

Check what you know:

The Second Amendment
 “Stand your ground” law
 Background checks
 Red flag laws
 Conceal carry
 Open carry
 Bump stock
 NRA
 Gun control
 Gun rights
 Gun laws
 Mass shooting
 Starbucks’ gun policy
 Federal Assault Weapons Ban
 Brady Bill
 Gabrielle Giffords
 Columbine
 Sandy Hook

A few video documents**•PBS News Hour, May 2022****Bipartisan group of lawmakers look for solutions on gun violence**

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/bipartisan-group-of-lawmakers-look-for-solutions-on-gun-violence>

• Channel News, Will anything ever change? America's history of gun control explained

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g1_kMdqw-ew&ab_channel=Channel4News

• VOX, How the NRA hijacks the gun control debate

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qcJeOphUtek&ab_channel=Vox

•VOX, The gun solution we're not talking about

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENw2y0ek1Jg&ab_channel=Vox

Document 1 - How many guns will it take to make us safe?

With mass shootings now happening just about every day, Americans must ask this question: How many more guns will it take to make us safe?

Gun advocates — manufacturers, activists in groups such as the National Rifle Association and Republicans who write their goals into law — insist that the root cause of gun violence is not guns themselves. To achieve security, they say, the country needs *more* guns, not fewer.

They insist that more guns will bring less crime. And they claim that more guns in more hands are a key answer to mass shootings, because “the only thing that stops a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.”

Okay then: If guns make us safer, how many will it take? Will 500 million guns do it? Six hundred million? Will a billion guns be enough?

The advocates have certainly been getting what they want. In many states, gun laws have become dramatically looser, and the number of guns in the United States keeps increasing. While it’s hard to know precisely how many are in circulation, estimates range from 352 million to 434 million.

Gun sales have been rising steadily for two decades. They rose especially fast during the pandemic in 2020 and 2021, and came down only slightly in 2022. The FBI’s background check system, which misses most private sales, logged nearly 40 million gun purchases in 2020 alone.

Gun deaths, both suicides and homicides, have also risen steadily. In 2021, there were about 21,000 gun homicides and more than 26,000 gun suicides.

Good-guy-with-a-gun proponents imply that there exists a kind of Laffer curve of gun murders that will be our liberation. Recall the quack economic theory propagated by Arthur Laffer positing that raising tax rates slightly from a low starting point might bring in more revenue, but further increases would cause revenue to fall as people discouraged by taxation stopped working.

Gun advocates seem to assume a similar arc for the relationship of guns to gun violence: At some point, there will be so many guns that the trends will reverse, crime will be deterred, and all arguments will be resolved peacefully. Once enough people — perhaps all of us? — are packing heat at all times and ready to kill, then we will finally be safe.

In the meantime, we live in fear. There have been more than 200 mass shootings in the United States already in 2023. Alongside these spectacular events and the daily body count from arguments and grudges that escalate into armed combat, we have the new terror of “law-abiding” gun owners so frightened by strangers knocking on their doors or turning around in their driveways that they open fire.

Meanwhile, the FBI feels it necessary to produce public service announcements with tips on how to survive a mass shooting in your favorite restaurant. Schools ban backpacks, and Republicans suggest training third-graders to treat gunshot wounds.

This cycle is fed by gun marketing and NRA rhetoric, which tell people that they must acquire more guns because there are so many people out there with guns. Conservative politicians such as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) implore people to buy more guns.

The same people insist that guns can't possibly be to blame for the endless carnage. It must be weaknesses in our mental health system, as though other countries with far fewer gun deaths don't also have people who struggle with mental health issues. Or perhaps it's that we aren't sufficiently devout, as some on the right argue: If we spent more time asking God to stop the shootings in our streets, our schools and our malls, He might do something about it.

But guns themselves, they keep telling us, are a solution to the problem. So when will we have enough that we will emerge into the bright future of safety we've been promised?

