



Firearm Restrictions and Youth's Public Safety With Gun Violence in the U.S.



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INTRODUCTION

Firearms are powerful weapons, and have the potential to result in irreversible consequences. In a time of debate about what the proper course of action is regarding this matter, tensions are intense, and the truth can be overlooked—or even intentionally neglected. This research evaluates various legislative measures and their effectiveness in protecting specifically the youth of America (ages 15-24) from violence caused by firearms. In addition to examining laws, it also analyzes key arguments from anti-gun advocates, evaluates their feasibility, and considers how these ideas interact with modern interpretations of the Second Amendment. While gun possession is a constitutional right granted to all Americans, preventing disasters that may arise from this liberty is also imperative.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

This study began with a preliminary search investigating the scale of gun violence and where it is most prevalent. After identifying the locations that face a lot of debate on this topic or one reason or another, the next step was to examine federal acts, Supreme Court landmark cases, and state statutes. Some states had passed bills on matters such as gun violence restraining orders (GVROs), while some did not even have any legislation passed. With this covering the political aspect of the matter, the CDC Wonder database was used to collect statistics on gun deaths (homicides and suicides) in respect to the population of four states: CA, MS, NY, and TX during the period of 2008 to 2024. Based on societal call to actions, three youth-protection driven groups were analyzed to see if their actions and arguments proved effective next to the trends.

DATA AND FINDINGS

Crude Rate Per 100,000 Of Gun Suicides and Homicides in Ages 15-24 From 2008-2024

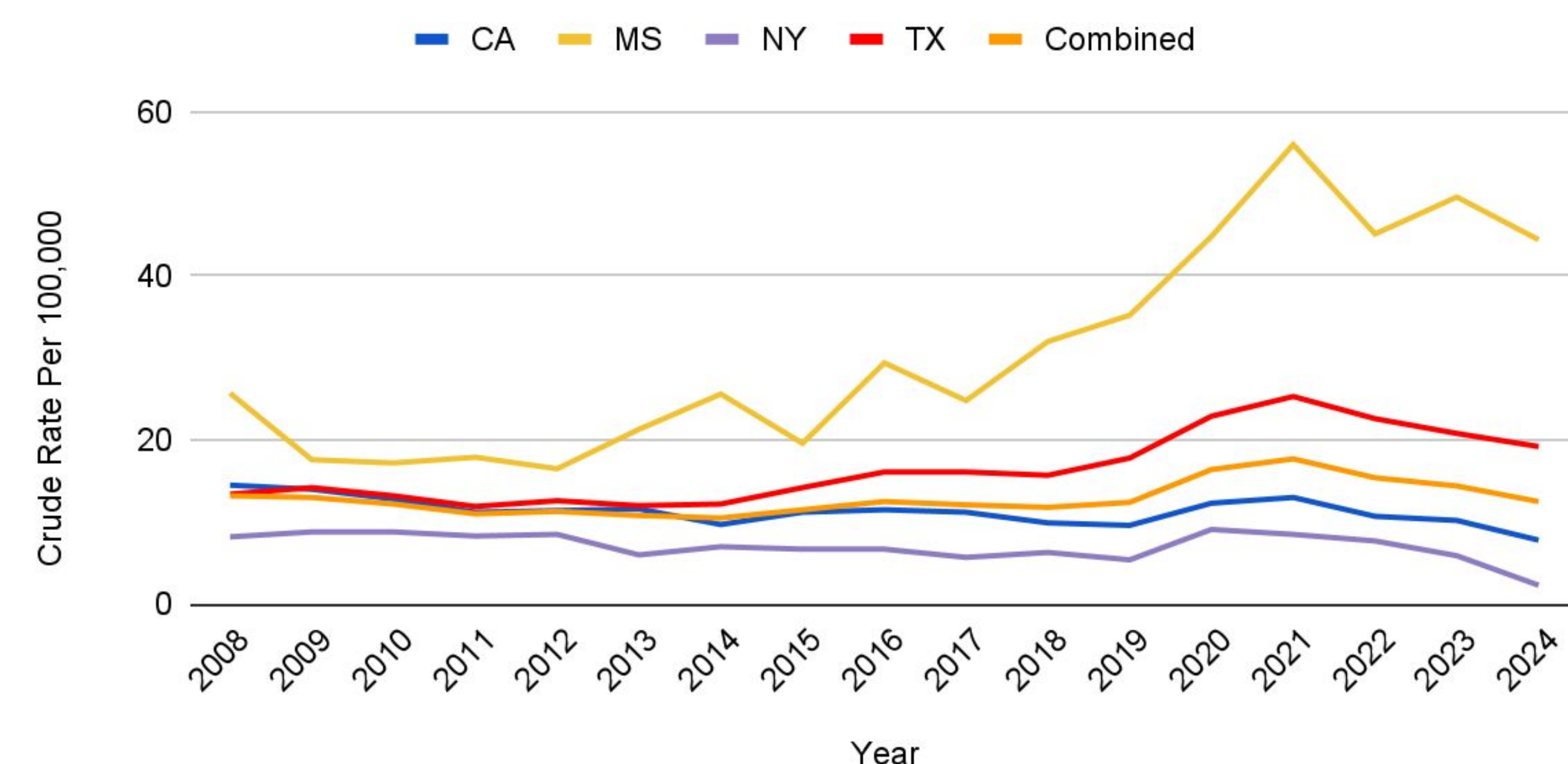


Figure 1: Preceding the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic, the number of deaths to the population from this age cohort were similar, but some have decreased more than others

