



ISSUE

Support Evidence-based Firearm Safety Laws

MMA Position

To address the devastating death and injuries from firearms, the MMA supports evidence-based and common-sense changes to firearm safety laws and policies, which include: 1) a statewide ban on assault rifles, including military-style semi-automatic firearms (HF 3433/SF 3654); 2) a statewide ban on high-capacity magazines (HF 3434/SF 3681); 3) a statewide requirement that firearms be stored locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition (HF 1203/SF 11); and 4) removal of the current prohibition on local municipalities enacting stricter firearm regulations than the state (HF 3351/SF 3549).

Background

Firearm violence and firearm-related accidents and suicides kill more than 30,000 Americans each year. According to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), firearm homicides in Minnesota were 117% higher in 2022 than in 2018 (143 and 66, respectively); and suicide deaths by firearm increased 13% from 2018 to 2022 (356 and 402, respectively).¹ According to the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, firearms are an irreversible solution to what is often a passing crisis, and individuals who use other means to attempt suicide have time to reconsider their actions or ask for help. In addition, firearms are also the leading method of suicide for adolescents aged 15 to 19.² These are all troubling statistics, and lawmakers can take proven steps to reduce the rate of death and injury due to firearms.

To effectively address the public health crisis of firearm violence and firearm suicide, a multipronged approach is needed. Studies cited by Everytown for Gun Safety found that states with bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines experienced a lower rate of mass shooting fatalities compared to states without such bans.³ Furthermore, studies have also found that mass shooting fatalities were 70% less likely during the 10-year period of the 1994 Federal Assault Weapons Ban, compared to the periods before and after the ban expired in 2004.⁴

Additional studies in *JAMA* have found that safe storage requirements – keeping firearms locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition – can reduce the risk of unintentional shootings and suicide among children and adolescents.⁵ In Minnesota, MDH data from 2024 demonstrates that most firearm-related deaths were suicide (72%), followed by homicide (26.2%).⁶ In addition to protecting children and adolescents, safe storage requirements can also help to reduce theft and the illegal use of firearms.

Finally, state preemption laws prevent local officials from protecting their communities from firearm violence – by reducing their ability to pass laws that address their specific needs.

The MMA considers firearm death and injury a public health crisis, and calls on policymakers at the state and federal level to step up and protect the health and safety of Minnesotans.

Talking Points

- Firearm death and injury is a public health crisis.
- The leading cause of death for children in the United States is not cancer, car crashes, or overdose – it is firearms.
- Putting an end to this public health crisis will require a multi-pronged approach, including:
 - A statewide ban on assault rifles, including military-style semi-automatic firearms;
 - A statewide ban on high-capacity magazines;
 - A statewide requirement that firearms be stored locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition; and
 - Removal of the current prohibition on local municipalities enacting stricter firearm regulations than the state.
- The link between firearms and suicide needs to be reframed, acknowledging that suicide is a silent epidemic we can no longer ignore.
- Minnesota must enact evidence-based firearm policies to save lives and protect the well-being of all Minnesotans, but especially those who are most vulnerable – children and adolescents.
- Not taking immediate action will only put the lives of more Minnesotans at risk.

References

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