BY YOUR CHILD'S FIRST YEAR, SHE CAN SQUEEZE YOUR FINGER WITH SEVEN POUNDS OF PRESSURE. APPROXIMATELY THE SAME AMOUNT NEEDED TO SQUEEZE THE TRIGGER OF A GUN.

Protect Children
Not Guns 2010

DEAR LORD BE GOOD TO ME THE SEA IS SO WIDE AND MY BOAT IS SO SMALL

Children's Defense Fund

The latest data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that 3,042 children and teens died from gunfire in the United States in 2007—one child or teen every three hours, eight every day, 58 every week.

2,161	were homicide victims
683	committed suicide
198	died in accidental or undetermined circumstances
2,665	were boys
377	were girls
397	were under age 15
154	were under age 10
85	were under age 5
1,499	were Black
1,460	were White
611	were Latino*
43	were Asian or Pacific Islander
40	were American Indian or Alaska Native

Almost six times as many children and teens — 17,523 — suffered non-fatal gun injuries.

* Persons of Hispanic/Latino origin can be of any race; these 611 deaths are included in the four race categories.

Protect Children, Not Guns 2010
No Hiding Place from Gun Violence

After almost two decades of reporting on youth gun violence, CDF's latest installment of *Protect Children, Not Guns* makes clear that our national obsession with guns continues to result in the senseless and unnecessary loss of young lives. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that a total of 3,042 children and teens died by gunfire in 2007—a number nearly equal to the total number of U.S. combat deaths in Iraq and four times the number of American combat fatalities in Afghanistan to date. Another 17,523 children and teens suffered non-fatal gun injuries in 2007 and the emotional aftermath that follows. In each case it was a gun that ended or changed a young life forever.

With over 280 million guns in civilian hands, the terrible truth is that there is no place to hide from gun violence. Children and teens are not safe from gun violence at school, at home, or anywhere else in America. A recent study found that rural and urban children and teens are equally likely to die from firearm injuries. Young people in urban areas are more likely to be homicide victims while rural children and teens are more likely to be victims of suicide or accidental shootings. The CDC estimates that nearly two million children live in homes with loaded and unlocked guns.

The epidemic of gun violence is particularly acute among young Black men. In 2007, for the first time, more Black than White children and teens were killed by gun violence. Black males 15 to 19 are more than five times as likely as White males of the same age and more than twice as likely as Hispanic males to be killed by firearms. They also are at substantially greater risk of being injured by gun violence than their White and Hispanic peers. Although their physical injuries heal, the emotional scars typically go untreated, leaving thousands of young survivors of gun violence in a hazy fog of trauma similar to that of soldiers returning from combat.

What will it take for us to stop this senseless loss of young lives? Common sense gun laws can make a difference. States with higher rates of gun ownership and weak gun control laws have the highest rates of firearm deaths of people of all ages. Although polls show that the majority of Americans favor common sense gun control laws that would stem the tide of gun violence, federal and state legislative reform has been difficult to achieve. We need political leaders who will protect our children by enacting legislation to limit the number of guns in our communities, control who can obtain firearms, and ensure that guns in the home are stored safely and securely.

But the responsibility to keep our children safe does not end here. Individuals and families must remove guns from their homes, mobilize community support to protect children from gun violence, stress non-violent values and conflict resolution, refuse to buy or use products for children and teens that glamorize violence, and provide children and teens positive alternatives to the streets where they can feel safe and protected.

We must act to end the culture of violence that desensitizes us—young and old—to the value of life. We cannot allow these shots to go unheard. Our children and our society deserve more.

Key Findings

In 2007, 3,042 children and teens died from gunfire in the United States and another 17,523 suffered non-fatal gun injuries.

- Gunfire deaths among children and teens declined by nearly five percent between 2006 and 2007: 142 fewer children and teens died from firearms in 2007 than 2006. This includes 64 fewer homicides, 80 fewer suicides, and 16 fewer accidental firearm deaths. Deaths classified as "unknown" increased by 18 between 2006 and 2007.

- The number of children and teens killed by guns in 2007 would fill more than 122 public school classrooms of 25 students each. The number of preschoolers killed by firearms in 2007 (85) surpassed the number of law enforcement officers killed in the line of duty (57).

- Among children and teens, firearm deaths are more likely to be homicides. More than 70 percent of the firearm deaths of children and teens in 2007 were homicides; 22 percent were suicides. Among adults the trend is the exact opposite: 60 percent of firearm deaths of adults in 2007 were suicides while 38 percent were homicides.

- Ninety-five percent of firearm deaths of young people occurred among children and teens 10 to 19 years old. In fact, more 10- to 19-year-olds die from gunshot wounds than from any other cause except motor vehicle accidents.

- Children and teens killed by firearms are more likely to be boys (90 percent). Boys ages 15 to 19 are almost 10 times as likely as girls that age to commit suicide with a firearm.

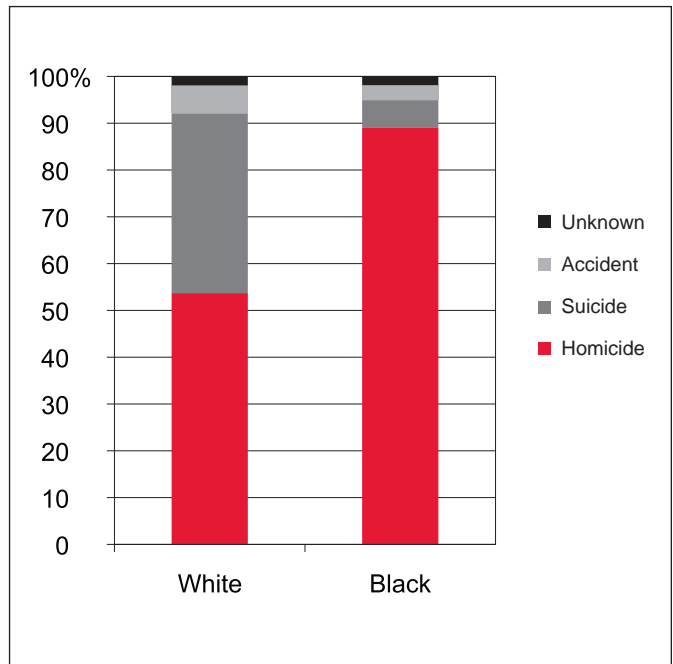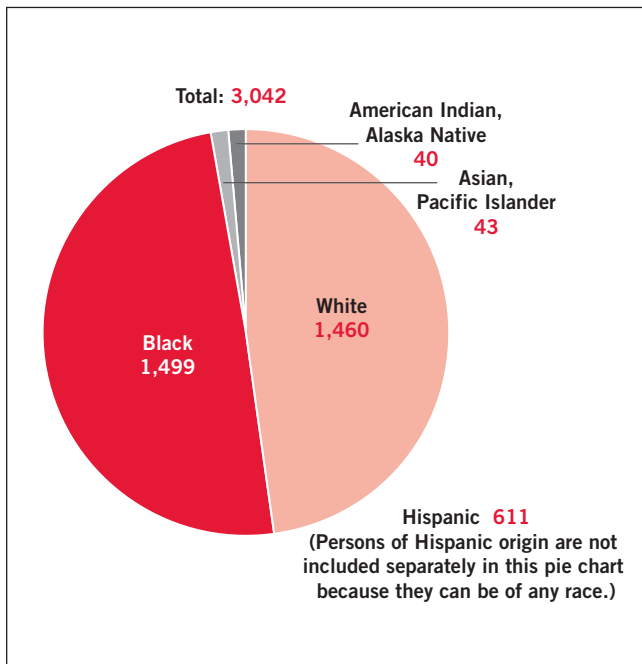## Firearm Deaths of Adults and Children/Teens, by Manner, 2007
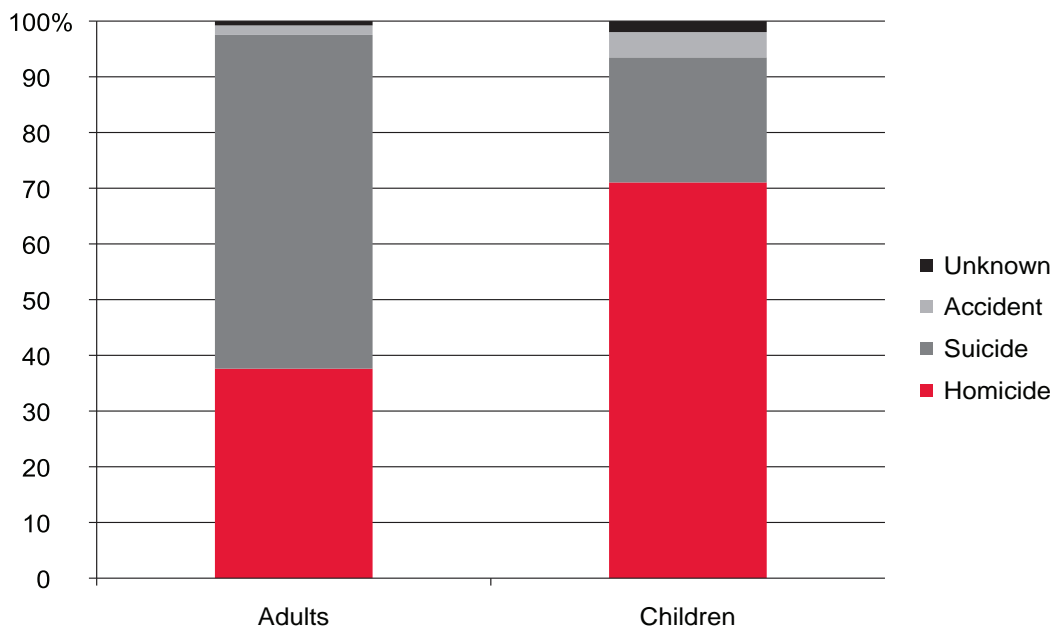
Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

In 2007, for the first time, more Black than White children and teens were killed by firearms.

