About

The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research (JHCGPR) has achieved a national reputation for our high-quality research, analysis, and innovation to advance the prevention of gun violence. Founded in 1995 by Professor Stephen Teret, JD, MPH, the Center’s multidisciplinary faculty study the effects of gun laws, the implementation and enforcement of gun policies, law enforcement strategies, and community prevention efforts.

JHCGPR faculty specialize in synthesizing research and conducting policy analyses to inform policy debates about how to reduce gun violence. They are frequently invited to advise federal, state, and local officials and to testify at congressional and state hearings.

In addition to publishing articles in leading scientific journals, the Center produces numerous resources, including fact sheets and policy analyses and works closely with the media and others to disseminate our findings to reach the general public and decision-makers.

Many of the leading gun violence prevention researchers in the U.S.—both inside and outside of our Center—have received their education at Johns Hopkins. Our faculty are training the next generation of gun violence prevention researchers.

Our Research

Our Center applies strong research methods and public health principles to answer the most pressing questions in gun violence prevention.

Center focus areas include: gun trafficking, domestic violence and guns, keeping guns from youth, smart guns, handgun licensing and universal background checks, public opinion polling, mental health and guns, and efforts with Baltimore officials to promote effective gun violence prevention strategies and programs in our community.

Specifically, our research has demonstrated that:

- Domestic violence restraining orders that include gun restrictions reduce intimate partner homicides.1
- Child access prevention laws (e.g., safe gun storage laws) reduce suicides and unintentional shooting deaths of youth.2
- More than one-third of accidental shootings in the U.S. could be prevented if the guns involved were personalized (also called smart or child-proof guns).3
- Increased accountability of gun dealers reduces the flow of illegal guns into communities.4
- The majority of Americans— including gun owners—support a number of common sense gun safety policies such as universal background checks.5

Our Impact

Our Center’s greatest strength is working collaboratively with partners and decision-makers in order to close the gap between research, practice and policy.

Case Study I: Studies by Center faculty on changes in gun laws in Connecticut and Missouri6-8 find that requiring universal background checks and permits to purchase (PTP) handguns are among the most successful tools we have to reduce homicides, suicides, shootings of law enforcement, and the overall flow of guns to criminals. The Center developed comprehensive communications and media outreach strategies for these studies, yielding thousands of stories and editorials/opinion pieces.

- The study results were used to push back against proposed bills in North Carolina and Iowa which would have repealed their universal background check and PTP laws.
- The research was the basis for a national grassroots campaign by Faiths United to Prevent Gun Violence to mobilize and educate faith-based leaders around the country on the importance of the policy.
- The research led to the introduction of federal legislation (House & Senate) which seeks to expand PTP to more states.
- President Obama cited the research in his address to the nation on January 5, 2016 when making the case to the American people about the importance of universal background checks to reduce gun violence.
Case Study II: Center faculty have been instrumental in the work of the Consortium for Risk-Based Firearm Policy. The Consortium identifies gaps in current gun violence prevention policies and offers solutions for rational, effective, and evidence-based gun policies.

Case Study III: Just weeks after the Sandy Hook school shooting in Connecticut, the Johns Hopkins University and Bloomberg School of Public Health brought together more than 20 global leaders in gun policy and violence for the Summit on Reducing Gun Violence in America. Contributors met immediately after the Summit to distill the best research and data into a set of clear and comprehensive policy recommendations to prevent gun violence.

- The Consortium released two sets of recommendations (federal, state) to inform evidence-based policymaking, particularly with respect to gun violence and dangerous behaviors. Briefings were held on Capitol Hill for Congressional offices. In response to stakeholder requests from around the country, the Consortium has participated in more than a dozen educational forums and produced tailored state reports and recommendations.

- On September 30, 2014 Governor Jerry Brown signed into law California AB 1014. This law allows family members and law enforcement officers to seek a gun violence restraining order (GVRO) against people who pose an immediate threat of harm to themselves or others. The law, which took effect on January 1, 2016, is consistent with one of the Consortium’s recommendations and allows individuals to petition the courts to temporarily prohibit an individual from purchasing or possessing firearms for the duration of the GVRO.

- Center faculty continue to work as part of the Consortium to advance translation of the evidence base into policy at the state and federal levels.

"For more than 20 years, we have been delivering on our goal to bring public health perspectives and expertise to the complex policy issues related to gun violence prevention.”
- Daniel Webster, ScD, MPH Director