

Georgia Domestic Violence and Guns

July 2014

Georgia has no laws to restrict access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons, including convicted domestic abusers, stalkers, and persons subject domestic violence protective orders.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Georgia is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2001 to 2010, 11,591 people were killed with guns in Georgia. That is more than twice the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Georgia every seven hours: In 2010 alone, there were 1,223 gun deaths in the state.²

Domestic violence fatalities are prevalent in Georgia, and they are frequently a result of gun crime.

- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were 627 homicides in Georgia in 2011. Of those, 15.9 percent—or 100 murders—were related to domestic violence.³
- Fifty-four percent of domestic-violence-related homicides in Georgia in 2011 were committed with a gun.⁴

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

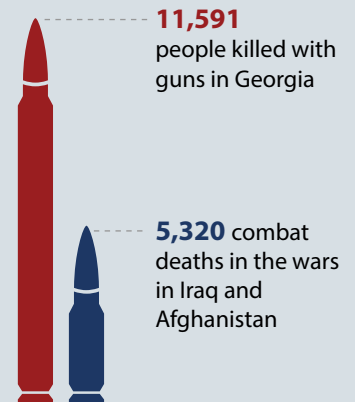
- From 2003 to 2012, women were 22.4 percent of all homicide victims in Georgia. In the same period, 283 women were killed by an intimate partner with a gun.⁵
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 823 women in Georgia from 2001 to 2010, making it the state with the fifth-highest firearm homicide rate per 100,000 women in the country.⁶

Overview of Georgia laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

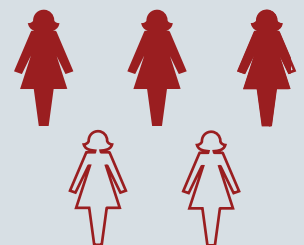
Georgia has few laws to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Georgia has no law prohibiting domestic violence misdemeanants or defendants subject to domestic violence protective orders from purchasing or possessing firearms, unlike federal law. As a result, people convicted of abusing non-cohabitating dating partners and family members, such as siblings, can legally own guns.

From 2001 to 2010, more than twice as many people were killed with guns in Georgia than the number of U.S. soldiers killed in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.



In 2011, 59.3 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims were murdered with a gun.



- Georgia does not require the surrender of firearms owned by a person who has become prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law.
- State law also does not bar stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing firearms.
- Georgia does not require a background check for all gun buyers, including those shopping at gun shows or over the Internet.

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

Most Georgia voters strongly support expanding background checks to keep guns from criminals, domestic abusers, and other dangerous people.

- In a May 2013 poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 71 percent of Georgia voters supported expanded background checks, including 81 percent of women.⁷

Case study

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

- Following an increasing frequency of abusive events, Maria obtained a temporary restraining order against her husband of 20 years, Carlos. Maria had decided to leave Carlos, and he began a series of violent episodes after she informed him that she wanted a divorce. Carlos was diagnosed with bipolar disorder and was involuntarily hospitalized for 10 days after he took 100 pills that were prescribed to him for his disorder; he was subsequently arrested and imprisoned on charges of aggravated assault. Carlos was released on \$20,000 bail and continued to harass and stalk his estranged wife. Following his release, he was able to steal a gun from a co-worker's car, which he then used to murder Maria and commit suicide in the parking lot outside of her office.⁸

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



Stalkers prohibited?



Dating partner abusers prohibited?

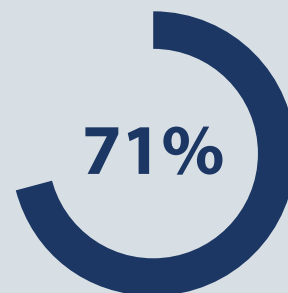


Mandatory surrender provisions?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

A majority of voters in Georgia favor expanded background checks for gun buyers.



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, 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. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplementary Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003–2012).
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. Public Policy Polling, "Strong Support for Expanded Background Checks in Red States of AR, GA, TN Women Show Especially Heavy Support," Press release, May 29, 2013, available at http://www.publicpolicypolling.com/pdf/2011/PPP_Release_BackgroundChecks_5291.pdf.
8. Georgia Coalition Against Domestic Violence, "2012 Georgia Domestic Violence Fatality Review" (2012), available at http://www.ndvfri.org/reports/georgia/Georgia_Statewide_Annualreport_2012.pdf.