- In 2007, firearms claimed the lives of 1,499 Black children and teens and 1,460 White children and teens. This is the first year since these data were compiled in 1979 that gun deaths of Black children and teens surpassed gun deaths of White children and teens.

- Nearly 90 percent of firearm deaths of Black children and teens in 2007 were homicides (1,334); six percent were suicides (89). Among White children and teens, just over half of all firearm deaths in 2007 were homicides (784) while 38 percent were suicides (561). Six times as many White children and teens committed suicide by gun as Black children and teens.

- Black males 15 to 19 are more than five times as likely as White males of the same age and more than twice as likely as Hispanic males of that age to be killed by firearms. Black teens 15 to 19 are at greater risk of homicide than White and Hispanic teens: Black males 15 to 19 were ten times as likely as White teens of the same age and three times as likely as Hispanic teens of that age to be a victim of a gun homicide.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Race and Manner, 2007

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

A Deadly Mix: Guns, Violent Injury and Trauma in the Lives of Young Black Men

Newspapers rarely carry the story of an inner city youth injured by gun violence. Gun deaths represent the tip of the iceberg of violent incidents involving guns. Many more young people are shot and survive than die from gun violence each year. In 2007, more than 17,000 children and teens, nearly six times the number killed, suffered non-fatal gunshot injuries. Three-quarters of these incidents occurred during an assault; nearly one-quarter were accidental and the remaining were suicide attempts. For every person who gets shot and dies, it is estimated that another four people get shot and survive. Although gunshot survivors' physical wounds may heal with treatment and time, the emotional trauma of a violent injury is often left to fester placing the survivors at increased risk for future injury, substance abuse, and death.

The young survivors of gun violence have a story to tell. In a new book called *Wrong Place, Wrong Time: Trauma and Violence in the Lives of Young Black Men*, Dr. John Rich documents these stories. As a primary care physician working in a busy Boston hospital, Dr. Rich wanted to understand the psychological impact of violent injury on the steady stream of young Black men filling the emergency room.

When Dr. Rich started collecting his patients' stories, he realized that although little research had been done on trauma among young Black victims of violence, their stories were echoing research on responses to trauma in other groups like rape survivors and soldiers returning from combat. These responses include hyper-vigilance and the constant feeling of being in danger; being unable to feel at all and exposing themselves to more danger in an attempt to feel something; returning to danger to prove to themselves they had mastered their fears; or using alcohol or drugs to try to ease pain. It became easy to connect the dots and see how these common responses to trauma play out in the lives of many survivors of inner-city violence, and why, in many cases, they lead to more violence. When many survivors are concentrated in a single area, it's also clear how these cycles of trauma and violence repeat themselves and infect that entire community.

Many survivors of violent injury experienced trauma well before they landed in the emergency room for a gunshot wound. Among the young people Dr. Rich interviewed, it was not uncommon to have a father who was in jail, addicted to drugs or simply not present in their lives. Others reported mothers who struggled with drugs or having to survive on the streets at a young age. These deeper scars of trauma do not excuse violent behavior but should inform our understanding of how young men like these get caught up in a cycle of violence.

What these stories teach us is that we cannot ignore the emotional trauma of gun violence in this country. We have become very adept at treating the physical wounds but have failed to properly attend to the psychological wounds that keep survivors trapped in a dangerous state of mind. Developing a more human understanding of the problems of inner city youth and how trauma impacts future behavior and the cycle of violence will help save our children from a premature and senseless death.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age, Manner, and Race/Hispanic Origin, 2007

	Under 5	Ages 5–9	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Total under age 20
All races	**85**	**69**	**243**	**2,645**	**3,042**
Accident	19	20	26	73	138
Suicide	0	0	53	630	683
Homicide	63	47	154	1,897	2,161
Undetermined intent	3	2	10	45	60
White	**50**	**43**	**144**	**1,223**	**1,460**
Accident	12	10	22	43	87
Suicide	0	0	43	518	561
Homicide	36	31	72	645	784
Undetermined intent	2	2	7	17	28
Black	**32**	**25**	**91**	**1,351**	**1,499**
Accident	6	9	4	29	48
Suicide	0	0	9	80	89
Homicide	25	16	76	1,217	1,334
Undetermined intent	1	0	2	25	28
American Indian, Alaska Native	**3**	**1**	**4**	**32**	**40**
Accident	1	1	0	1	3
Suicide	0	0	1	19	20
Homicide	2	0	3	10	15
Undetermined intent	0	0	0	2	2
Asian, Pacific Islander	**0**	**0**	**4**	**39**	**43**
Accident	0	0	0	0	0
Suicide	0	0	0	13	13
Homicide	0	0	3	25	28
Undetermined intent	0	0	1	1	2
Hispanic*	**19**	**8**	**45**	**539**	**611**
Accident	4	2	2	14	22
Suicide	0	0	2	90	92
Homicide	14	6	39	427	486
Undetermined intent	1	0	2	8	11

*Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race.

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Almost one in five high school students surveyed in 2007 admitted to carrying a weapon; one-third of them brought a weapon to school. Five percent reported carrying a gun.

- Nearly eight percent of teens surveyed said they had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property.

- One in 18 high school students reported staying home from school because they felt unsafe going to or from school.

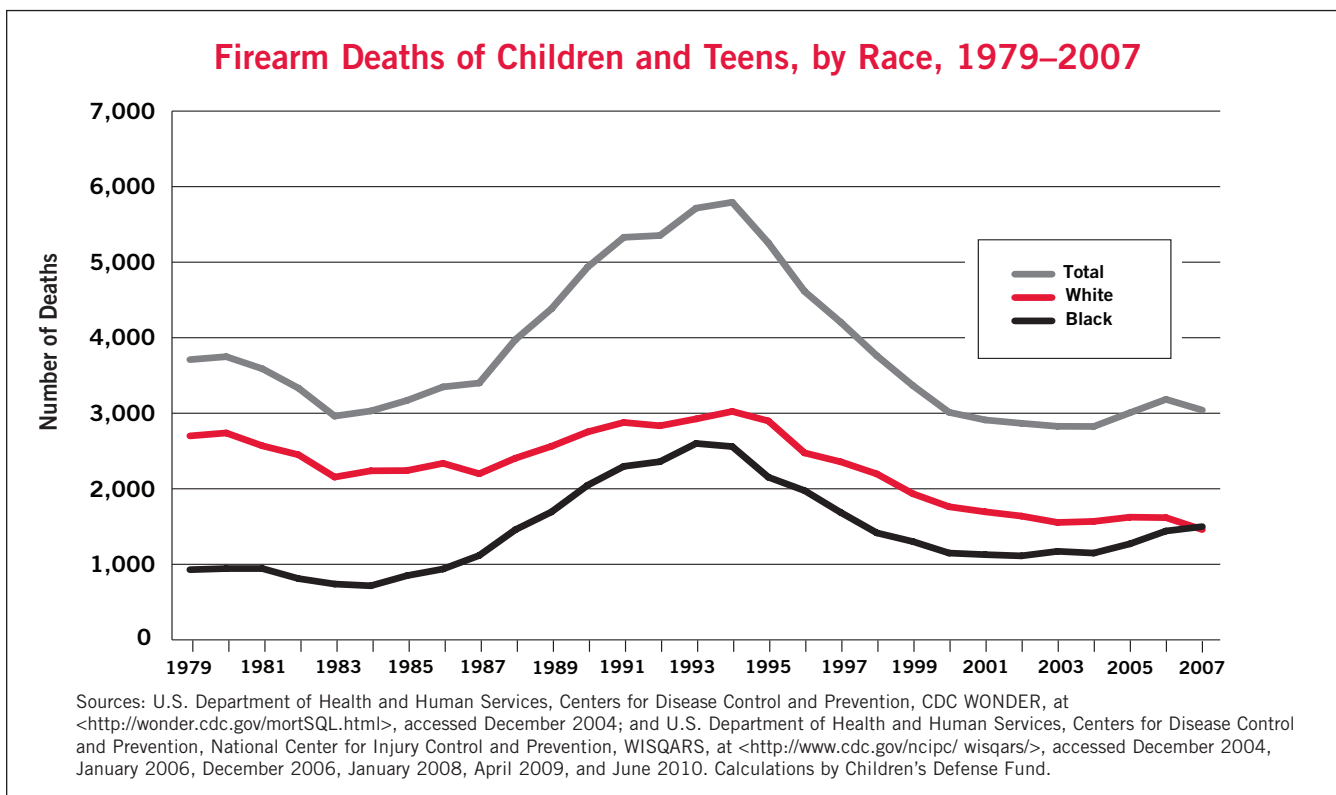- Twelve percent had been in a physical fight on school property.

