

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION SPECIAL SESSION IN VIRGINIA



Since the Virginia Tech shooting, over 11,000 Virginians have been killed by guns.¹ This year alone, over 170 Virginians have died and over 440 have been injured by gun violence.² Cities like Richmond experience a disproportionate percentage of this violence, much of which is localized in communities of color. From 2013-2016, Richmond's annual firearm homicide rate was over four times higher than the rest of the Commonwealth,³ and black residents of Richmond are twice as likely to die from gun violence in comparison to the American average.⁴

UNIVERSAL BACKGROUND CHECKS

Under current law, Virginia does not require private sellers (like those who sell guns online or at gun shows) to conduct a Brady background check before a gun purchase is made.

- About 1 in 5 guns sold nationwide is bought without a background check.⁵
- Background checks are supported by over 90 percent of Americans, and Virginia is no exception: A 2017 poll showed that 91 percent of Virginians support a background check for every gun sale.⁶
- In 2016, more than 9,000 guns purchased in Virginia were later recovered in crime scenes across the country.⁷ Virginia is a "net exporter" of crime guns, and has the 9th highest rate of crime gun exports to other states nationwide.⁸

EXTREME RISK LAWS

Extreme Risk laws give family members, law enforcement, and partners an avenue to prevent an individual in crisis from harming themselves or others by temporarily removing guns and prohibiting the purchase of another gun.

- Extreme risk laws have been passed by 16 states and Washington, D.C.⁹
- 83% of Virginians in battleground districts support extreme risk laws.¹⁰
- Extreme Risk laws are incredibly effective in saving lives. A study of Connecticut's law over 14 years found that one suicide was averted for every 10-20 orders issued and 44 percent of respondents received psychiatric care that they may have not otherwise received.¹¹

DANGEROUS WEAPONS BAN

Assault weapons, high capacity magazines, bump stocks, and silencers have all been used by mass shooters to increase casualties. Assault weapons are uniquely lethal because of their rapid rate of fire and high muzzle velocity, coupled with high capacity magazines, which when attached to an assault weapon, allow dozens of gunshots to be fired without reloading.

- 62% of Virginians in battleground districts support banning semi-automatic assault weapons and 63% support banning high-capacity magazines that hold more than 10 bullets.¹²
- During the recent mass shooting in Virginia Beach, the perpetrator attached both a high-capacity magazine and a suppressor to the pistol he used in the rampage.¹³
- A review of mass shootings between 2009 and 2015 demonstrated that in shootings where assault weapons or high capacity magazines were used, 155% more people are shot and 47% more die compared to those without them.¹⁴

GUNS IN GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Current Virginia law prevents localities from passing laws to prohibit individuals from entering government buildings, parks, or large public events while carrying firearms. Despite state office buildings prohibiting guns, localities like Richmond or Virginia Beach cannot take the same steps. Passing a law of this type would enable local governments to secure their buildings and help protect against workplace shootings.

- 67% of Virginians in battleground districts support enacting a law enabling local governments to prevent guns from being brought into government buildings.¹⁵
- The recent tragedy in Virginia Beach was perpetrated by a city employee who opened fire in the same municipal building where he worked after submitting his resignation earlier that day, killing 12 people and injuring 4 others.

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1. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, <https://twitter.com/EFSGV/status/1143930059759267843>.
 2. These numbers do not include those who have died by firearm suicide. Data obtained from the Gun Violence Archive on June 25, 2019: <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>.
 3. Virginia Office of the Chief Medical Examiner.
 4. Gun Violence in Richmond City, Richmond: <https://www.lives-tories.com/statistics/virginia/richmond-city-gun-firearm-violence-deaths-mortality>
 5. Miller, Hepburn & Azrael, Firearm Acquisition Without Background Checks: Results of a National Survey, <https://annals.org/aim/fullarticle/2595892/firearm-acquisition-without-background-checks-results-national-survey>
 6. Quinnipiac University, "Virginia Voters Back Universal Background Checks 91-8, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds; 2-1 Opposition To Republican Health Care Plan," June 22, 2017, <https://poll.qu.edu/virginia/release-detail?ReleaseID=2468>
 7. Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, "Virginia Is a Top Exporter of Crime Guns," <http://efsgv.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Virginia-is-a-Top-Exporter-of-Crime-Guns-2.pdf>
 8. Center for American Progress analysis of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, "Firearms Trace Data" (2010–2017), <https://www.atf.gov/resource-center/data-statistics>.
 9. Brady, "How Extreme Risk Orders Work to Save Lives," <https://brady-static.s3.amazonaws.com/ExtremeRiskFactSheet.pdf>
 10. Public Policy Polling, Virginia Survey Results, June 7-9, 2019, <https://brady-static.s3.amazonaws.com/Download/VirginiaResults.pdf>
 11. Swanson, et al., Implementation and Effectiveness of Connecticut's Risk-Based Gun Removal Law: Does it Prevent Suicides?
 12. Public Policy Polling, Virginia Survey Results, June 7-9, 2019, <https://brady-static.s3.amazonaws.com/Download/VirginiaResults.pdf>.
 13. ABC News, "Suspected Virginia Beach Shooter Used Legally-Bought Gun Suppressor," June 4, 2019, <https://abcnews.go.com/US/suspected-virginia-beach-gunman-resigned-personal-reasons-massacre/story?id=63449625>
 14. Everytown for Gun Safety, Analysis of Recent Mass Shootings, August 2015, <https://everytownresearch.org/documents/2015/04/analysis-of-recent-mass-shootings.pdf/>
 15. Public Policy Polling, Virginia Survey Results, June 7-9, 2019, <https://brady-static.s3.amazonaws.com/Download/VirginiaResults.pdf>.