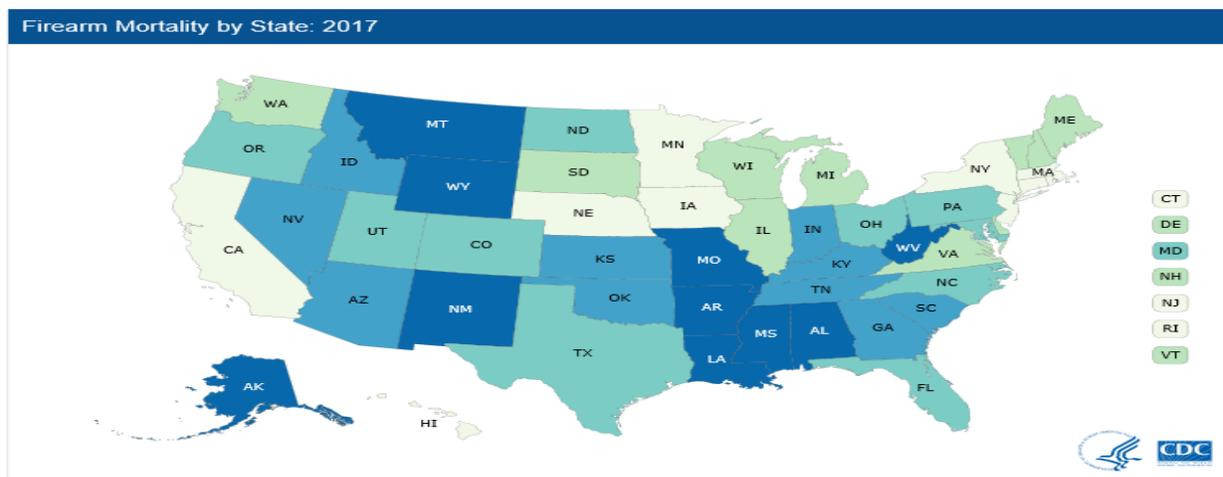


My name is Ahmad Mostafavifar. I am a gun owner, Physician, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Ohio State University (OSU), and Board member at the Columbus Medical Association (CMA).

I believe that we can maintain the integrity of the Second Amendment, and at the same time make reasonable steps to make society safer. In recent days several bills have been introduced that address some portion of the challenge firearm regulations, including SB 182, SB 183, SB 184, HB 348, HB 349, HB 354, and Governor DeWine's STRONG OHIO plan.

I am writing to provide some background on the research regarding the prevalence of firearms in our country and impacts of attempts to improve the safety of our citizens.

Most medical organizations are calling firearm deaths a public health emergency at a time when over a hundred Americans are dying every day from firearms. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) there were almost 40,000 Americans killed from firearms in 2017, with about two thirds of these being suicides. Furthermore, according to the CDC, states with high gun ownership (WV, AL, WY, MS, LA) have a higher firearm mortality rate compared to states with low gun ownership (HI, MA, RI, NY, NJ).



Age-Adjusted Death Rates¹



Globally, the United States (US) has the highest firearm death rate of developed countries (JAMA 2016). Firearm deaths are the second major cause of death in children and adolescents (Cunningham, NEJM 2018) behind only motor vehicle accidents, this is especially alarming as children have the most life years lost.

Firearms are lethal and intensify violence. When a perpetrator uses a gun rather than a knife or club or bare fists, the likelihood that the victim will die is greatly increased. The CDC breaks down firearm deaths into suicides, homicides, and gun accidents. In the US most firearms deaths are suicides in males, with the highest suicide death rate being in rural areas. Almost 65 Americans kill themselves

with guns every day. Firearms in the home are associated with higher rates of suicide while, storing a gun loaded and unlocked are independent risk factors for suicide (Brent, Kellermann, Conwell). Furthermore, suicides are impulsive acts that are aided by the availability of a firearm. Red flags laws can allow family members or the police to remove firearms during this critical period. Removing guns will not eliminate all suicides. Some determined individuals will find ways to get guns or will choose alternative methods. But many others will not try at all. Simply put access to guns increases suicides.

ACCESS TO GUNS RAISES THE RISK OF SUICIDE		
VARIABLE	States with the Highest Rates of Gun Ownership	States with the Lowest Rates of Gun Ownership
Average population 2001–2005	49 million	50 million
Percent of households with guns	47	15
Total firearm suicides	16,577	4,257
Total nonfirearm suicides	9,172	9,259

Source: Miller M and Hemenway D. Guns and suicide in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine* 2008; 359:672-3.

A comprehensive policy approach to reducing gun injuries includes sensible regulations concerning 4 time periods. The time of manufacture, time of sale, period of possession, and period of use. But most regulatory resources have gone into the last 2 time periods in the form of punishment or jail sentences. The U.S. already has the strictest jail sentences in the world and this has not deterred firearm related injuries and deaths. We need to look at the time of manufacture and sale of guns. Gun manufactures can make safer guns such as guns that don't go off when dropped, magazine safeties, personalized guns, and etc. Gun distribution should require universal background checks, sale of firearms accompanied by educational programs in safe storage and use, raising the minimum age to purchase a firearm to twenty-one, and more support for The Bureau of Alcohol & Tobacco & Firearms & Explosives (ATF) to ensure gun dealers do not readily supply felons.

Background checks are a vital part of firearm legislation. No law can stop all dangerous behavior, but background checks stem the easy flow of guns to prohibited people. Research shows that prohibited people disproportionately seek guns in unlicensed online sales. Responsible gun owners have nothing to fear from a background check and in fact, pass background checks routinely whenever they buy guns from a licensed dealer. Also, raising the minimum age to purchase a gun to twenty-one has the potential to decrease school mass shooting deaths by one third.

The American College of Physicians (ACP) has come out with a position paper on firearm deaths due to the continued public health crisis. Some of their recommendations include universal background checks, waiting periods, educational programs, and red flag laws.

POSITION PAPER

Annals of Internal Medicine

Reducing Firearm Injuries and Deaths in the United States: A Position Paper From the American College of Physicians

Renee Butkus, BA; Robert Doherty, BA; and Sue S. Bornstein, MD; for the Health and Public Policy Committee of the American College of Physicians*

For more than 20 years, the American College of Physicians (ACP) has advocated for the need to address firearm-related injuries and deaths in the United States. Yet, firearm violence continues to be a public health crisis that requires the nation's immediate attention. The policy recommendations in this paper build on, strengthen, and expand current ACP policies approved by the Board of Regents in April 2014, based on analysis of ap-

proaches that the evidence suggests will be effective in reducing deaths and injuries from firearm-related violence.

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For author affiliations, see end of text.
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In conclusion, there is a way to keep society reasonably safe and maintain the integrity of the Second Amendment. We did it with cars by making them safer using air bags, anti-lock brakes, seat belts, driver's license ages, child car seats, and manufacturing safer cars. We didn't take cars away, we just made them safer and we can do the same with firearms. I urge your careful consideration of the many gun regulations being proposed and adopt new laws that make Ohio communities and your family safer.

Regards,

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