



America Can't Afford Gun Violence

Gun violence injuries, including self-inflicted gunshots, are [among the five](#) leading causes of death for individuals ages 1 to 64 in the United States. On average, [96 Americans](#) are killed each day with guns. In fact, [gun-related deaths outpace](#) motor vehicle deaths in 21 states and the District of Columbia. Tragedy after tragedy, we are reminded of the devastating impact that gun violence has on American lives, and that the cost implications of gun violence go beyond the tragic loss of life. From health care costs to lost wages, gun violence has a negative impact on the U.S. economy.

Putting a price tag on gun violence in America involves measuring the direct and indirect costs of a firearm injury or death. Direct [costs](#) include emergency services, law enforcement investigations, medical and mental health services, as well as legal fees and prison costs. Gunshot wounds cost [\\$2.8 billion](#) per year in hospital bills, while long-term prison costs for people who commit crimes using guns total [\\$5.2 billion](#) per year.

While more difficult to measure, the indirect costs associated with gun violence are much higher. Lost wages and economic contributions from both victims and imprisoned perpetrators amount to an annual cost of [\\$49 billion](#), and losses in quality of life are estimated to cost [\\$169 billion](#). Though a lack of data makes it difficult to fully calculate, researchers have estimated that after accounting for direct and indirect costs, gun violence in America has an annual price tag of [\\$229 billion](#), over two times the size of New Mexico's economy.

The economic health of local communities is hampered by gun violence. Sharp increases in gun violence can reduce the growth rate of new businesses and slow home value appreciation. In Minneapolis, for example, each additional gun homicide in a given year was associated with [80 fewer jobs](#) in the neighborhood the following year. Across six different American cities, from Baton Rouge to San Francisco, neighborhood surges in gun violence slowed home value appreciation by about [4 percent](#).

We've seen that gun violence is a drain on the U.S. economy, and given its prevalence, a public health problem as well. Yet federal funding to track this crisis has been [severely limited](#) due to the Dickey Amendment, which has effectively restricted the use of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) funds for gun violence research since 1996. Even though gun violence causes about as many deaths as liver disease, funding allocated for gun violence research is [less than 1 percent](#) of that for liver disease research. The 1996 provision has had a [chilling effect](#) on this research, shifting funds away from studies on gun violence nationwide.

Hopefully, the FY 2018 omnibus, which clarifies that CDC funds can be used to research gun violence and its causes, will spur an increase in gun-related research inside and outside the

government. This is a significant step towards effectively reducing gun related injuries and deaths and its associated costs.