STRATEGIES TO REDUCE CHILD & TEEN GUN DEATHS

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The Data

- **2,000 children are shot and killed each year.**
- Since 2020, **gun violence** has been the **leading cause of death** among **children** overall.
- Since 2006, **gun violence** has been the **leading cause of death** for **Black children**.
- People **under the age of 18** are at **higher risk** of **firearm suicide** than older Americans.
- **3 million children** are directly exposed to gun violence each year, resulting in death, injury, and lasting trauma.
The Causes

Homicide

- Community violence in neighborhood parks and streets
- Armed domestic violence at home
- Mass shootings in schools and other locations

Black children are 13 TIMES more likely to be killed in a gun homicide than white children.

Suicide and unintentional shootings

- Unsupervised gun access is a major factor driving youth suicide and unintentional shooting rates
- Household guns are used in more than 80% of youth suicides
LAWS AIMED AT PROTECTING KIDS FROM GUN VIOLENCE
MINIMUM AGE LAWS

Federal law

- Purchasing
  - FFLs cannot sell handguns to people under 21, no long guns to under 18
  - Private sellers cannot sell handguns to people under 18, no minimum age for long guns

- Possessing
  - Long gun: no minimum age
  - Handgun: 18 years old

California law

- Purchasing
  - No firearm sales to anyone under 21 (some exceptions)
  - No ammunition sales to anyone under 18

- Possessing
  - No possession of any firearm under 18 without adult supervision or consent
  - No marketing of guns to minors under the age of 18
  - Allows civil suits against people who violate
MINIMUM AGE LAWS

Effectiveness

One study found that state minimum age laws that raise the age to 21 were associated with a 9% decline in rates of firearm suicides among 18-20-year-olds.

In another study (controlling for other factors), unintentional firearms deaths and firearm suicides among youth (ages 0-19) also fell after the federal minimum age law was enacted.
CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION / SAFE STORAGE LAWS

Federal law

○ Handguns must be sold with locking devices, but they don’t have to be used.
California law

- It’s a crime for an adult to negligently store or leave a firearm on premises within the person’s custody or control in a location where the person knows, or reasonably should know, that a child under 18 is likely to gain access to the firearm
  - Gun doesn’t have to be loaded
  - Minor doesn’t even have to know it’s there
- Parents and guardians are also civilly liable if a minor accesses a firearm in violation of the child access prevention (CAP) law and discharges it
- Exceptions to liability:
  - The firearm was kept in a locked container or in a location that a reasonable person would believe to be secure;
  - The firearm was locked with a locking device that rendered the firearm inoperable
- New law in CA: School districts must send notice of CAP law to parents
Local laws

- Neither OC or Irvine have a safe storage ordinance, but dozens of other CA communities have passed local laws that go above and beyond state law.
CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION / SAFE STORAGE LAWS: Effectiveness

Numerous studies over the past 20 YEARS have found that child access prevention laws can reduce suicide, unintentional gun deaths, and injuries by UP TO 54%.
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS

**Federal law**
- Prohibits people convicted of DV misdemeanors (including dating partners) and people subject to final DVROs (not including dating partners)

**Local laws**
- Localities must focus on relinquishment and disarming prohibited people
- Local law enforcement agencies are required to develop protocol on how to disarm people subject to DVROs and GVROs

**State law**
- Misdemeanors
  - CA law goes much further—anyone convicted of a violent misdemeanor, such as assault, battery, or stalking, regardless of the victim’s relationship to the offender, is prohibited for 10 yrs
  - People convicted of certain DV specific crimes face a lifetime prohibition
- Restraining Orders
  - Lots of different firearm-prohibiting types of ROs in CA (DV, GVRO, Workplace Violence, School Violence, Stalking, Elder Abuse). None require domestic relationship except DV.
  - Emergency, temporary, final
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LAWS: Effectiveness

States like California that cover dating partners in domestic violence laws experience a **16% reduction** in intimate partner gun homicides.

Similarly, when states require proof that someone has given up their gun, there is also a **16% reduction** in intimate partner gun homicides.
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

Violence that disproportionately impacts Black men and communities in urban centers

- For this group, hospital-based intervention and the HAVI network
  - A Baltimore-based hospital violence intervention program (HVIP) trial found that only 5% of those in the HVIP group were rehospitalized, versus 36% in the control group.
  - Evaluation of the San Francisco Wraparound Project — patients who received HVIP services were 4 times less likely to be violently reinjured compared to similar patients without access to services.
COMMUNITY VIOLENCE

● Also, **street outreach and intervention**, using credible messengers to identify and mediate conflicts in their community
  ○ Chicago CRED’s reduced the likelihood of injury or death among program participants by nearly 50%. Participants were also 48% less likely to be arrested for a violent crime 18 months after starting the program.

● **Case management and transformational mentoring programs** provide individuals impacted by community violence with social service supports tailored to their needs.
  ○ Operation Peacemaker Fellowship (OPF) in Richmond — fellows receive person-specific mentorship, CBT, internship opportunities, and stipends up to $1,000 per month for achieving program goals, saw 55% fewer homicides and 43% fewer assaults.
WHAT THESE PROGRAMS NEED:

- Sustained, dedicated funding — federal, state, and local funding available
- Excellent coordination