Opinion by Paul Waldman, [The Washington Post](#), May 10, 2023

With the help of the following documents, gather the measures for and against gun control in the USA to help you find ideas for a commentary

Document 2 - **America's Gun Problem**

More guns in the U.S. mean more deaths.

By German Lopez, The Morning Newsletter, *New York Times*, May 26, 2022

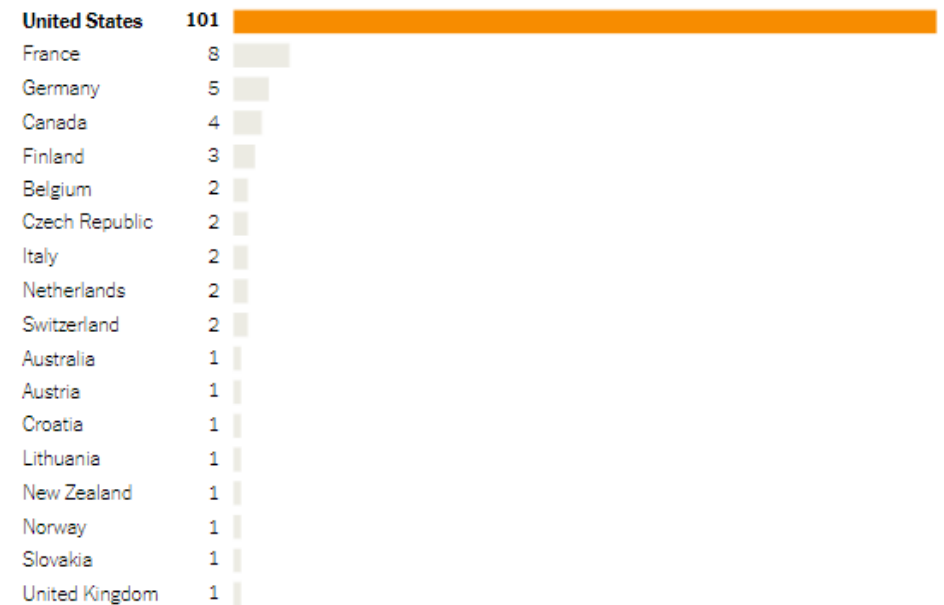
In every country, people get into arguments, hold racist views or suffer from mental health issues. But in the U.S., it is easier for those people to pick up a gun and shoot someone.

That reality is what allowed an 18-year-old to obtain an assault rifle and kill 19 children and two teachers at an elementary school classroom in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday. And it is what makes the U.S. a global outlier when it comes to gun violence, with more gun deaths than any of its peers.

This chart, looking at public shootings in which four or more people were killed, shows how much the U.S. stands out:

Number of mass shootings

Developed countries, 1998-2019



Source: Jason R. Silva, William Paterson University

In today's newsletter, I want to walk through three ways to think about America's gun problem.

The number of guns

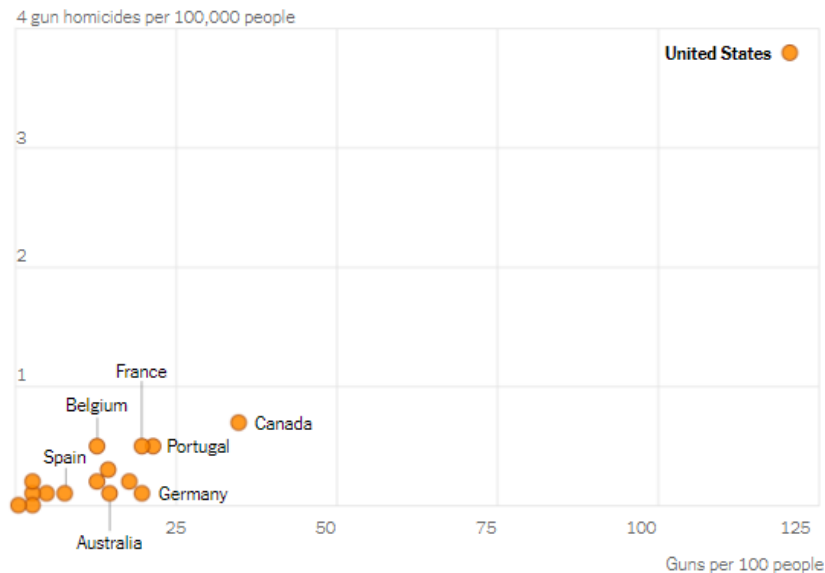
Where there are more guns, there are more gun deaths. Studies have found this to be true at the state and national level. It is true for homicides, suicides, mass shootings and even police shootings.

