



FACT SHEET

How Gun Violence Affects Dating Partners

February 2015

Gun violence in an intimate partner context remains unacceptably high in the United States, and the burden of this violence frequently falls on people in dating relationships. Federal law restricts access to firearms for some domestic abusers, but few protections exist for victims of dating partner violence or stalking. More can be done at the state and federal level to extend protections to victims of dating partner violence.

Despite a decrease in overall violent crime, intimate partner violence persists throughout the United States, and this violence falls disproportionately on people in dating relationships:

- More women are abused by their current or former boyfriends than by current or former spouses: From 2003 to 2012, 39 percent of nonfatal violence against women was committed by a dating partner versus 25 percent committed by a spouse.¹
- In 1980, 69 percent of intimate partner homicides were committed by a spouse. By 2008, 48.6 percent of intimate partner homicides were committed by a dating partner.²

This violence particularly affects women under age 35:

- In 2010, women between the ages of 18 and 34 experienced the highest rates of intimate partner violence compared with all other age groups.³
- According to a National Dating Abuse Helpline survey, 50 percent of those seeking aid from the helpline in 2012 were between the ages of 17 and 24.⁴
- Of all people under age 30 that were murdered by a boyfriend or girlfriend between 2003 and 2012, 80 percent of the victims were women.⁵

Dating partner abuse often turns fatal, and this is frequently due to the presence of a gun:

- Between 2003 and 2012, 2,431 young people under the age of 30 were killed by their boyfriend or girlfriend. Of these murders, nearly half involved a gun.⁶

Federal law and many states' laws do not provide comprehensive protections for victims of dating violence to ensure that their abusers do not have access to guns. Currently, the following dangerous groups of people are still allowed to purchase and carry guns:

- Individuals convicted of misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence against a current or former dating partner with whom they do not have a child or with whom they have not lived



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- Individuals subject to a domestic violence restraining order from the categories of victims listed above
- Individuals convicted of misdemeanor crimes of stalking

However, some states have taken action to protect victims of dating violence from gun violence and have enacted laws that offer the protections missing from federal law:

- In 2014, six states enacted legislation to strengthen laws that keep guns out of the hands of known domestic abusers. In 2015, 13 states—Arizona, Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Virginia, and Washington—have already introduced legislation that would close the loopholes in federal law and prevent convicted domestic abusers from accessing or purchasing guns.⁷

Endnotes

1 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Nonfatal Domestic Violence, 2003-2012* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2014), available at <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ndv0312.pdf>.

2 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2011), available at <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/htus8008.pdf>.

3 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Intimate Partner Violence, 1993-2010* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2012), available at <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ipv9310.pdf>. Intimate partner violent victimizations in this survey are defined as rape or sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault committed by a current or former spouse, boyfriend, or girlfriend.

4 National Dating Abuse Helpline, "National Report" (2012).

5 Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Supplemental Homicide Data* (U.S. Department of Justice, 2003-2012).

6 Ibid.

7 CAP analysis of Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "State Legislation Strategy Report."

8 Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Homicide Trends in the United States, 1980-2008*.

9 Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Supplementary Homicide Data*.

10 The Daily Mail, "Mom-of-three, 33, shot dead by boyfriend, 46, in murder-suicide hours after going to the police for protection," February 5, 2015, available at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2942122/Mother-three-33-shot-dead-ex-boyfriend-46-murder-suicide-just-hours-went-police-protection.html>; Nina Golgowski, "Texas mother gunned down by ex-boyfriend hours after reporting him to police: cops," New York Daily News, February 11, 2015, available at <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/national/texas-mom-dead-hours-seeking-protection-cops-article-1.2103520>; KZTV, "Murder-suicide suspected in Bay Bluff Apartments deaths," February 3, 2015, available at <http://www.kztv10.com/story/28011021/murder-suicide-suspected-in-bay-bluff-apartments-deaths>.

11 Jeremy Goner and Michelle Manchir, "Woman who allegedly bought gun used in Nordstrom attack held on \$10K bail," *Chicago Tribune*, December 6, 2014, available at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-nordstrom-gun-met-20141205-story.html>; Jeremy Goner, "Police: Nordstrom killer attacked victim's friend days earlier," *Chicago Tribune*, December 3, 2014, available at <http://www.chicagotribune.com/news/local/breaking/ct-nordstrom-friend-beating-met-20141202-story.html>; Marta Bakula, "University mourns Nadia Ezaldein, 22," *The Chicago Maroon*, December 9, 2014, available at <http://chicagomaroon.com/2014/12/09/university-mourns-nadia-ezaldein-22/>.

Heather Coglaiti,
February 3, 2015,
Corpus Christi, Texas

Heather Coglaiti went to the police seeking protection hours before she was murdered by her ex-boyfriend, Jose Calderon. Police interviewed Calderon but ultimately did not arrest him. He then shot and killed Coglaiti before committing suicide at her apartment, with two of her children present. In the month before her murder, Coglaiti had filed seven reports with the police over threats Calderon made against her.¹⁰

Nadia Ezaldein,
November 28, 2014,
Chicago, Illinois

22-year-old Nadia Ezaldein was shot and killed by her ex-boyfriend, Marcus Dee, who then committed suicide, at the Nordstrom store where she worked. Ezaldein had broken up with Dee almost a year earlier after he allegedly put a gun in her mouth. The murder came seven months after Ezaldein's sister applied for a protection order against Dee, alleging that he had broken Ezaldein's rib and fractured her jaw. Dee was not licensed to have a gun under Illinois law; he obtained it through a friend's girlfriend who falsely reported the gun stolen.¹¹



For more information about how gun violence affects women in each state, visit www.protectallwomen.org.