

FACT SHEET

Maine Gun Violence

Gun violence and gun crime are prevalent in Maine.

- In Maine, 113 people were killed in gun-related violence in 2010, or one every three days.¹
- Gun deaths in Maine numbered 1,054 over ten years (2001-2010), just 653 less than the number of US combat deaths over the course of the war in Afghanistan.²

Maine's gun safety ratings are weak.

- Maine receives an 'F' grade for its gun laws from the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence.³
- Maine's gun laws currently do not require a background check for private firearm sales.⁴

With weak gun laws, Maine is a source state for guns later used in crimes in other states.

- As of 2011 Maine's rate of submitting mental health records to the federal database—which are used in background checks to deny dangerous people from getting guns—is almost nonexistent: Maine submits 2.6 mental health records for every 100,000 residents, compared to the national average of 379.3 mental health records per 100,000.⁵
- In 2009, 233 guns originally purchased in Maine were recovered at crime scenes in other states.⁶

The National Rifle Association has been extremely generous to politicians in Maine that try to protect the status quo.

- In Maine, the NRA's political action committee has spent over \$137,200 on state legislative elections since 2002. By contrast, Maine Citizens Against Handgun Violence has spent \$9,228 since 2002.⁷

Polls show Maine residents strongly support common sense gun violence prevention measures.

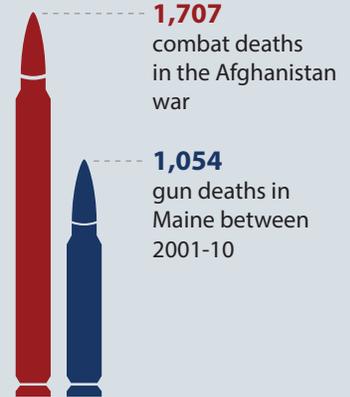
- Maine residents overwhelmingly support universal background checks – 85 percent of Maine residents want every gun buyer to pass a criminal background check.⁸

Why gun violence prevention laws could make a difference in Maine

- In January 2010, twenty-five-year old Portland man, Darien Richardson, was murdered during a home invasion. The police were able to trace the murder weapon, a .45 caliber handgun, to a Maine gun show, but because the gun was sold there in a private transfer, the police declared it a cold case. "There's no documentation, no bill of sale, no background check," said Portland Police Chief Michael Sauschuck.⁹

Questions? Email us at guns@americanprogress.org.

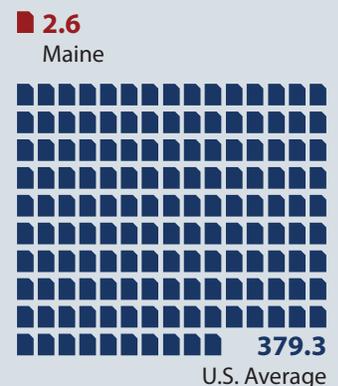
In the past 10 years, the number of gun deaths in Maine was just 653 less than the number of combat deaths in Afghanistan



The Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence gave Maine an "F" for its gun laws



Maine's submission of mental health records per 100,000 residents is almost nonexistent



Maine residents overwhelmingly support universal background checks



Endnotes

- 1 Centers for Disease Control, "WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System)", available at <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html> (last accessed February 2013).
- 2 Centers for Disease Control. (War casualties statistic from Defense Department, available at <http://www.defense.gov/NEWS/casualty.pdf>.) (From start of the war to March 4, 2013).
- 3 Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, "Gun Laws Matter 2012: Understanding the Link Between Weak Laws and Gun Violence," available at <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws-matter-2012-understanding-the-link-between-weak-laws-and-gun-violence/> (last accessed February 2013).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, "Fatal Gaps: How Missing Records In The Federal Background Check System Put Guns In The Hands Of Killers" (2011).
- 6 Mayors Against Illegal Guns, "Trace the Guns 2010," available at <http://www.tracetheguns.org/#/states/ME/exports/> (last accessed February 2013).
- 7 Steve Mistler, "In Maine, laws to restrict guns usually prove to be a hard sell," *Portland Press Herald*, December 18, 2012, available at http://www.pressherald.com/politics/in-maine-laws-to-restrict-guns-usually-prove-to-be-hard-sell_2012-12-18.html.
- 8 Mayors Against Illegal Guns January 28-31, 2013, "NEW POLL FINDS 85 PERCENT IN MAINE FAVOR MANDATORY BACKGROUND CHECKS FOR ALL GUN BUYERS" available at, http://libcloud.s3.amazonaws.com/9/c0/4/1398/ME_MAIG_Release_030513.pdf (last accessed March 2013).
- 9 Kevin Miller, "Many sales of firearms in Maine fall under the radar," *Maine Sunday Telegram*, Feb. 10, 2013 available at: http://www.pressherald.com/news/maine-under-the-gun-for-unregulated-private-sales_2013-02-10.html.