It is an intuitive idea: If guns are more available, people will use them more often. If you replaced "guns" in that sentence with another noun, it would be so obvious as to be banal.

Stricter gun laws appear to help. They are associated with fewer gun deaths, in both a domestic and global context, while looser gun laws are linked with more gun deaths.

Gun ownership and homicide rates in developed countries

Gun ownership and homicide rates in developed countries



Ownership rates are for 2017 and homicide rates are for 2018.

Source: Small Arms Survey

But federal laws are lax. Other developed countries typically require at least a license to own a gun, if they allow someone to get a firearm at all. In the U.S., even a background check is not always required to buy a gun — a result of poor enforcement and legal loopholes.

Reducing mass shootings

The U.S. is always going to have more guns, and consequently more deaths, than other rich countries. Given the Second Amendment, mixed public opinion and a closely divided federal government, lawmakers face sharp limits on how far they can go.

But since America's gun laws are so weak, there is a lot of room to improve — and at least cut some gun deaths.

To reduce mass shootings, experts have several ideas:

- More thorough background checks might stop some gunmen, like those in the church shootings in Charleston, S.C., in 2015 and in Sutherland Springs, Texas, in 2017.

- “Red flag” laws allow law enforcement officials to confiscate guns from people who display warning signs of violence, like threatening their peers or family members. The laws might have applied to the gunman in the Parkland, Fla., school shooting in 2018.
- Assault weapon bans would restrict or prohibit access to the kinds of rifles shooters often use. A ban could at least make mass shootings less deadly by pushing gunmen toward less effective weapons, some experts argue.

But it is hard to say exactly how much impact these measures would have, because little good research exists on the effects of gun policies on mass shootings. One unanswered question is whether a determined gunman would find a way to bypass the laws: If he can't use an assault rifle, would he resort to a handgun or shotgun? That could make the shooting less deadly, but not stop it altogether.

The bigger problem

Most shootings in America never appear in national headlines. The majority of gun deaths in 2021 were suicides. Nearly half were homicides that occurred outside mass shootings; they are more typical acts of violence on streets and in homes (and most involve handguns). Mass shootings were responsible for less than 2 percent of last year's gun deaths.

Stricter gun laws could also reduce the more common gun deaths. It all comes down to the same problem: More guns equal more gun deaths, whether a gang shootout in California, a suicide in Wyoming or a school shooting in Texas.

Document 3 - No noise news, Newsletter by Jessica Yelin,

- **We Aren't As Divided as the NRA Says:** Instead of updating you on the details of the latest mass shooting (there could be another one by the time you read this), instead I'm sharing information to help reshape your understanding of the gun debate in America. We are not as divided on gun safety rules as the political dialogue and NRA would have you believe.

Here is data is from 97percent, a nonprofit that brings gun owners into the conversation to find common ground on gun safety. According to their research:

- Prohibiting someone with a domestic violence restraining order from owning a gun has the support of 76.9% of gun owners and 74.7% of Republican gun owners.

- Red flag laws have the support of 69.2% of gun owners and 60.5% of Republican gun owners.
- If you add language to red flag laws — like a fine for vindictive use of the law and a timely hearing where the subject is allowed to present evidence — support among gun owners rises to 81%.
- Requiring a permit to carry a concealed weapon has the support of 63.8% of gun owners and 54.5% of Republican gun owners.