Risk Behaviors of High School Students, 2007

	Race/Ethnicity			
	Total	**White**	**Black**	**Hispanic**
Carried a weapon	18%	18%	17%	19%
Carried a gun	5	4	6	6
Carried a weapon to school	6	5	6	7
Threatened or injured with a weapon on school property	8	7	10	9
In a physical fight	36	32	45	40
Injured in a physical fight	4	3	5	6
In a physical fight on school property	12	10	18	16
Did not go to school because felt unsafe at school or on way to/from school	5	4	7	10

Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Surveillance Summaries, "Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2007," *MMWR*, Vol. 57, No. SS-4 (June 6, 2008), Tables 7, 9, 13, 15, and 17.

Since 1979, gun violence has prematurely ended the lives of 110,645 children and teens in America.

- The number of children and teens killed by guns since 1979 would fill 4,426 public school classrooms of 25 students each or Boston's Fenway Park nearly three times over.
- Of the 110,645 children killed by a firearm since 1979, 59 percent were White and 37 percent were Black.
- The majority of gun violence deaths among children since 1979 have been homicides (57 percent) while nearly one-third have been suicides (31 percent).
- The number of Black children and teens killed by gunfire since 1979 is more than 10 times the number of Black citizens of all ages lynched in American history.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Race, 1979–2007

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/ wisqars/>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Child Soldiers in Somalia and America

In June, the United Nations expressed new concern about a crisis many Americans know little about: the use of child soldiers in global conflicts, especially in Somalia. Somalia, whose government collapsed in 1991, has been in a constant state of conflict and tension for years and still has no legally recognized government. The United States joins Somalia as the only two countries in the world not to ratify the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international treaty recognizing the human rights of children. One of the Convention's provisions prohibits the use of soldiers younger than age 15 in conflicts. The United States did ratify a later optional protocol prohibiting the use of soldiers younger than 18. But in Somalia, both insurgent groups and the Transitional Federal Government—which is dependent on help from the West including the United States—have been widely accused of violating this principle. The United Nations estimates the Somali military is using hundreds of child soldiers, some as young as age nine. Just as children should not be paid soldiers in armed conflicts half a world away, they also should not be forced to live in fear of the widespread armed threat in American streets, schools, and homes. Yet, since 1979 gun violence has ended the lives of 110,645 children and teens in America.

After reaching an all-time high of 5,793 gun deaths in 1994, the annual number of firearm deaths of children and teens declined by 47 percent between 1994 and 2007.

- Hidden in this overall trend of declining gun violence are stark differences among White and Black children and teens. Although the total annual number of firearm deaths of White children has historically surpassed Black children (until 2007), gun deaths among White children and teens have *decreased* by 54 percent since 1979 while gun deaths of Black children and teens *increased* by 61 percent over the same period.

- The dramatic rise and fall of firearm deaths among children and teens since 1979 is driven by changes in homicide deaths. In the decade between 1983 and 1993 (when homicide deaths peaked), homicide deaths of children and teens increased by nearly 200 percent. During that same 10 year period, suicides increased by 27 percent.

- Between 1994 and 2004, both homicide and suicide gun deaths declined substantially: homicide deaths among children and teens dropped by 50 percent and suicides declined by 46 percent.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 1979-2007
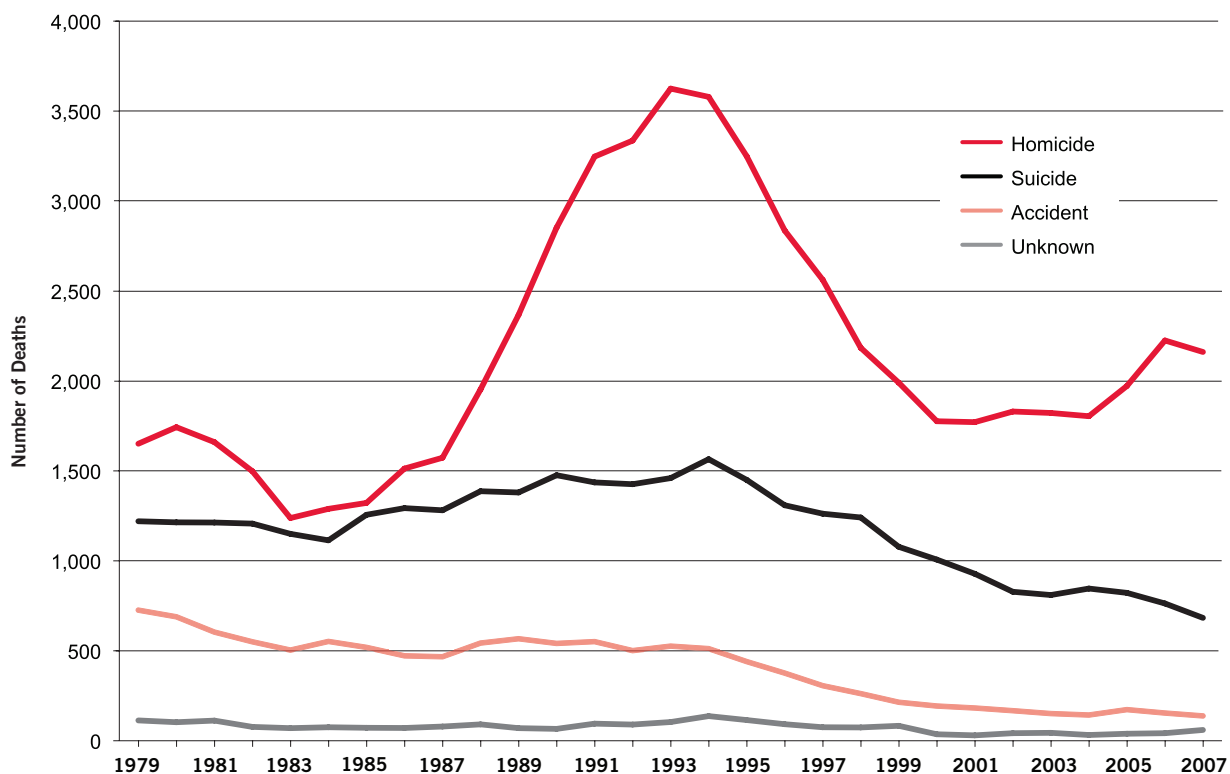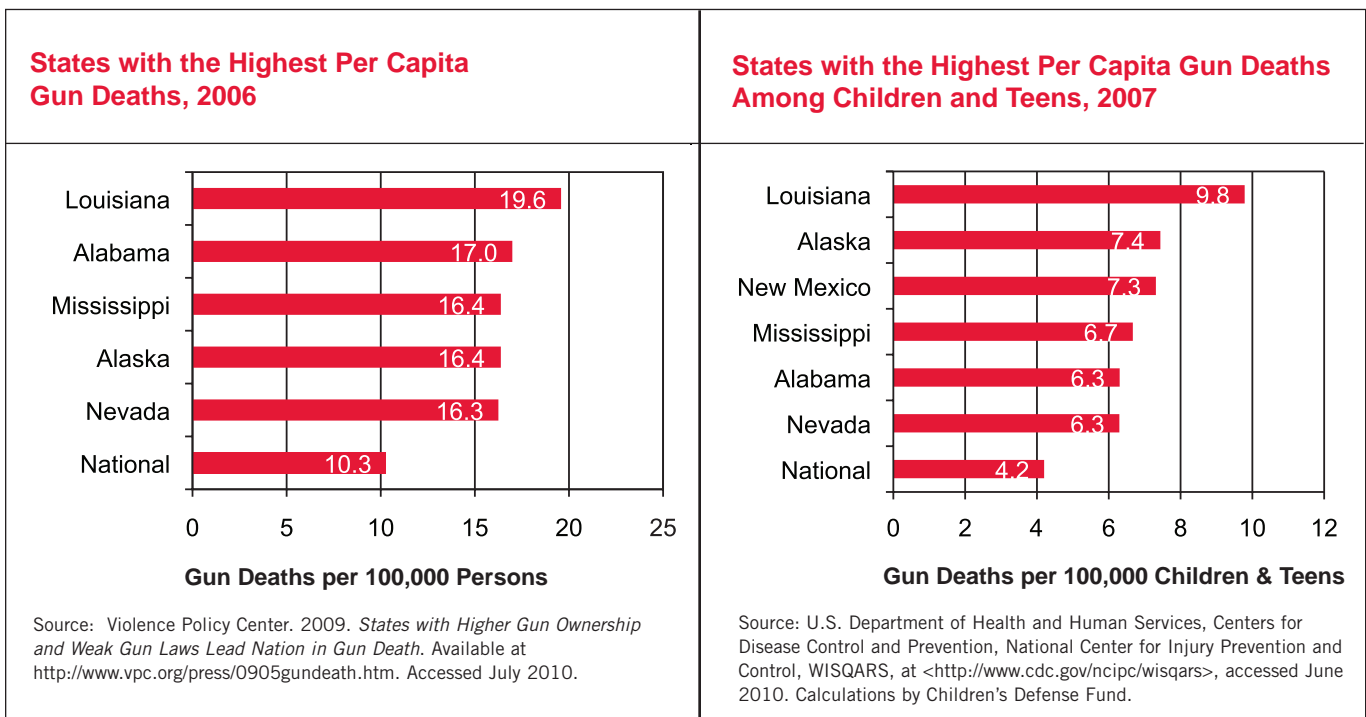

