

# Colorado Domestic Violence and Guns

June 2014

Colorado passed new laws in 2013 addressing guns in the hands of domestic abusers. However, there is still more that can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons, such as convicted stalkers.

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## State Gun and Domestic Violence Overview

*Colorado is home to a significant amount of gun violence.*

- From 2001 to 2010, 5,269 people were killed with guns in Colorado, which is 51 percent more than all combat deaths during the Iraq War.<sup>1</sup>
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Colorado every 16 hours: in 2010 alone, there were 555 gun deaths in the state.<sup>2</sup>

*Domestic violence fatalities are prevalent Colorado, and they are frequently a result of gun crime.*

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2011, 18.1 percent of all 188 homicides in Colorado were cases of domestic violence involving family members or intimate partners.<sup>3</sup>
- Of these victims of domestic violence, 50 percent were killed with guns.<sup>4</sup>

*Women are far more at risk to be victims of fatal domestic violence, and guns play a significant role in that violence.*

- In 2011, more than 40 percent of female homicide victims in Colorado were killed in a domestic violence incident; a total of 21 women were murdered in domestic violence disputes. Of those homicides, 47.6 percent were committed with a gun.<sup>5</sup>
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 258 women in Colorado from 2001 to 2010.<sup>6</sup>

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## Overview of Colorado laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

*Colorado law currently prevents some domestic abusers from possessing guns.*

- In 2013, Colorado amended state laws to bar persons subject to domestic violence protective orders from possessing firearms and to require courts to order the surrender of firearms by persons subject to domestic violence protective orders.<sup>7</sup>
- The 2013 law also requires courts convicting abusers of domestic abuse misdemeanors—as defined under federal law—to order them to surrender their firearms.<sup>8</sup>
- Colorado requires universal background checks for all firearms purchasers, including those who purchase from private sellers—sellers who are not federally licensed dealers.<sup>9</sup>

In the past 10 years, twice as many people were killed with guns in Colorado than were killed in combat in the war in Iraq.



In 2011, more than 40 percent of all female homicides in Colorado were cases of domestic violence involving family members or intimate partners.



*Colorado state law has loopholes that can let some abusers have easy access to guns.*

- Colorado does not bar persons convicted of stalking misdemeanors, or similar crimes, from possessing firearms.
- Colorado does not generally ban gun possession by people who have abused non-cohabitating dating partners or family members, such as siblings, even if the abuser is subject to a restraining order or has been convicted of the abuse as a misdemeanor.

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## Support for doing more to protect women from abusers and stalkers in Colorado

*Voters in Colorado strongly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people.*

- In a November 2013 poll conducted by Quinnipiac University, 85 percent of Colorado voters supported requiring background checks for all gun buyers, including 78 percent of Republicans and 80 percent of gun-owning households.<sup>10</sup>

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## Case Study

*We need universal background checks and other important measures to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous abusers.*

- Anastasia Glinisty and Christopher Fields dated and then broke up in June 2011. Following this breakup, Fields began harassing and stalking Glinisty and was arrested for his conduct a number of times between September 2011 and June 2012. In June 2012 while a criminal felony case against Fields was pending, a court issued an order of protection barring Fields from contacting Glinisty and ordering him to wear a GPS ankle monitor to ensure that he complied. On January 9, 2013, in Denver, Fields lay in wait on a highway-exit ramp. When Glinisty approached in her car, Fields stepped in front of the car and shot her once through the windshield. Glinisty, who was injured, survived the attack. Fields fled to New Mexico and was apprehended by police a few days later. He has been charged with attempted first-degree murder.<sup>11</sup>

### Where does Colorado stand on laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers?



Stalkers prohibited?



Dating partner abusers prohibited?

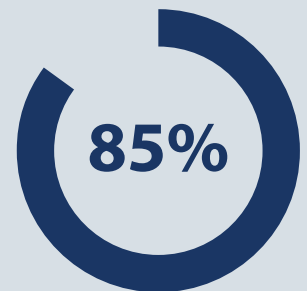


Mandatory surrender provisions?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

**A majority of Coloradans support background checks required on all gun sales.**



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## Endnotes

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)," available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed May 2014); U.S. Department of Defense, Operation Iraqi Freedom U.S. Casualty Status (2014), available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS)," available at <http://wisqars.cdc.gov:8080/nvdrs/nvdrsDisplay.jsp> (last accessed May 2014).
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*
6. Arkadi Gerney, Chelsea Parsons, and Charles Posner, "America Under the Gun: A 50-State Analysis of Gun Violence and Its Link to Weak State Gun Laws" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/AmericaUnderTheGun.pdf>.
7. Colo. Rev. Stat. §§ 13-14-102, 13-14-105.5, 18-1-1001(9)(a); 18-6-803.5(1)(c).
8. Colo. Rev. Stat. § 18-6-801(8)(a).
9. Colo. Rev. Stat. § 24-33.5-424; 18-12-112(1)(a).
10. Quinnipiac University, "Colorado Gov Has Early Lead In Reelect Bid, Quinnipiac University Poll Finds; Voters Back Fracking, Mixed Signals On Gun Control," Press release, November 19, 2013, available at <http://www.quinnipiac.edu/news-and-events/quinnipiac-university-poll/colorado/release-detail?ReleaseID=1977>.
11. Winnie Stachelberg, Arkadi Gerney, Chelsea Parsons, and Megan Knauss, "Preventing Domestic Abusers and Stalkers from Accessing Guns" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2013), available at <http://americanprogress.org/issues/civil-liberties/report/2013/05/09/60705/preventing-domestic-abusers-and-stalkers-from-accessing-guns/>.