Meantime here is our current reality:

- The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that people with a domestic violence restraining order have a right to a gun.
- The majority of US states do not have red flag laws.
- 28 states have passed permitless carry laws.

With support for reform so high among gun owners, there should be enough public will to pass national legislation. The problem: the NRA. It stirs up the extremist minority and funds politicians to do nothing. Understanding the reality and sharing this info, could help change the narrative.

(The Whole report is here:

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61fd89ffc80d394fb525db71/t/634ee0e89dbf05860c29861/1666117141048/97Percent-2022Report-Final.pdf?utm_source=substack&utm_medium=email)

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/3-things-to-know-about-americas-relentless-gun-violence>

Document 4 - 3 things to know about America's relentless gun violence

PBS, May 25, 2022

At least 19 children and two adults were killed when a teenage gunman shot them at a Texas elementary school on May 24, 20

22 – the latest mass shooting in a country in which such incidents have become common.

A lot remains unknown about the attack at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, a small, predominantly Latino town in South Texas. Police have not as yet revealed a possible motive behind the attack, in which the 18-year-old went classroom to classroom dressed in body armor and carrying two military-style rifles, according to reports.

1. School shootings are at a record high

The attack at Robb Elementary School was, according to the data, the 137th school shooting to take place in the U.S. so far this year. In 2021, there were 249 school shootings – by far the worst year on record.

James Densley, of Metropolitan State University, and Hamline University's Jillian Peterson log such incidents in a database of U.S. mass shootings. It has helped them build a profile of the typical school shooting suspect – some of which appears to apply to the suspect in the latest massacre, such as his age and gender. In general, school shooters overwhelmingly tend to be current or former students of the school they attack. And they are “almost always” in a crisis of some sort prior to the incident, as evidenced by changes in their behavior. Suspects are also often inspired by other school shooters, which could go some way in explaining the rapid growth in such attacks in recent years.

Densley and Peterson write that the “overwhelming number of shootings and shooting threats” have left schools struggling to respond, resulting in a patchwork of different measures that have failed to slow the frequency of attacks across the states. The two scholars contrast this local response to school shooting in the U.S. to the national legislative action taken in countries such as the U.K., Finland and Germany, concluding: “School shootings are not inevitable. They're preventable. But practitioners and policymakers must act quickly because each school shooting feeds the cycle for the next one, causing harm far beyond that which is measured in lives lost.”

2. More guns within reach of would-be school shooters

While some of the traits that make up a “typical” U.S. school shooter may appear in those living in other countries, too, there is one area in which the U.S. stands alone – access to guns.

The suspect in the Robb Elementary School reportedly bought his military-style rifles shortly after his 18th birthday. That he was able to do so apparently with ease is likely due to the lax gun control laws in place in Texas, where the alleged shooter lived, and in the U.S. That lack of substantive regulation has led to an ever-increasing number of firearms in the hands of U.S. residents – a trend that has only accelerated in recent years, as University of Michigan's Patrick Carter and Marc A. Zimmerman and Rebeccah Sokol of Wayne State University note.

WATCH: What we're learning about the Texas elementary school massacre
“Since the onset of the public health crisis, firearm sales have spiked. Many of these firearms have ended up in households with teenage children, increasing the risk of

accidental or intentional injury or fatalities, or death by suicide,” they write. It also makes it easier for would-be school shooters to get their hands on firearms that left unsecured around the house.

“Most school shooters obtain the firearm from home. And the number of guns within reach of high school-age teenagers has increased during the pandemic,” they write.

3. Why popular support for gun control isn’t enough

In response to the killings in Texas, calls for stronger gun control laws are already being made, including by President Joe Biden in his speech the night of the shooting. But as evidenced by the lack of meaningful political action after the Sandy Hook massacre, in which 20 children and six school staff members were killed, the chances of getting anything through Congress appear slim.

