

Giffords Law Center: Wisconsin Receives a C- for Gun Safety Laws

Posted on Thursday, Feb 25, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Washington DC — Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence released the latest edition of its [Annual Gun Law Scorecard](#), which grades and ranks each state on its gun laws. Wisconsin received a C- due the state having the 12th-lowest gun death rate in the country.

This year's Scorecard highlights the disproportionate toll that both COVID-19 and gun violence take on Black communities across the United States. Black Americans in F states have a gun death rate 117% higher than the national gun death rate for all Americans. The health and safety crisis of gun violence must be addressed alongside the epidemic of COVID-19. Despite these challenges, Virginia still took decisive action to save lives from gun violence in 2020

- **Website:** Learn more about [Wisconsin's](#) ranking by visiting this *year's Scorecard*.

"America's devastating gun violence epidemic is growing and impacting every part of our country because too many lawmakers would rather wish it away than acknowledge their role in advancing solutions to make our communities safer," said **Robyn Thomas, executive director of Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence**. "This public safety threat needs to be addressed with facts, evidence, and action. We've proven that lawmakers can save lives, reduce violence, and make their states safer by following a simple blueprint: pass gun violence prevention laws. Every year, our scorecard is a reminder to states that progress is possible, but also a reminder of the work we have left to accomplish. The *Gun Law Scorecard* should be both a resource and roadmap for elected leaders, activists, and

concerned citizens to take action.”

Changes in two states were significant enough to raise their grades in 2020:

- **Virginia (D to a B):** Passed a comprehensive package of bills that included laws to close the private sale background check loophole, temporarily take guns away from people at risk of dangerous behaviors, prevent access to guns by minors, and fund evidence-based violence intervention programs.
- **New Mexico (C to a C+):** Enacted an extreme risk protection order law.

States with the strongest gun laws have taken significant steps to protect their residents from gun violence, such as closing loopholes in the federal background checks system, investing in community violence intervention and prevention, and prohibiting unregulated and untraceable firearms, also known as ghost guns. These states include:

- **California (A)**
- **New Jersey (A)**
- **New York (A-)**
- **Maryland (A-)**

States with the lowest grades are responsible for the troubling export of guns used for crimes in other states along with pushing dangerous policies like expanding the places concealed carry permit holders can bring their guns. Some of the worst include:

- **Texas (F)**
- **Louisiana (F)**
- **Alabama (F)**

- **West Virginia (F)**

Background checks critical to improving more scores

Since the *Annual Gun Law Scorecard* was created one of the key findings has been that to raise their grade and save lives, all states should enact universal background checks, closing the dangerous loophole in federal gun laws that allows individuals to obtain firearms at gun shows and on the internet without a background check. Twenty states and Washington DC have so far extended the background check requirement beyond federal law. Instituting universal background checks at the federal level would help keep guns out of the wrong hands by improving the patchwork of state laws that currently leaves states with universal background checks vulnerable to ineffective implementation and trafficking.

2020 Gun Law Scorecard Spotlight: Guns & COVID-19

Both COVID-19 and gun violence were badly mismanaged by the Trump administration, leaving our most vulnerable communities unprotected from two epidemics. The movement for racial justice that swept the country in 2020 after the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor brought renewed attention to the critical links between policing and gun violence. To end vicious cycles of gun violence, we must address police brutality and harmful practices that fuel mass incarceration and retaliatory violence.

Black Americans have a significantly higher gun death rate than Americans in all states. In fact, Black Americans are **10 times more likely than white Americans to be murdered with a gun**. In the face of the ongoing public health crisis of COVID-19, spikes in gun violence have continued despite shelter-in-place orders, particularly in the communities most vulnerable to the virus's spread, related economic harms, and devastating budget cuts in states and cities across the nation.

The facts are undeniable:

- **134 out of 100,000** Black Americans die of COVID-19 while **83 out of 100,000** white Americans die of COVID-19

- **23 out of 100,000** Black Americans die of gun violence while **12 out of**

100,000 white Americans die of gun violence

Until we pass strong federal gun safety laws, lives will continue to be jeopardized. States and the federal government must take action to ensure a safer America for all.

Visit the *Annual Gun Law Scorecard* at gunlawscorecard.org Experts Available for Comment

- **Robyn Thomas**, Executive Director, Giffords Law Center
- **Laura Cutilletta**, Managing Director, Giffords Law Center
- **Allison Anderman**, Managing Attorney, Giffords Law Center