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

State Trends

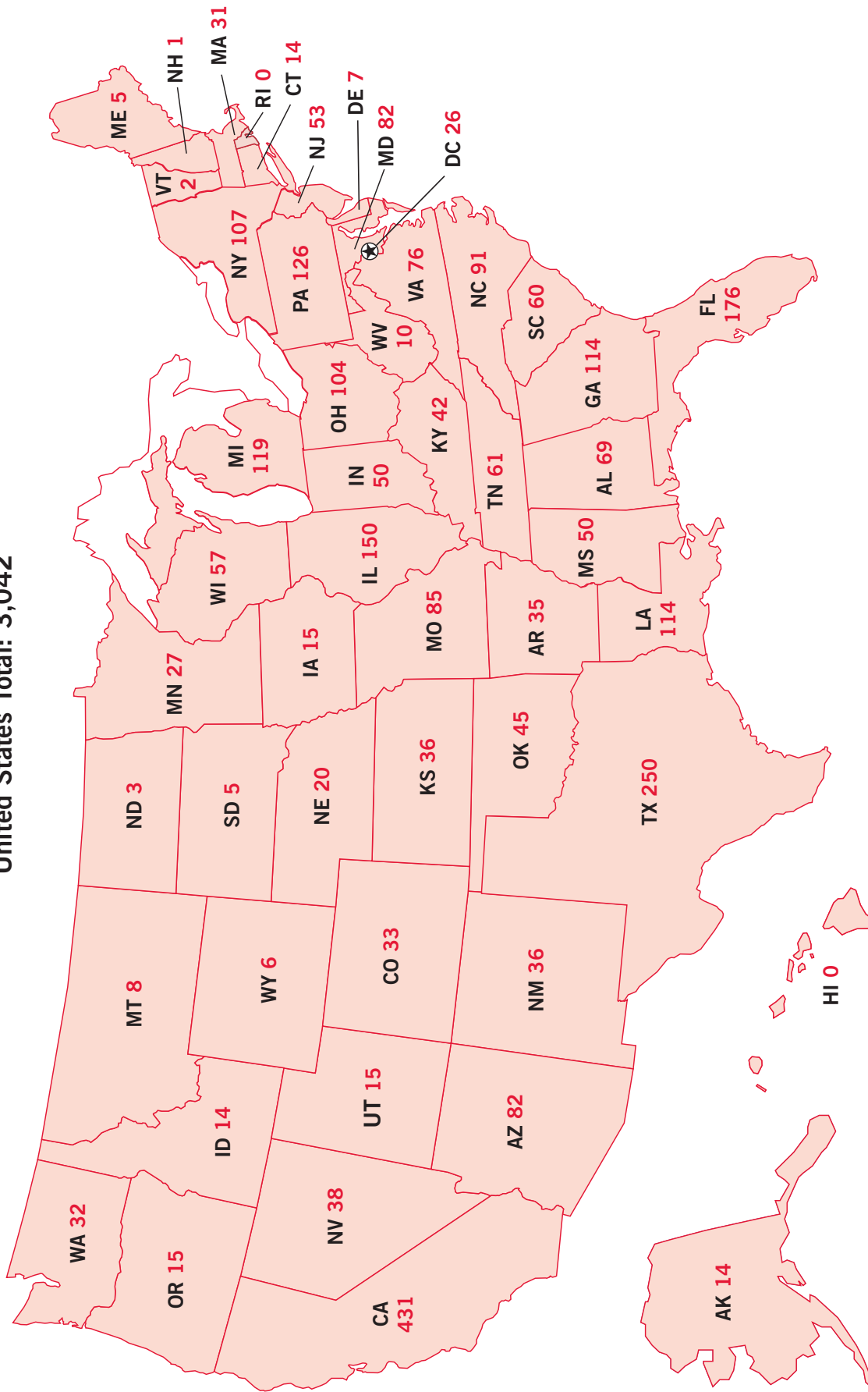## Snapshot of Child and Teen Gun Deaths by State

- Between 2006 and 2007, the number of children and teens killed by firearms increased in 18 states and the District of Columbia.

- More than half the firearm deaths of children and teens in 2007 were in the following ten states: California (431), Texas (250), Florida (176), Illinois (150), Pennsylvania (126), Michigan (119), Georgia (114), Louisiana (114), New York (107), and Ohio (104).

- Hawaii and Rhode Island had no firearm deaths of children and teens in 2007. The following states had fewer than 10 gun deaths of young people in 2007: Montana (8), Delaware (7), Wyoming (6), Maine (5), South Dakota (5), North Dakota (3), Vermont (2), and New Hampshire (1).

- Substantial overlap exists between the states with the highest rates of gun deaths of children and teens and states with the highest per capita rates of gun deaths among persons of all ages. Louisiana ranked number one with 9.8 gun deaths per 100,000 children and teens and 19.6 gun deaths per 100,000 persons regardless of age.

- According to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, states with higher rates of gun ownership and weak gun control laws have the highest rates of firearm deaths when looking at victims of all ages.[1] The five states with the highest per capita gun-related deaths in 2006 were Louisiana, Alabama, Alaska, Mississippi, and Nevada.

- By contrast, states with low rates of gun ownership and comparatively strong gun control laws had lower rates of gun-related deaths. The five states with the lowest per capita gun deaths were Hawaii, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York.

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[1] Violence Policy Center. 2009. *States with Higher Gun Ownership and Weak Gun Laws Lead Nation in Gun Death*. Available at http://www.vpc.org/press/0905gundeath.htm. Accessed July 2010.

States with the Highest Per Capita Gun Deaths, 2006

State	Gun Deaths per 100,000 Persons
Louisiana	19.6
Alabama	17.0
Mississippi	16.4
Alaska	16.4
Nevada	16.3
National	10.3

Gun Deaths per 100,000 Persons

Source: Violence Policy Center. 2009. *States with Higher Gun Ownership and Weak Gun Laws Lead Nation in Gun Death*. Available at http://www.vpc.org/press/0905gundeath.htm. Accessed July 2010.

States with the Highest Per Capita Gun Deaths Among Children and Teens, 2007

State	Gun Deaths per 100,000 Children & Teens
Louisiana	9.8
Alaska	7.4
New Mexico	7.3
Mississippi	6.7
Alabama	6.3
Nevada	6.3
National	4.2

Gun Deaths per 100,000 Children & Teens

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, 2007

United States Total: 3,042

ME 5

NH 1

MA 31

RI 0

CT 14

VT 2

NY 107

NJ 53

DE 7

MD 82

DC 26

PA 126

VA 76

NC 91

SC 60

FL 176

WV 10

OH 104

KY 42

GA 114

MI 119

IN 50

TN 61

AL 69

IL 150

MS 50

WI 57

MO 85

AR 35

LA 114

IA 15

MN 27

OK 45

ND 3

SD 5

NE 20

KS 36

TX 250

CO 33

NM 36

MT 8

WY 6

UT 15

AZ 82

ID 14

NV 38

HI 0

WA 32

OR 15

CA 431

AK 14

Source: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars>, accessed June 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by State and Manner, 2007

	Total	Deaths Per 100,000 Children and Teens	Homicide	Suicide	Accident	Unknown
Alabama	69	6.3	52	11	4	2
Alaska	14	7.4	5	8	0	1
Arizona	82	5.3	53	17	4	8
Arkansas	35	5.2	23	8	4	0
California	431	4.5	376	43	8	4
Colorado	33	2.8	13	16	1	3
Connecticut	14	1.7	10	3	0	1
Delaware	7	3.6	6	1	0	0
District of Columbia	26	23.7	25	0	0	1
Florida	176	4.4	136	31	3	6
Georgia	114	4.9	87	16	8	3
Hawaii	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Idaho	14	3.8	0	12	2	0
Illinois	150	4.6	128	17	4	1
Indiana	50	3.1	31	16	3	0
Iowa	15	2.2	4	10	1	0
Kansas	36	5.3	19	17	0	0
Kentucky	42	4.3	21	17	3	1
Louisiana	114	9.8	82	21	10	1
Maine	5	1.8	1	4	0	0
Maryland	82	5.9	73	9	0	0
Massachusetts	31	2.1	26	4	1	0
Michigan	119	4.7	92	23	2	2
Minnesota	27	2.2	11	16	0	0
Mississippi	50	6.7	20	16	13	1
Missouri	85	6.1	55	20	5	5
Montana	8	3.8	2	6	0	0
Nebraska	20	4.6	10	8	2	0
Nevada	38	6.3	27	9	2	0
New Hampshire	1	0.3	0	1	0	0
New Jersey	53	2.5	50	2	1	0
New Mexico	36	7.3	14	16	3	3
New York	107	2.3	93	13	1	0
North Carolina	91	4.3	67	17	7	0
North Dakota	3	2.2	0	3	0	0
Ohio	104	3.7	65	32	3	4
Oklahoma	45	5.2	24	16	5	0
Oregon	15	1.8	3	11	1	0
Pennsylvania	126	4.4	93	21	8	4
Rhode Island	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
South Carolina	60	5.9	46	8	4	2
South Dakota	5	2.6	0	5	0	0
Tennessee	61	4.4	40	19	2	0
Texas	250	4.0	160	73	15	2
Utah	15	2.0	5	9	1	0
Vermont	2	1.5	1	1	0	0
Virginia	76	4.2	57	19	0	0
Washington	32	2.2	16	15	1	0
West Virginia	10	2.6	3	4	2	1
Wisconsin	57	4.4	35	14	4	4
Wyoming	6	5.1	1	5	0	0
Total	3,042	4.2	2,161	683	138	60

States that Prevent Child Access to Guns

- For the most part, the hard work of crafting comprehensive gun control legislation has been left to state and local governments. Federal firearm policy contains significant gaps and mostly focuses on issues of the sale and transfer of guns.