This is despite polling that shows that a majority of Americans actually support stronger gun laws such as a ban on assault weapons.

So why doesn’t the government do what the people want? Harry Wilson, a professor of public affairs at Roanoke College, has a three-part answer.

First, the United States is not a direct democracy and, as such, citizens do not make decisions themselves, Wilson writes. Instead, the power to make laws lies in the hands of their elected representatives in Congress. But “the composition and rules of Congress are also crucial, especially in the Senate,” he writes, “where each state has two votes. This allocation of senators disproportionately represents the interests of less populous states.”

Secondly, “polling and public opinion are not as straightforward as they seem. Focusing on only one or two poll questions can distort the public’s views regarding gun control,” says Wilson.

And finally, the influence of voters and interest groups acts as a counterbalance to popular opinion.

“Gun owners are more likely than non-owners to vote based on the issue of gun control, to have contacted an elected official about gun rights, and to have contributed money to an organization that takes a position on gun control,” writes Wilson.

Meanwhile lobbying groups representing huge membership, like the NRA, put further pressure on elected representatives. “Elected officials want votes. There is no doubt that money is essential for political campaigns, but votes, not money or polls, are what determine elections. If a group can supply votes, then it has power,” writes Wilson.

Document 5 - Texas gunman who killed eight had ‘neo-Nazi’ ideation, say officials

The gunman who killed eight people and wounded seven others at a suburban Dallas shopping mall had no prior criminal record but had “neo-Nazi ideation”, authorities said on Tuesday.

Investigators are still trying to determine why Mauricio Garcia opened fire on Saturday at the Allen Premium Outlets, Hank Sibley, the regional director of the Texas department of public safety, said at a news conference.

Garcia, 33, researched when the mall in Allen was busiest – Saturday afternoons – and posted photos on social media in mid-April of a store near where he ultimately started his attack, which ended with police killing him. Among the dead were two elementary school-age sisters, a couple and their three-year-old son, and a security guard.

An Associated Press review of online activity showed Garcia also betrayed a fascination with white supremacy and mass shootings, which he described as sport.

Photos Garcia posted showed large Nazi tattoos on his arm and torso, including a swastika and the SS lightning bolt logo of Hitler’s paramilitary forces.

The online statements have contributed to an emerging picture of Garcia. He was discharged from the US army in 2008 because of mental health issues and apparently had been working as a security guard, according to neighbors and an army official.

Aric Toler, director of training and research at the international research collective bellingcat.com, said he identified Garcia’s profile on the site OK.RU by searching for active accounts with his birthdate located in the US. The AP independently verified the account, which also featured an image of a traffic ticket with Garcia’s name and birthdate as well as paperwork from a motel where he stayed before the shooting.

Federal agents have also reviewed the online posts, according to a federal law enforcement official who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The official said Garcia had a patch on his chest when police killed him that read “RWDS”, an acronym for the phrase “Right Wing Death Squad”, popular among rightwing extremists and white supremacy groups.

Investigators have interviewed family members and associates of Garcia to ask about his ideological beliefs and are examining his financial records and other electronic media, the official said.

Garcia joined the army in 2008 but was terminated three months later without completing his initial training, spokesperson Heather J Hagan said.

According to an army official who spoke on condition of anonymity, he was kicked out due to mental health issues.

Garcia received an “uncharacterized” discharge, common for recruits who don’t make it through training or the first 180 days of their enlistment, according to a defense official who also spoke on condition of anonymity. That type of discharge, which is not dishonorable, would not set off red flags or require any reports to law enforcement.

On the Dallas block where Garcia lived until recently, neighbors said they thought he worked as a security guard. The company that manages the mall where the attack happened did not reply to messages seeking further information.

A woman who lives nextdoor said she did not know her neighbors well but described them as nice and polite. Garcia was always friendly, she said.

