

Oregon Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Oregon has some laws restricting access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much more can be done to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous persons, including convicted domestic abusers, stalkers, and persons subject to domestic violence protective orders.

State gun and domestic violence overview

Oregon is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 4,007 people were killed with guns in Oregon. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq War.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Oregon every 21 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 420 gun deaths in the state.²

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

- According to the FBI, there were 138 domestic violence homicides in Oregon from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than half of the victims—56.5 percent—were killed with guns.³

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

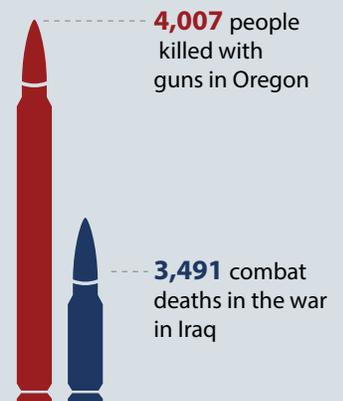
- Of the 269 female homicide victims in Oregon from 2003 to 2012, 113 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 145 women in Oregon from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Oregon laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

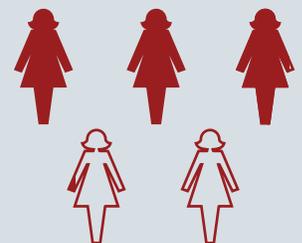
Oregon has few laws to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Oregon does not explicitly prohibit the possession of a firearm by domestic violence misdemeanants but does prohibit transferring a firearm when the transferor knows or reasonably should know that the recipient has been convicted of a “misdemeanor involving violence” within the previous four years.⁶
- Oregon does not require the surrender of firearms or ammunition by domestic abusers who have become prohibited from possessing firearms or ammunition under federal law.
- Oregon does not explicitly authorize or require the removal of firearms or ammunition at the scene of a domestic violence incident.

From 2002 to 2011, 4,007 people were killed with guns in Oregon. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the Iraq War.



From 2003 to 2012, 59.3 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Oregon were killed with a gun.



- Oregon law also does not bar stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing firearms.
- Oregon requires a background check for private sales at gun shows but not for sales that take place over the Internet or at other locations.⁷

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

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

- In a January 2014 poll conducted by Public Policy Polling, 78 percent of Oregonians surveyed supported requiring a background check on all gun buyers. Additionally, 74 percent of Oregon voters supported prohibiting anyone convicted of stalking or subject to a restraining order for domestic violence from buying a gun.⁸

Case study

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

- Jeffrey Grahn, a Clackamas County sheriff's sergeant, murdered his wife, Charlotte, and two of her friends at a restaurant in Gresham, Oregon, in February 2010, before killing himself. Prior to the shootings, the Sheriff's office had received information that Grahn was abusive and had substance-abuse issues. When the Portland Police attempted to send this information to the county district attorney, the Sheriff's office intervened and prevented the DA from investigating further. The Clackamas County Sheriff's office took no action and allowed Grahn to retain his badge and firearms. When Grahn arrived at the restaurant on the day of the murders he was drunk and shot his wife outside before going back in to shoot both of her friends.⁹

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



Misdemeanant domestic abusers prohibited?



Individuals subject to a domestic violence protective order prohibited?



Stalkers prohibited?



Background checks required on all gun sales?

A majority of Oregon voters support prohibiting convicted stalkers and people subject to domestic violence restraining orders from buying guns.



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 August 2014); U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Casualty Status (2014), available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>.
2. Ibid.
3. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Supplemental Homicide Data (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003–2012).
4. Ibid.
5. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)."
6. Or. Rev. Stat. § 166.470(1)(g).
7. Or. Rev. Stat. §§ 166.434(1), 166.438.
8. Public Policy Polling, "Oregon Survey Results," January 2014, available at <http://cdn.americanprogressaction.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/OregonResults12414.pdf>.
9. Steve Mayes, "Families of women killed by off-duty Clackamas deputy file \$8 Million lawsuit," The Oregonian, February 9, 2012, available at http://www.oregonlive.com/clackamascounty/index.ssf/2012/02/families_of_women.html.