- There are no federal laws that prevent child access to guns. Twenty-seven states and the District of Columbia have enacted laws designed to prevent children from accessing firearms.[2] These laws attempt to keep guns out of the hands of children and teens in a variety of ways.

- Only Massachusetts and the District of Columbia require that all firearms be stored using a locking device to prevent accidental discharge.

- Generally, the states with the strongest child access prevention laws impose criminal liability when a minor could or does gain access to a *negligently stored firearm*. These laws apply when a person "knows or reasonably should know" that a minor is likely to gain access to the gun. The broadest of these provisions apply regardless of whether the minor ever actually handled the gun. Some states impose criminal liability only if the child uses or possess the firearm. A few states and the District of Columbia impose criminal liability for negligent storage of an *unloaded* firearm.

- Most states allow exceptions to their negligent storage gun laws. The common exceptions include situations where the firearm was stored in a locked container; where the minor gains access to the firearm by illegally entering the premises; where the firearm is used for hunting, in self-defense; or where the child has completed a firearm safety course.

- The remaining states with child access prevention laws impose a weaker standard for criminal liability. They only prohibit persons from directly providing a firearm to a minor by making it a crime to intentionally, knowingly, and/or recklessly provide some (i.e., loaded firearms or handguns) or all types of firearms to children.

State child access prevention laws based on negligent storage

States imposing criminal liability for allowing a child to gain access to a firearm regardless of whether the child used it or caused injury	Hawaii, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Texas, and the District of Columbia
States imposing criminal liability only if a child uses or possesses the firearm	California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Iowa, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Rhode Island
States imposing criminal liability for negligent storage of unloaded firearms	California, Hawaii, Massachusetts, and the District of Columbia
State child access prevention laws prohibiting intentional, knowing or reckless provision of firearms	Colorado, Delaware, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Mississippi, Missouri, Nevada, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia, Wisconsin

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[2] Legal Community Against Violence. 2008. *Regulating Guns in America: An Evaluation and Comparative Analysis of Federal, State and Selected Local Gun Laws*. Available at https://lcav.org/publications-briefs/regulating_guns.asp. Accessed July 2010.

Growing Power of the Pro-Gun Lobby

Over 280 million guns are in civilian hands in the United States; that is approximately nine guns for every ten men, women and children.[3] Every year, an estimated 4.5 million new firearms, including two million handguns, are sold.[4] The preceding pages document the devastating toll of guns on children and teens in this country. Although polls show that the majority of Americans favor common-sense gun control laws that would reduce the epidemic of gun deaths, federal and state legislative reform has been difficult to achieve.

Congress has not embraced pursuit of significant gun control legislation in nearly two decades, despite an annual rate of firearm deaths that rivals all other industrialized nations. The 1993 Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act required gun dealers, but not private sellers (known as the "gun show loop hole"), to run background checks on gun buyers. One year later, Congress passed legislation banning private ownership of assault weapons. Since then, there has been only bad news. Rather than acting to stem gun violence, Congress let the assault weapons ban expire and passed legislation to protect gun manufacturers and dealers from lawsuits if their guns are used to commit a crime.

Supporters of gun control point to the growing power and political influence of the National Rifle Association (NRA) as the primary impediment to passing common sense gun laws in Congress and state legislatures. The NRA has four million dues-paying members and a budget that exceeds $200 million annually. In 2009, the NRA spent over $2 million on direct lobbying efforts.[5] Over the past two decades, the NRA has given more than $17 million to members of Congress.[6] These numbers do not account for other types of political spending not measured by official statistics such as vote scorecards and issue advertisements. For 2010, the group has budgeted $20 million for political spending.[7]

The NRA is opposed to nearly all forms of gun control including restrictions on assault weapon ownership, handgun registration requirements, and buyer background checks, despite a recent survey suggesting its members may have more moderate views about certain gun control measures. The NRA has gone to great lengths to protect gun rights:

- In the 2010 health care debate, the NRA successfully lobbied Congress to include a little-noticed provision that will prohibit health insurance companies from charging higher premiums for people who keep a gun in their home.

- In June 2010, a measure that would have given the District of Columbia a voting seat in Congress never made it to a vote in part because the NRA inserted a provision to substantially weaken the District's gun laws.

- Also in 2010, the NRA worked out a deal to exempt only itself from the DISCLOSE Act, a campaign finance bill that would require groups that spend more than $10,000 a year on campaign activities to disclose their donors.

- A popular 2009 bill that placed certain restrictions on credit card lenders came with a totally unrelated provision negotiated by the NRA which allows people to carry loaded guns in national parks.

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3 L. Hepburn, M. Miller, D. Azrael, and D. Hemenway. 2007. The U. S. Gun Stock: Results from the 2004 National Firearms Survey. *Injury Prevention* 13: 15-19. Available at http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/13/1/15.full. Accessed July 2010.

4 Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. 2000. *Commerce in Firearms in the United States*. Washington, DC: Department of the Treasury.

5 See Center for Responsive Politics, data on national lobbying efforts of the National Rifle Association. Available at http://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/clientsum.php?year=2009&lname=National+Rifle+Assn&id. Accessed July 2010.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Dan Eggen, "Another victory for the bulletproof NRA." *Washington Post*, June 17, 2010. Available at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/06/16/AR2010061605341.html. Accessed July 2010.

Three Years Since the Tragedy at Virginia Tech:
How long will it take for our nation to protect its children from gunfire?

Selected incidents of mass shootings involving children and teens since 2007:

- **Blacksburg, VA • April 16, 2007** – A Virginia Tech student killed 32 students and faculty and wounded 15 more at the University before killing himself.

- **Tulsa, OK • July 22, 2007** – A man was charged with shooting two 12-year-old girls and a 16-year-old boy in a parking lot early in the morning. Two were killed. The conflict, authorities believe, began over a stolen wallet.

- **Newark, NJ • August 4, 2007** – Three Delaware State University students were shot and killed execution style by a 28-year-old and two 15-year-old boys. The three friends were forced to kneel against a wall behind an elementary school and were shot in the head. A fourth, who survived, was found about 30 feet away with gunshot and knife wounds to her head.

- **Camden, NJ • September 21, 2007** – A man shot four people, including a three-year-old and a 73-year-old, on the street.

- **Saginaw, MI • October, 25, 2007** – Two Arthur Hill High School students and two adults were shot by another student as they left a middle school football game.

- **Cleveland, OH • October 10, 2007** – A 14-year-old student shot two teachers and two students at SuccessTech Academy before killing himself. He had been suspended for fighting earlier in the week and had threatened to harm other students and blow up the school.

- **Las Vegas, NV • December 11, 2007** – Two assailants using 9-millimeter and .45-caliber guns shot six people as they exited a Mojave High School bus. The attack followed a fight at school earlier in the day.

- **Carnation, WA • December 24, 2007** – A woman and her boyfriend, using large-caliber pistols, shot and killed six members of her family, including her parents, her brother and wife, and their two children, ages three and six. The shootings took place in and around the parents' house on Christmas Eve.

- **Washington, DC • January 22, 2008** – Four Ballou High School students were shot as they were leaving school at the end of the day.

- **DeKalb, IL • February 14, 2008** – A man entered a lecture hall at Northern Illinois University and began shooting. He killed five students and wounded 16 before killing himself.

- **Dallas, TX • February 21, 2008** – A four-year-old boy died and two others were injured when they were shot through a window of their home.

- **Stafford, VA • May 5, 2008** – A man shot and killed his girlfriend with an AK-47 assault rifle before killing his one-year-old son, two-year-old daughter, and himself with a handgun in their home.

- **Pittsburgh, PA • June 15, 2008** – Three teenagers were shot in a drive-by shooting as they stood outside a home. A 15-year-old girl died and 16 year-old boy was paralyzed.

- **San Francisco, CA • June 22, 2008** – A father and two sons were shot in their car over a traffic incident. The father and one of the sons died.

- **North Vallejo, CA • October 15, 2008** – A man on a motorcycle shot three men and a two-year-old boy who were outside a home. The gunman hit all four victims multiple times, shooting repeatedly with a high-capacity handgun.

- **Portland, OR • January 24, 2009** – A 24-year-old man with a history of mental illness and hospitalization shot nine people at an under-21 nightclub before shooting and killing himself. Two teenage girls died from their injuries.