A law enforcement official said investigators had searched a motel where Garcia had been staying ahead of the attack.

Amid protests at the Texas capitol for stricter gun control, two Republicans sided with Democrats to advance a bill that would raise the age to buy semiautomatic rifles from 18 to 21, though the measure has little or no chance of becoming law.

The shooting was the latest attack to contribute to the unprecedented pace of mass killings this year in the US.

The Guardian, May 9, 2023

Document 6 - **Tennessee governor calls for law removing guns from dangerous people**

In the wake of a mass shooting in Nashville, Gov. Bill Lee of Tennessee signed an executive order on Tuesday strengthening background checks for gun purchases. The Republican governor also called for lawmakers to pass a so-called red flag law that would temporarily remove guns from dangerous people.

“When there is a clear need for action, I think that we have an obligation to remind people that we should set aside politics and pride and accomplish something that the people of Tennessee want to get accomplished,” Lee told reporters, according to audio obtained of his news conference.

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“When there is a clear need for action, I think that we have an obligation to remind people that we should set aside politics and pride and accomplish something that the people of Tennessee want to get accomplished,” Lee told reporters, according to audio obtained of his news conference.

The executive order would set a 72-hour period for reporting new criminal activity and require that the courts submit timely and accurate information directly

to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation. It also would require that agency to examine the current process for purchasing firearms.

The governor made the announcement amid political turmoil in the state Legislature over a GOP-led ouster of two Democrats for leading a gun reform protest inside the statehouse this month. The Nashville Metropolitan Council, a body that has sparred with Republicans in the Legislature, reappointed one of the lawmakers, Rep. Justin Jones, to his seat on Monday. The second member, Rep. Justin Pearson, is also expected to be reinstated this week.

While some GOP states, including Florida and Indiana, have embraced red flag laws, such legislation faces long odds in Tennessee, a deep-red state with many Republican leaders strongly opposed to any effort that could be construed as limiting gun rights.

But Lee said that he’d been meeting with legislative leaders to discuss passing an order-of-protection law that would allow law enforcement to seek a court order confiscating firearms from people deemed a danger to themselves or others. Nineteen states and the District of Columbia have passed similar legislation with bipartisan support.

“I think everyone — leadership from speakers, as well as other leaders — have expressed a desire to do something and move forward,” Lee said at the police precinct that responded to the March 27 shooting at the Covenant School in Nashville that left six people dead, including three children. One of the adult victims was friends with Lee’s wife, Maria.

“I do believe we should get it done during this session,” Lee said.

www.politico.com, April 11, 2023

Document 7 - **Serbia to be ‘disarmed’ after second mass shooting in days, president says**

Serbia will be “disarmed”, its president, Aleksandar Vučić, has pledged in an address to the nation, after eight people were killed and 14 wounded in a second mass shooting in the Balkans country in as many days.

Thursday night’s drive-by assault by a 21-year-old with an automatic weapon had followed the death of nine people at the hands of a 13-year-old who opened fire in a school in downtown Belgrade on Wednesday.

Vučić described the 48 hours of bloodshed as an “attack on our entire country” as he announced that registered and illegal arms would be seized in what he said would amount to “an almost complete disarming of Serbia”.

Mass shootings are rare in Serbia but there is a high level of gun ownership. There are more than 760,000 registered firearms in the country of roughly 6.8 million

people and many more are held unofficially. A large number of weapons entered the black market after the wars in the Balkans that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia. [...]

On Friday morning, a man identified only by his initials, UB, was arrested near the city of Kragujevac, 141km south of the capital Belgrade, over the shootings on Thursday night.

He had been found at the home of a relative after hijacking a taxi. The driver had subsequently tipped off authorities, Vučić said. The alleged gunman was in possession of four grenades, a Kalashnikov and a large amount of ammunition.

Vučić said the gunman had been wearing a T-shirt with neo-Nazi symbols as he fired randomly. The president vowed that the suspect would be convicted and “will never again see the light of the day”. [...]