States' Laws on Concealed Carry of Firearms

License/Permit Required	No License/Permit Required	
CA (2022)	MS (2016)	
NY (1911)	TX (1995)	
States' Laws Permitting Gun Violence Restraining Orders (Red Flag Laws)		
Permitted	Not Passed	
NY (2019)	MS	
CA (2014)	TX	
States' Laws on a Permit Being Required to Purchase a Firearm		
Permit Required	Permit Not Required	
NY (2022)	MS	
CA (2015)	TX	
States' Laws on Background Checks Being Required for Private Party Sales		
Required	Not Required	
CA (1991)	MS	
NY (2013)	TX	
States' Laws on Open Carry of Firearms		
Allowed	Prohibited by law	Partial by case status
MS (2013)	NY (1911)	CA (1967)
TX (2015)		

Anti-Gun Group Rankings

Group Name	Argument	Political Action	Viability	Actions Taken	Reach (IG)
March For Our Lives	Stricter laws + cultural change (not total bans)	White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention; Protect IL Communities Act; CA AB 28 & SB 2	Moderate — policy change possible, no constitutional change	Rallies; voter registration; policy advocacy	408K
Sandy Hook Promise	Prevention through education ("know the signs")	Stop School Violence Act	High — widely accepted, easy to implement	School programs; awareness campaigns; research teach it	153K
Youth Over Guns	Reduce violence through culture & environment	None	High — mental health + community focus	Social media; safe spaces for mental health; research for mental wellness	8.2K

Figure 2 (left): The table shows state firearm laws in respect to Figure 1, particularly in the dates and certain states.

Figure 3 (right): The table ranks youth anti-gun advocacy groups from the most effective (top) to the least effective (bottom) in terms of primarily political action and arguments.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND NEXT STEPS

Conclusion:

From the data collected, there appears to be a slight association between more restrictive firearm regulations and lower youth firearm death rates from suicides and homicides. At the state level, jurisdictions with stricter laws, such as CA and NY, consistently show lower crude rates per 100,000 compared to less restrictive states like TX and MS. However, when aligning policy changes with observed trends, legislation alone does not appear to produce clear or consistent shifts in outcomes. Overall, gun laws may influence public safety, but they are not the sole determining factor in whether youth firearm deaths increase or decrease.

Implications:

Since changes in legislation do not consistently correspond to sharp increases or decreases in firearm-related deaths, it can be inferred that other factors are also contributing to these patterns. Environmental and socioeconomic conditions, along with access to resources and general awareness, likely play a significant role in shaping these outcomes. Additionally, the policy proposals examined from advocacy groups appear only moderately viable within the current legal framework, especially following *NYSPPRA v. Bruen* (2022), which reinforced strong protections for carrying firearms in public under the Second Amendment.

Next Steps:

There is no single solution to preventing firearm-related violence. However, one consistent factor across prevention strategies is education. While policy changes can be slow and limited in impact on their own, increasing awareness about risk factors, consequences, and prevention methods may help reduce future harm. Further research should also focus on isolating additional variables, such as socioeconomic status and community environment, to better understand what is driving the differences seen across states.

DISCUSSION, ANALYSIS, AND EVALUATION

The data reveal that more restrictive gun laws on a state level can influence gun suicides and homicides by resulting in a decreased level compared to the states that have less restrictive laws. When comparing the trends in Figure 1 with those in Figure 2, states with more restrictive legislation, such as required background checks for private-party sales or a permit required to conceal carry, have lower rates (CA and NY) than those with less restrictive regulations (TX and MS). Lining up the changes in trends for each line in Figure 1 with the year that statutes or senate bills were passed also shows that the regulations alone do not make a significant difference in the crude rate of gun suicides and homicides per 100,000 youths aged 15-24. For example, after MS legalized open carry in 2013, the crude rate continued its upward trend; however, other factors may have influenced this. While one implication of this study is that it examines only laws, it, on the other hand, shows the strict relationship between the level of gun violence and laws. The viability of gun-control advocacy groups can be evaluated by considering that laws may have an impact, but that impact would be more drastic when combined with other factors. Socioeconomic factors may well be influencing the quality of life and the perceived need to carry a firearm.

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