately four times as many gun suicides in the high gun ownership states compared to the low gun ownership states (16,577 vs. 4,257). Non-gun suicides in the two populations were approximately the same (9,192 vs. 9,259). This study provides compelling evidence that the presence of a gun in the household is linked to an increase in risk of suicide by family members.

Variable	States with the Highest Rates of Gun Ownership	States with the Lowest Rates of Gun Ownership	Ratio of Mortality Rates
Population	39.0 million	40.0 million	
Percent Households with Guns	47	15	
Male			
No. Gun Suicides	14,365	3,971	3.7
No. Non-Gun Suicides	6,593	6,781	1.0
Female			
No. Gun Suicides	2,212	286	7.9
No. Non-Gun Suicides	2,599	2,478	1.1
Total			
No. Gun Suicides	16,577	4,257	3.9
No. Non-Gun Suicides	9,192	9,259	1.0

High gun ownership states: Wyoming, South Dakota, Alaska, West Virginia, Montana, Arkansas, Mississippi, Idaho, North Dakota, Alabama, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Utah.  
Low gun ownership states: Hawaii, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Connecticut, and New York.

### Guns in the workplace

Most adults spend a significant amount of time at work. Are workplaces that allow workers to carry guns and other weapons more safe than workplaces where firearms are prohibited?

Not according to a University of Carolina study<sup>5</sup> that analyzed homicides at North Carolina workplaces between 1994 and 1998. The study found that workplaces that allowed workers to carry firearms and other weapons at work were 5-7 times more likely to be the site of an on-the-job homicide compared to workplaces that prohibited workers from carrying weapons.

The North Carolina study confirms that just as residents of households with guns are more likely to become a victim of a homicide in the home, workers who work in places that allow guns are more likely to be killed while at work.

<sup>1</sup> Reference for endnote 1.

<sup>2</sup> Kellerman, AL, "Injuries and Deaths Due to Firearms in the Home," Journal of Trauma, Aug 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Miller M, Azrael D, and Hemenway D, "Firearm Availability and Unintentional Firearm Deaths, Suicide, and Homicide among 5-14 Year Olds," Journal of Trauma, Feb 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Miller M and Hemenway D, "Guns and Suicide in the United States, New England Journal of Medicine, Sep 4, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Loomis D, Marshall SW, and Ta MI, "Employer Policies Toward Guns and the Risk of Homicide in the Workplace," American Journal of Public Health, May 2005.