On Wednesday, a 13-year-old boy shot dead eight fellow pupils and a security guard in a Belgrade primary school, an attack that shocked the Balkan country.

Police named Wednesday’s shooter as Kosta Kecmanović and said he had been a pupil at the school since 2019. They said he had used two of his father’s guns in the shooting and may have been plotting the attack for a month.

The head of Belgrade police, Veselin Milić, said the teenager also had two petrol bombs and “made a list of kids he planned to kill and their classes”. Milić identified the dead pupils as seven girls and a boy born between 2009 and 2011.

Kecmanović is too young to face criminal charges and will be placed in a psychiatric institution. His parents have been arrested. [...]

The most recent mass shooting in Serbia before this week had been in 2013, when a war veteran killed 13 people in the central village of Velika Ivanča.

Serbia’s interior ministry has been tasked with drafting changes to the weapon law to tighten up conditions for possession of pistols and handguns.

The measure is aimed at reducing ownership by 90%. An amnesty is also planned within a month, in which anyone who illegally possess such weapons – and explosive devices – will be able to hand them in without consequences. Jail terms for the illegal production, possession, carrying of and trade in weapons will also be increased.

Comparison with other countries - See Also:

- **PBS How does US Gun policy compare with the rest of the world?**

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/nation/how-does-u-s-gun-policy-compare-with-the-rest-of-the-world>

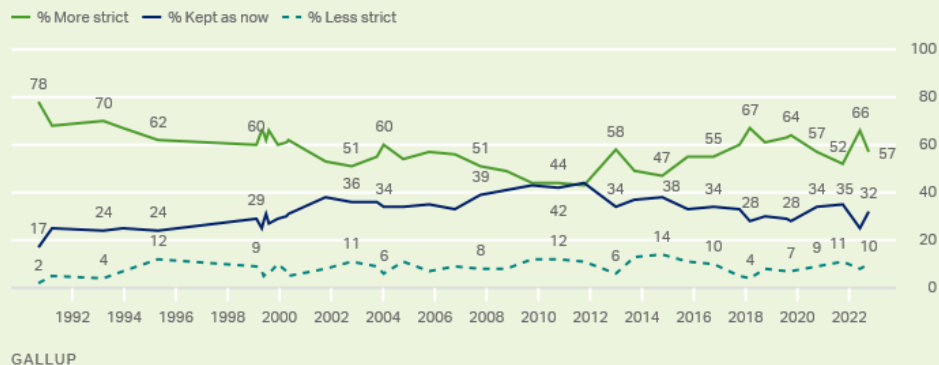
- **The New York Times, *Other Countries Had Mass Shootings. Then They Changed Their Gun Laws***

https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/25/world/europe/gun-laws-australia-britain.html?unlocked_article_code=BvrJirq5VrLerpjFWVAR1rZ4Zjk_Nsvl4bPrxcMVezwkg4Ikaj-tVeaYikafZRjume8n4cQ3cceAO6kEc8c3wPL-Rglfs7ZIm110AJEXa_BsWB3HdxCbPuGiR8qf0xYygpntal74fY4ci7Adlu5ybMRyiWDMcxbNrJ_PDlDZDFaWnWpmY1j3kjoXONISlhzZIW-aGqJsLOAAGtnp_r_9UXu2T0qNX_yKrqn4vtZCsBhGswKHeC9yDWjXiVOXj3W1UwETzepyfepfW6LaOqJ8ZklyDMMAM2N8cf1akB9FyHRIv0CSeXAlvB5c0oVO6VyY9PpRK4DSdmgs5hUCRO5VdThzwVAn6bfxA&smid=ur-share