- **New Orleans, LA • February 24, 2009** – Seven people, including a toddler and two teenagers, were shot at a Mardi Gras parade in the middle of the afternoon. All survived.

- **Kinston & Samson, AL • March 10, 2009** – Michael K. McLendon, 28, killed 10 people, including several members of his family, over a 20 mile trail in rural southern Alabama. McLendon was licensed to carry handguns.

- **Washington, DC • August 15, 2009** – Seven teenagers were shot during a dispute that erupted after an afternoon community event.

- **West Odessa, TX • January 10, 2010** – Two 20-year-olds were arrested for shooting five young adults, killing an 18-year-old man early in the morning.

- **New Orleans, LA • March 25, 2010** – A woman, her seven-year-old daughter, four-year-old son, and 17-year-old sister were each shot multiple times in their home. All four victims died.

- **Washington, DC • March 30, 2010** – A 14-year-old and three men with an AK-47 assault rifle and two handguns opened fire on a group of young adults gathered outside in the evening. Four teenagers were killed and five other people injured. Police believe the shooting stemmed from an incident involving a missing a bracelet.

Stand Up and Take Action

1. Advocate and support common-sense gun safety measures. Stronger federal legislation could help protect more children from the all too often fatal effects of gun violence. Measures that would help include:

- **Require consumer safety standards and childproof safety features for all firearms.** All guns in this country should be childproof. One-third of all households with children have at least one firearm in the home.[8] It is estimated that nearly two million children live in homes with an unlocked and loaded firearm.[9] Federal law is silent on gun related consumer safety standards and child access prevention laws. In fact, the production and manufacture of firearms is exempt from oversight by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. As a result, many handguns do not contain easily-installed life-saving safety features. Only 27 states and the District of Columbia have attempted to keep children from accessing guns by passing child access prevention laws.[10] Congress must pass legislation that subjects firearms to the same consumer product safety regulations that cover virtually all other consumer products. Congress must also require childproof safety features on all guns.

- **Close the gun show loophole.** The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act requires federally licensed firearms dealers to conduct background checks on every sale. However, a loophole in the law allows private dealers to sell firearms without a license and avoid the required background checks. This loophole accounts for a large share of all gun sales, especially at gun shows. It is estimated that over 40 percent of all firearms in this country are sold by unlicensed sellers to buyers who did not have to submit to a background check.[11] Eighteen states have attempted to block the loophole by requiring background checks for some categories of gun sales not covered by the Brady Law. Congress must pass legislation that closes the gun show loophole by requiring criminal background checks on anyone who attempts to purchase a gun.

- **Impose tougher restrictions on people convicted of a violent misdemeanor or a violent act as a juvenile.** A related loophole exists for people adjudicated for violent and other serious offenses as juveniles who remain able to purchase guns as adults despite their past violent offenses. Under current law, a conviction for a violent misdemeanor does not prohibit a person from purchasing or possessing a gun. A study found that a person convicted of a violent misdemeanor was eight times more likely to be charged with a subsequent firearm and/or violent crime and

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8 RM Johnson, T. Coyne-Beasley, and CW Runyan. 2004. Firearm ownership and storage practices, U.S. households, 1992-2002: A systematic review. *American Journal of Preventative Medicine,* 27(2): 173-182.

9 Catherine A. Okoro, et al. 2005. Prevalence of household firearms and firearm-storage practice in the 50 states and the District of Columbia: Findings from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002. *Pediatrics,* 116(3): e370-e376. Available at http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/116/3/e370. Accessed July 2010.

10 Legal Community Against Violence. 2008. *Regulating Guns in America: An Evaluation and Comparative Analysis of Federal, State and Selected Local Gun Laws.* Available at https://lcav.org/publications-briefs/regulating_guns.asp. Accessed July 2010.

11 Phillip J. Cook, PJ and Jens Ludwig. 1996. *Guns in America: Results of a Comprehensive National Survey on Firearms Ownership and Use.* Washington, DC: Police Foundation.

one in three people convicted of a violent misdemeanor who tried to buy a handgun was arrested for a new crime within three years of acquiring the gun.[12] Congress must pass legislation to block these loopholes and prohibit gun possession by individuals who have been convicted of certain violent misdemeanors and individuals who have been found delinquent for an act that would have been a felony if committed by an adult.

2. Parents, remove guns from your home. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates nearly two million children live in homes with loaded, unlocked guns.[13] The presence of guns increases the risk of homicide and suicide. Parents often think they have adequately protected their children by safely storing their guns, but this sense of security seems misplaced. A study by the Harvard Injury Control Research Center found that 39 percent of children interviewed knew the location of their parents' firearms and 22 percent said they had handled the guns despite their parents' assertions to the contrary.[14] Children under 10 were just as likely to have reported knowing where the guns were kept and having handled them as older children. Research shows that it is not enough to talk to children about the dangers of guns. Children exposed to gun safety programs are no less likely to play with guns than those who are not exposed to such classes. Removing guns from the home is one of the best ways to protect children and teens from gun deaths.

3. Foster a climate of nonviolent conflict resolution in your home, your children's school, and your congregation and community. Family violence in our society is epidemic, child abuse and neglect are widespread and children are exposed to television programming that glamorizes guns, violence and brutality. Conflict resolution skills are essential in this environment and not something that are typically taught in school or at home. Concerned parents can partner with schools, community groups and faith congregations to organize nonviolent conflict resolution support groups and push for adoption of a conflict resolution curriculum in your local school. Some excellent resources on conflict resolution include the following:

- **PEACEZONE:** A Program for Teaching Social Literacy by Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith is a violence prevention curriculum for kindergarten through grade 5. (http://www.researchpress.com/product/item/5250/)

- **Massachusetts Medical Society's** *Recognizing and Preventing Youth Violence* provides guidance for health care professionals on how to intervene to prevent youth violence. (http://www.massmed.org/violence)

- **Safe Start Center's** *Healing the Invisible Wounds: Children's Exposure to Violence* provides a guide for families helping a child or teen deal with trauma. Also, see *Helping Children Cope with Violence: A School-Based Program That Works* for helping children and teens in a school setting. (http://www.safestartcenter.org)

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[12] Garen J. Wintemute et al., 2001. Subsequent Criminal Activity Among Violent Misdemeanants Who Seek to Purchase Handguns. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 285(8): 1019-1026.

[13] Catherine A. Okoro, et al. 2005. Prevalence of household firearms and firearm-storage practice in the 50 states and the District of Columbia: Findings from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2002. *Pediatrics,* 116(3): e370-e376. Available at http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/116/3/e370. Accessed July 2010.

[14] Frances Baxley and Matthew Miller. 2006. Parental Misconceptions about Children and Firearms. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*, 160(5): 542-547. Available at http://archpedi.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/160/5/542. Accessed on July 2010.

- **Other sources for educational resources** focused on conflict resolution include Educators for Social Responsibility (http://www.esrnational.org) and the Association for Conflict Resolution (http://acrnet.org/resources/index.htm).

4. Focus attention on the number of children killed and injured by gun violence. Adults and young people impacted by gun violence and concerned community members can unite to educate others about our crisis of gun violence. There are moving examples of parents and other family members of a child killed or injured by a gun channeling their grief and anger into broadening public understanding of the devastation of guns and increasing political support for stronger gun laws. Mobilize support to protect children from gun violence:

- **Organize a group of influential community leaders to see and hear first-hand the effects of gun violence.** Let them hear from young people who were victims of gun violence. Arrange visits with medical staff from your local hospital who directly serve gun violence victims and their families. Involve police officers who interact with both victims and perpetrators.

- **Urge local newspapers and radio and television stations to publish and broadcast photographs of children and teens killed by guns in your community.** Get them to keep a running tally of young gun victims in 2011.

- **Encourage your place of worship to read the names of children killed by guns in your community and publish their photos in the congregational bulletin.** Begin a visual memorial to the young lives lost to gun violence by placing a stone in a central and meaningful location to mark the loss of each child to gun violence in your community.

- **Encourage and assist young people** who have been victims of gun violence to write a letter to the editor or an opinion column about how to stop the violence.

- **Connect with groups working to reduce the epidemic of gun violence in this country.** Go to www.childrensdefense.org/violenceresources to learn more about national, state and local organizations that you can help make a difference.

5. Support innovative efforts to promote positive youth development and reduce gun violence. Many children and teens, particularly in urban areas, are exposed to gangs, drugs, violence and guns on a daily basis. We must offer positive alternatives and role models for children and teens, especially during after-school hours, weekends and summers. We must open our congregational, school and community doors and engage young people in purposeful activities. For instance, check out the CDF Freedom Schools® reading and enrichment model program, which includes nonviolence training and conflict resolution. (Go to http://www.childrensdefense.org/freedomschools.)

6. Refuse to buy or use products for children and teens that glamorize violence. Our culture frequently glamorizes guns and violence in movies, television, music and on the internet. Many shows targeted at children have violent themes and language. Protest and refuse to buy or use products that glamorize or make violence socially acceptable or fun. Turn off violent programming and read or play with your children instead. Talk to them about the importance of rejecting violence as a cultural or personal value.

