

Ashima Saigal M.S. & Kristine M. Jacquin, Ph.D.  
Fielding Graduate University

## Introduction

In 1999, 113 people were killed in 21 mass shooting incidents and in 2015, 25 mass shooting incidents killed 116 people showing a slight increase in the number of incidents and deaths (Krouse & Richardson, 2015). Federal and local governments sometimes respond to mass shootings with gun legislation.

This presentation will analyze gun legislation's impact on mass shootings in the United States.

## Defining Mass Shootings

A legal definition for mass shootings does not exist. The FBI has defined mass murder, mass killings, mass public shootings, and mass murder (Booty et al., 2019; Krouse & Richardson, 2015).

The literature reviewed in this study defined mass shootings as losing four or more lives, excluding the perpetrator. However, three studies defined it as six or more victims, another excluded drug or gang-related incidents, and another was three or more non-family members murdered. With differing definitions, data sets end up different and what is called mass shooting by one researcher does not match another researcher's data. Therefore, it is challenging to know how many mass shootings have occurred.

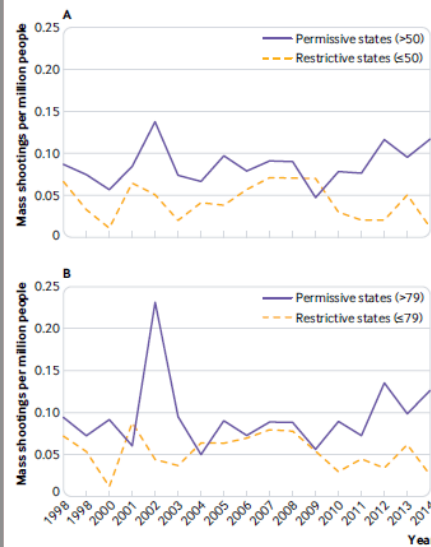
## Public's Reaction

Evidence suggests citizens desire additional gun control immediately following an incident and living near a mass public shooting.

- Stricter gun sale laws
- Universal background checks

## Impact of Gun Ownership

There appears to be a relationship between gun ownership and the number of mass shootings per year in a specific state. As the number of gun owners in a state increases, the incidence of mass shootings increases (Fridel, 2020; Reeping et al., 2019).



From "State Gun Laws, Gun Ownership, and Mass Shootings in the US: Cross Sectional Time Series," by P. M. Reeping, M. Cerda, B. Kalesan, D. J. Wiebe, S. Galea, and C. C. Branas. 2019. *BMJ*, 364(542), p. 3. (<http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i542>). Copyright 2019 by BMJ.

Rating provided by the 1998-2015 edition of the *Traveler's Guide to the Firearms Laws of the Fifty States* which provides a rating of 0 (completely restrictive) to 100 (completely permissive).

## Impact of Gun Ownership (cont.)

However, other studies have not found a direct relationship between gun ownership and mass shooting incidence. Furthermore, there were contradictory findings between Fridel and Reeping related to permissive and restrictive state gun laws. It is unclear if the permissive or restrictive gun laws impact the reduction or increases of mass shootings.

## Legislative Impact

In 2004, the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons ban expired and was not renewed.

Under the ban, assault weapons and large-capacity magazines (LCM) were not permitted to be manufactured or sold (Klarevas et al., 2019; Krouse and Richardson, 2015; Webster et al., 2020)

Some states enacted LCM bans, however, recent federal Supreme Court legislation overturned LCM bans, specifically in the state of California (Duncan v. Becerra, 2020).

LCM bans were shown to have an impact on fatal mass shootings. However, bans on assault weapons had no apparent impact (Klarevas et al., 2019; Webster et al., 2020).

## Policies that Impact

Policies that appeared to reduce fatal mass shootings are laws requiring fingerprinting of firearms purchasers and in-person applications. (Webster et al., 2020)

## Conclusion

Despite the challenges of a clear definition of what constitutes a mass shooting, there appear to be legislation and policies that have worked to curtail the number of mass shootings.

- Ban all LCMs from being manufactured or sold
- Institute in-person application and fingerprinting for firearm applicants

## References

- Booty, M., O'Dwyer, J., Webster, D., McCourt, A., & Crifasi, C. (2019). Describing a "mass shooting": The role of databases in understanding burden. *Injury Epidemiology*, 6(47). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40621-019-0226-7>.
- Fridel, E. E. (2020). Comparing the impact of household gun ownership and concealed carry legislation on the frequency of mass shootings and firearms homicide. *Justice Quarterly*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07418825.2020.1789693>
- Jose, R., Holman, E. A., & Silver, R. C. (2020). How Americans feel about guns after mass shootings: The case of the 2016 Orlando nightclub massacre. *Psychology of Violence*. <https://doi.org/10.1037/vio0000346>
- Klarevas, L., Conner, A., & Hemenway, D. (2019). The effect of large-capacity magazine bans on high-fatality mass shootings, 1990-2017. *American Journal of Public Health*, 109(12), 1754-1761. <https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2019.305311>
- Krouse, W. J., & Richardson, D. J. (2015). Mass murder with firearms: incidents and victims, 1999-2013. *UNT Libraries Government Documents Department*. <https://digital.library.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metadc743624/>
- Reeping, P. M., Cerda, M., Kalesan, B., Wiebe, D. J., Galea, S., & Branas, C. C. (2019). State gun laws, gun ownership, and mass shootings in the US: Cross sectional time series. *BMJ*, 364(542). <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.i542>
- Webster, D. W., McCourt, A. D., Crifasi, C. K., Booty, M. D., & Stuart, E. A. (2020). Evidence concerning the regulation of firearms design, sale, and carrying on fatal mass shootings in the United States. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 19(1), 171-212. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1745-9133.12487>