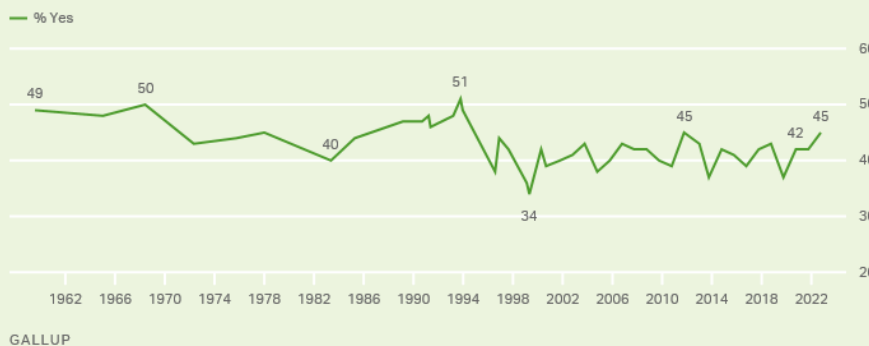
(The is a very long link because it is a gift to bypass the fire wall but shush, don’t tell anyone!)

GALLUP POLLS (October 2022)

In general, do you feel that the laws covering the sale of firearms should be made more strict, less strict or kept as they are now?



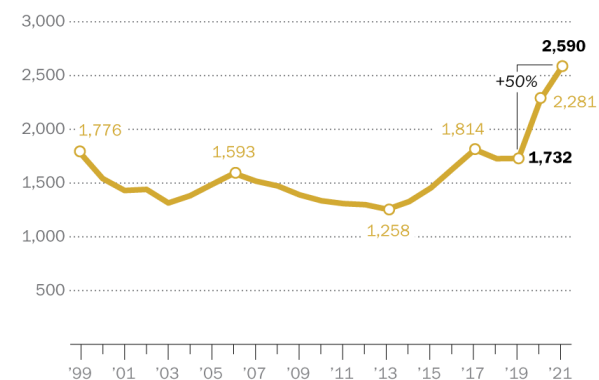
Do you have a gun in your home?



PEW RESEARCH CENTER (April 2023)

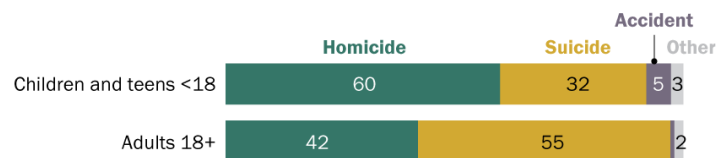
Gun deaths among U.S. kids increased 50% between 2019 and 2021

Gun deaths among U.S. children and teens under 18



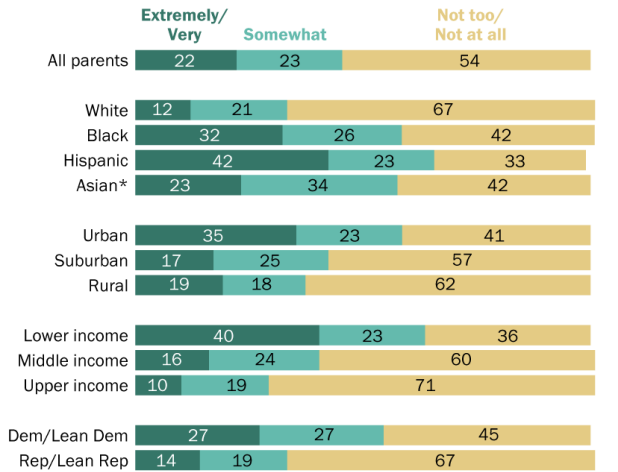
Most gun deaths among U.S. kids are homicides; most gun deaths among adults are suicides

% of gun deaths, by type, in 2021



Around one-in-five U.S. parents are extremely or very concerned about their children getting shot

% of parents who say they are _____ worried about their children getting shot at some point



* Estimates for Asian adults are representative of English speakers only.
 Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.
 Source: Survey of U.S. parents conducted Sept. 20-Oct. 2, 2022.
 PEW RESEARCH CENTER

