

APA Official Actions

Position Statement on Firearms Access

Approved by the Board of Trustees, July 2025

Approved by the Assembly, May 2025

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“Policy documents are approved by the APA Assembly and Board of Trustees. . . These are . . . position statements that define APA official policy on specific subjects. . .” – *APA Operations Manual*

Issue:

National and state legislative and regulatory measures are an important means of preventing death and injuries from gun violence, including suicide. It is critical to examine the balance between upholding the Second Amendment (regarding the right to bear arms) and the increasing public health harms related to firearm violence. Laws regulating access to firearms reduce homicide rates and can also reduce suicide rates because there is a strong association between access to lethal means and the risk of suicide.¹ Alarming data indicate that, although overall gun violence deaths declined by 3% from 2022 to 2023 to a total of 46,728 deaths, 27,310 firearm-related suicides occurred in 2023, marking the highest rate since data collection began. This makes it more imperative than ever to advocate for strategies to reduce firearm-related injury while encouraging protections for confidentiality in treatment and access to care.²

APA Position:

It is the position of APA that firearm-related violence is a critical public health epidemic. To reduce morbidity and mortality due to firearm-related violence and promote safe communities, the APA supports: “red-flag laws” and “extreme risk protection order laws”; background checks and waiting periods on all gun sales and transactions; requiring safe storage of all firearms; regulating the characteristics of firearms to reduce the likelihood that they can be fired by anyone other than the owner without the owner’s consent; limiting children and adolescents’ access to firearms; restricting the manufacture and sale for civilian use of large-capacity magazines and firearms with features designed to increase their rapid and extended-killing capacity; banning possession of firearms on the grounds of schools, colleges, hospitals, and similar institutions by anyone other than law enforcement and security personnel; allowing physicians and other health care professionals to make clinically appropriate inquiries of patients and others about possession of and access to firearms; Increasing research into firearm violence; compiling a national unified database of firearm-associated injuries and mortality; and promoting suicide prevention through the education of gun buyers, at the point of firearm sales, about risks associated with guns, secure storage laws, and best practices for storing a gun safely.

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