What the U.S. Supreme Court is Saying and Not Saying About Guns

Two recent decisions by the U.S. Supreme Court have reexamined the meaning of the Second Amendment, ultimately making it easier for people to get access to guns. These cases hinged on the 27 words of the Second Amendment: "A well-regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." For the majority of the last century, courts have interpreted the Second Amendment as conferring a collective right "to bear arms" associated with militias, or their modern day equivalent, the National Guard.

In June 2008, the Supreme Court ruled for the first time in *District of Columbia v. Heller* that the Second Amendment actually protects an individual right to own a gun.[15] In doing so, the Court struck down the District's 32-year-old complete ban on ownership of handguns. The *Heller* opinion held that law-abiding citizens have an individual right to own a gun in their home for the purpose of self-defense, but "like most rights, the Second Amendment right is not unlimited." The Second Amendment does not stand for "a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever for whatever purpose." The Court in *Heller* made clear that certain longstanding gun regulations are still constitutional, including restrictions on possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill; prohibitions on carrying guns in certain sensitive places like schools and government buildings; and laws that place conditions on the sale of firearms.

The *Heller* case only addressed federal gun control laws because the District of Columbia is a federal enclave. It left open the question of whether the Second Amendment also protects gun owners from overreaching gun control legislation by state and local governments. In June 2010, the Court once again returned to the Second Amendment by issuing an opinion in *McDonald v. City of Chicago*.[16] The *McDonald* case involved handgun ordinances in Chicago and Oak Park, Illinois that essentially amounted to complete bans on handgun possession in those cities. The Court concluded that the Second Amendment's guarantee of an individual right to have a gun in the home for self-defense applies to state and local gun control laws. The Court was careful to point out, however, that the rulings in *Heller* and *McDonald* do not prohibit all government regulation of guns. The Court specified that the government has a vital interest in placing limits on certain types of guns, the sale of guns and where they can be kept and carried.

The actual impact of these cases could be minimal depending on how the lower courts interpret the scope of allowable gun regulations. In the two years after the *Heller* decision, the gun lobby has brought over 260 challenges to gun laws around the country; most were summarily dismissed. Policymakers must continue to work to find the outer most bounds of gun restrictions allowed under the Second Amendment that will keep our children and communities safe.

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[15] *District of Columbia v. Heller* slip opinion available at http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/07pdf/07-290.pdf. Accessed July 2010.

[16] *McDonald v. City of Chicago* slip opinion available at http://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/09pdf/08-1521.pdf. Accessed July 2010.

Five Myths About Guns

1. **Gun deaths are mostly an urban problem.** A study published recently in *Pediatrics* found that rural and urban children and teens are equally likely to die from firearm injuries.[17] They differ in how they die: urban children and teens are more likely to be homicide victims, whereas rural children and teens are more likely to be victims of suicide or accidental shootings.

2. **Guns don't kill people, people kill people.** Anti-gun-control advocates erroneously argue that it is the deadly intent of the people wielding the gun, not the weapons, that results in deadly violence. Yet research demonstrates that the presence of a gun intensifies a violent event and increases the likelihood that someone will die. For example, a groundbreaking and often replicated study of criminal attacks in Chicago by University of California at Berkeley law professor Frank Zimring found that the circumstances of gun and knife assaults were very similar: Incidents typically were unplanned and did not involve a clear intention to kill. But having a gun on hand made it more likely that the incident would end with a fatality.

3. **More guns available for self-defense will result in safer homes and communities.** Although this is the argument used against handgun bans, research demonstrates that in fact having a gun may make you less safe and endangers your loved ones. Higher rates of household gun ownership are correlated with higher rates of homicides, suicides and accidental shootings.[18] Annually, there are only about 200 legally justified self-defense homicides by private citizens[19] compared with over 30,000 gun deaths.[20] More guns in the home also means more guns on the street. As many as a half a million guns are stolen each year landing in the hands of people who are, by definition, criminals.[21] This net increase in household gun ownership would mean more homicides and perhaps even more burglaries.

4. **Guns are already sufficiently regulated.** While there are some restrictions on gun purchases by teenagers, convicted felons, and people with a history of severe mental illness, much more is needed. The U.S. has an estimated 283 million guns in civilian hands, the equivalent of nine firearms for every 10 men, women and children in America.[22] Contrast that with the fact that there were 245 million registered cars, trucks and motorcycles in 2007.[23] The result of so many guns and weak federal and state firearms regulations is an unacceptably high rate of gun deaths and injuries – higher than any other industrialized nation in the world.[24] Stronger gun laws would significantly reduce the epidemic of senseless gun deaths. Records on gun transactions could be used to solve crimes and track criminals. Requirements that all guns be stored in a secure manner would prevent more guns from being stolen or accessed by children.

5. **Most gun homicides occur in the course of another felony.** Another myth is that only the bad guys kill with guns. Of the known circumstances surrounding homicides in 2007, fewer than one in four was the result of a felony where the victim was killed with a gun while being raped or robbed or in the course of another serious offense. More than 40 percent of all homicides in 2007 were the result of an argument that turned deadly, presumably because a gun was present.[25]

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[17] Michael Nance, et al. 2010. Variation in Pediatric and Adolescent Firearm Mortality Rates in Rural and Urban U.S. Counties. *Pediatrics*, 125(6): 1112-17. Available at http://www.pediatrics.org/cgi/doi/10.1542/peds.2009-3219. Accessed July 2010.

[18] See Harvard School of Public Health, Injury Control Research Center, for a collection of studies and literature review documents describing the relationship between gun availability and the increased risk for homicides, suicides, and accidental deaths. Available at http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/research/hicrc/firearms-research/guns-and-death/index.html. Accessed July 2010.

[19] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Expanded Homicide Data Table 14, 2007. Available at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_14.html. Accessed July 2010.

[20] National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System, 2007. Available at http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html. Accessed July 2010. Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

[21] Charles F. Wellford, John V. Pepper, and Carol V. Petrie. 2004. *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review*. National Academy of Science, Committee on Law and Justice.

[22] L. Hepburn, M. Miller, D. Azrael, and D. Hemenway. 2007. The U. S. Gun Stock: Results from the 2004 National Firearms Survey. *Injury Prevention* 13: 15-19. Available at http://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/13/1/15.full. Accessed July 2010.

[23] Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Table 1-11: Number of U.S. Aircraft, Vehicles, Vessels, and Other Conveyances. Available at http://www.bts.gov/publications/national_transportation_statistics/html/table_01_11.html. Accessed July 2010.

[24] Franklin E. Zimring and Gordon Hawkins. 1999. *Crime is not the Problem: Lethal Violence in America*. New York: Oxford University Press; and AL Kellermann and JF Waeckerle. 1998. Preventing Firearm Injuries. *Annals of Emergency Medicine*, 32(1):77-79.

[25] Federal Bureau of Investigation, Expanded Homicide Data Table 11, 2007. Available at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius2007/offenses/expanded_information/data/shrtable_11.html. Accessed July 2010.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Race/Hispanic Origin, 1979–2007

	Total	Black	White	American Indian, Alaska Native*	Asian, Pacific Islander*	Hispanic**
1979	3,710	929	2,700	—	—	—
1980	3,749	944	2,739	—	—	—
1981	3,589	944	2,569	49	27	
1982	3,332	811	2,450	55	23	—
1983	2,962	739	2,155	42	25	—
1984	3,030	716	2,238	44	32	—
1985	3,169	850	2,241	42	36	—
1986	3,349	938	2,337	43	31	—
1987	3,400	1,117	2,199	28	54	—
1988	3,974	1,458	2,405	76	53	—
1989	4,384	1,694	2,563	50	76	—
1990	4,935	2,047	2,753	47	87	748
1991	5,329	2,297	2,878	60	91	883
1992	5,353	2,359	2,834	55	105	924
1993	5,715	2,600	2,925	51	139	977
1994	5,793	2,559	3,024	75	135	993
1995	5,254	2,153	2,898	73	130	1,005
1996	4,613	1,976	2,475	64	98	817
1997	4,205	1,687	2,357	59	102	748
1998	3,761	1,416	2,197	60	88	661
1999	3,365	1,301	1,934	57	73	605
2000	3,012	1,149	1,762	44	57	568
2001	2,911	1,128	1,695	49	39	518
2002	2,867	1,112	1,639	52	64	581
2003	2,827	1,172	1,554	50	51	553
2004	2,825	1,149	1,568	57	51	574
2005	3,006	1,271	1,624	51	60	614
2006	3,184	1,441	1,618	48	77	678
2007	3,042	1,499	1,460	40	43	611
Total	**110,645**	**41,456**	**65,791**	**1,421**	**1,847**	**13,058**

* Data for American Indian/Alaska Native and Asian/Pacific Islander not available for 1979-1980.

