

Missouri Domestic Violence and Guns

October 2014

Missouri has no laws specifically aimed at restricting access to firearms by domestic abusers. Much 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

Missouri is home to a staggering amount of gun violence.

- From 2002 to 2011, 7,635 people were killed with guns in Missouri. That is more than the number of all U.S. combat deaths in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.¹
- Somebody is killed with a gun in Missouri every 10 hours: In 2011 alone, there were 854 gun deaths in the state.²

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

- According to the FBI, there were 366 domestic violence homicides in Missouri from 2003 to 2012, which include both male and female victims.
- Of those homicides, more than one-half of the victims—55.7 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 785 female homicide victims in Missouri from 2003 to 2012, 256 were killed as a result of a domestic violence incident.⁴
- Firearms accounted for the murders of 462 women in Missouri from 2002 to 2011.⁵

Overview of Missouri laws to protect women from abusers and stalkers

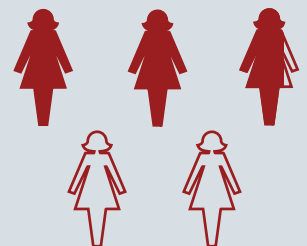
Missouri law currently prevents some domestic abusers from possessing guns.

- Missouri provides protective orders for current or former household members as well as for current and former partners in a romantic relationship.⁶

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From 2003 to 2012, 55.9 percent of female domestic violence homicide victims in Missouri were killed with a gun.



Missouri can do more to prevent abusers from having easy access to guns.

- Missouri has no law prohibiting domestic violence misdemeanants or defendants subject to domestic violence protective orders from purchasing or possessing firearms, unlike federal law.
- Missouri does not require the surrender of firearms owned by a person who has become prohibited from possessing firearms under federal law.
- State law also does not bar stalking misdemeanants from purchasing or possessing firearms.
- Missouri does not require a background check for all gun buyers, including those at gun shows or over the Internet.

Case study

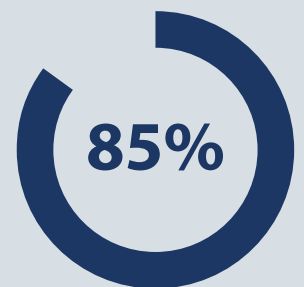
We need universal background checks and other important measures to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous abusers.

- Robyn Hamilton was murdered by her husband during an argument at their home in Kansas City, Missouri, on October 26, 2010. Hamilton's marriage to Robert Washington had been troubled for a long time, when Washington shot her at her home in the early morning and fled the scene. Police eventually arrested Washington, although he denied committing the murder. He was convicted of first-degree murder and armed criminal action in May 2013.⁷

Where does Missouri 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 Missourians support background checks on all gun purchases.



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. Mo. Rev. Stat. § 455.010(7).
7. Chris Allen, "Police: Woman shot to death during fight with her Husband," KSHB Kansas City, October 26, 2010, available at <http://www.kshb.com/news/crime/one-female-dead-after-kansas-city-shooting>; Jackson County Prosecutor, "Guilty Verdict in KC Murder," May 2, 2013 available at <http://www.jacksongov.org/content/8829/8837/9181.aspx>.