** Persons of Hispanic origin can be of any race. Hispanic data not available prior to 1990. For 1990 to 1996, a small number of states with small Hispanic populations did not include Hispanic identifiers in their reporting to the federal government.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Age, 1979–2007

	Under 5	Ages 5–9	Ages 10–14	Ages 15–19	Under 20
1979	109	157	447	2,997	3,710
1980	106	131	435	3,077	3,749
1981	115	123	438	2,913	3,589
1982	114	142	402	2,674	3,332
1983	83	108	379	2,392	2,962
1984	103	124	469	2,334	3,030
1985	104	120	470	2,475	3,169
1986	93	110	453	2,693	3,349
1987	85	126	484	2,705	3,400
1988	101	124	523	3,226	3,974
1989	121	138	555	3,570	4,384
1990	103	121	560	4,151	4,935
1991	105	94	613	4,517	5,329
1992	117	111	665	4,460	5,353
1993	116	141	700	4,758	5,715
1994	107	105	657	4,924	5,793
1995	105	107	640	4,402	5,254
1996	88	95	509	3,921	4,613
1997	84	107	438	3,576	4,205
1998	83	96	430	3,152	3,761
1999	73	80	335	2,877	3,365
2000	59	70	304	2,579	3,012
2001	81	79	254	2,497	2,911
2002	71	71	274	2,451	2,867
2003	56	63	259	2,449	2,827
2004	58	61	239	2,467	2,825
2005	69	62	273	2,602	3,006
2006	63	80	265	2,776	3,184
2007	85	69	243	2,645	3,042
Total	**2,657**	**3,015**	**12,713**	**92,260**	**110,645**

Firearm Deaths of Children and Teens, by Manner, 1979–2007

	Total*	Homicide*	Suicide	Accident	Unknown
1979	3,710	1,651	1,220	726	113
1980	3,749	1,743	1,214	689	103
1981	3,589	1,660	1,213	604	112
1982	3,332	1,498	1,207	550	77
1983	2,962	1,238	1,150	504	70
1984	3,030	1,289	1,114	552	75
1985	3,169	1,322	1,256	519	72
1986	3,349	1,513	1,293	472	71
1987	3,400	1,573	1,281	467	79
1988	3,974	1,953	1,387	543	91
1989	4,384	2,367	1,380	567	70
1990	4,935	2,852	1,476	541	66
1991	5,329	3,247	1,436	551	95
1992	5,353	3,336	1,426	501	90
1993	5,715	3,625	1,460	526	104
1994	5,793	3,579	1,565	512	137
1995	5,254	3,249	1,450	440	115
1996	4,613	2,836	1,309	376	92
1997	4,205	2,562	1,262	306	75
1998	3,761	2,184	1,241	262	74
1999	3,365	1,990	1,078	214	83
2000	3,012	1,776	1,007	193	36
2001	2,911	1,771	928	182	30
2002	2,867	1,830	828	167	42
2003	2,827	1,822	810	151	44
2004	2,825	1,804	846	143	32
2005	3,006	1,972	822	173	39
2006	3,184	2,225	763	154	42
2007	3,042	2,161	683	138	60
Total	**110,645**	**62,628**	**34,105**	**11,723**	**2,189**

*Total firearm deaths and homicide firearm deaths exclude firearm deaths by legal (police or corrections) intervention.

Sources: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC WONDER, at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>, accessed December 2004; and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Control and Prevention, WISQARS, at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/wisqars/>, accessed December 2004, January 2006, December 2006, January 2008, April 2009, and June 2010.

Calculations by Children's Defense Fund.

Data on Firearms

The data used in this report are from the vital statistics systems. The basic information (without individual identification) comes from death certificates. The states collect the information and send it on to the National Center for Health Statistics, which then compiles all the data to produce national numbers. Every death is included in the vital statistics system.

Another source of data for some firearm deaths is law enforcement reports of murders. There is a national system that collects these data—the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) system, which dates back to the late 1920s—but this system is not complete. Not all law enforcement agencies participate in this system, and coverage varies from year to year. About one-third of the population is not covered by this system. Further, the UCR system does not cover all firearm deaths: suicides, accidental deaths and undetermined cause deaths are not included. A comparison of this system with the vital statistics system shows that UCR includes between 75 and 80 percent of the firearm homicides of children and teens.

The National Electronic Injury Surveillance System-All Injury Program (NEISS-AIP) is the source of the number of non-fatal firearm injuries. These data are collected by the Consumer Product Safety Commission and processed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The data are collected from a sample of emergency rooms representative of the nation as a whole. No state-level data are available through this system.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conducts a survey of the risk behaviors of high school students. Among the pieces of information collected are: carried a weapon, carried a gun, was threatened with a weapon on school property, and did not go to school because felt unsafe at school or on the way to/from school. There are two parts to this survey: a national component and a state component; 39 states and the District of Columbia participated in the 2007 survey.

Selected Resources for Advocates

For information about federal policy:
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence   www.bradycampaign.org/
Coalition to Stop Gun Violence   www.csgv.org/
Campaign to Close the Gun Show Loophole   www.campaigntoclosethegunshowloophole.org/

To locate or contact an advocacy group in your state or community:
Million Mom March Chapters   www.millionmommarch.org/
States United to Prevent Gun Violence   www.supgv.org/
Protest Easy Guns   protesteasyguns.com/

For information about gun laws in your state:
Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence   www.stategunlaws.org/
Legal Community Against Violence   www.lcav.org/

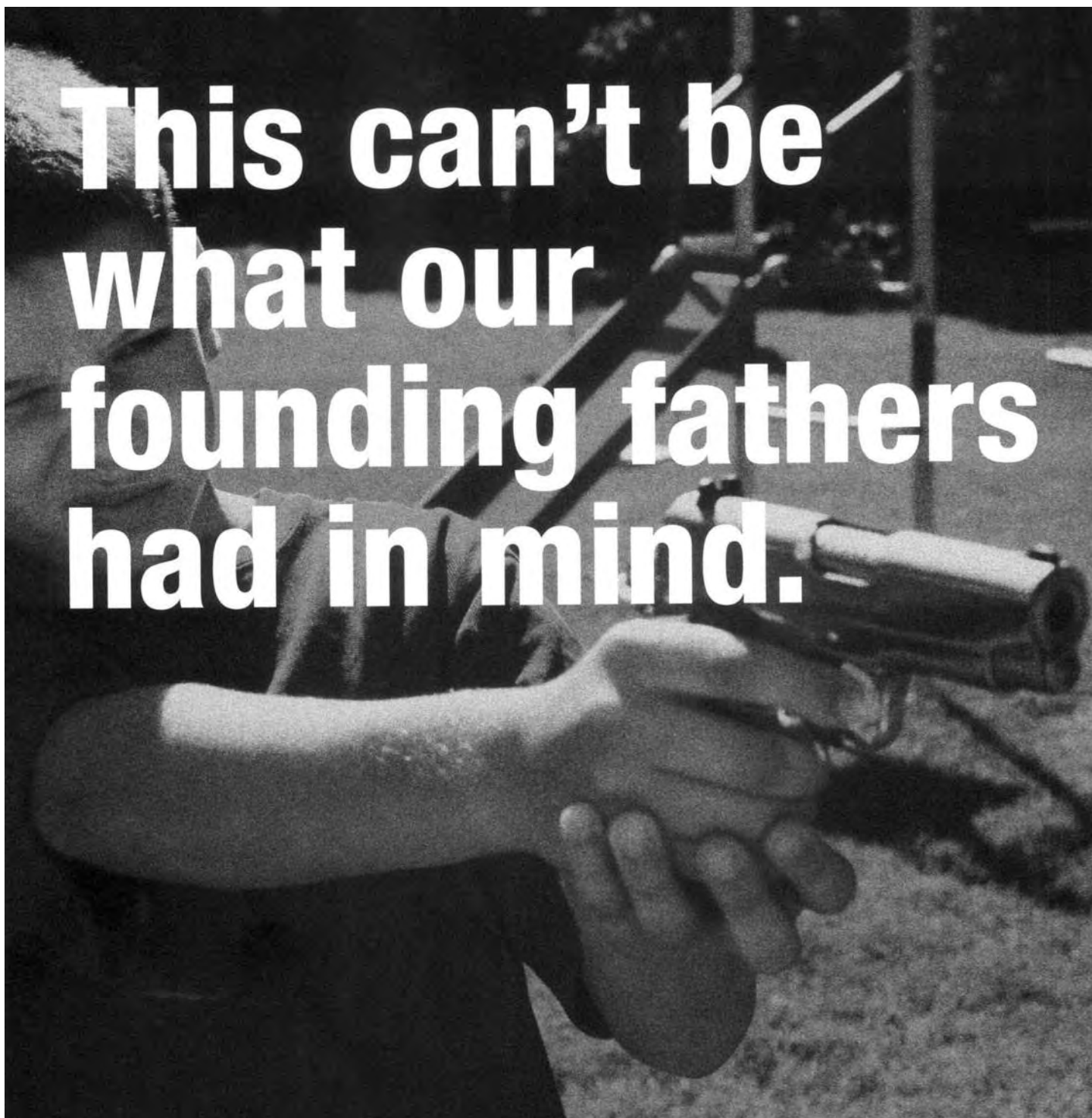**For information about what states and cities across the nation are doing to reduce gun violence:**
Mayors Against Illegal Guns   www.mayorsagainstillegalguns.org/html/local/local.shtml
Campaign to Close the Gun Show Loophole   www.campaigntoclosethegunshowloophole.org/

To keep up with the news about gun violence:
Gun Policy News   www.gunpolicy.org/

For other organizations and links, please go to www.childrensdefense.org/violenceresources

DEAR LORD
BE GOOD TO ME
THE SEA IS SO
WIDE AND
MY BOAT IS
SO SMALL

Children's Defense Fund