

Gun Violence

POSITION

There is a definite need to address handgun use and the accompanying violence that leads individuals to use handguns. ANA supports both the waiting period for the purchase of handguns and a ban on the sale of all assault weapons.

BACKGROUND

The number of Americans killed or wounded by handguns each year has reached epidemic proportions. Police chiefs across the country report increases in the use of weapons with large capacity ammunition magazines, clips that contain 10 rounds or more, in crime and against police officers and civilians since the federal ban expired in 2004.

- Gunmen used large capacity magazines in their killing rampages in Tucson, January 8, 2011 (6 killed, 13 wounded); Fort Hood, November 5, 2009 (13 killed, 34 wounded); Virginia Tech, April 17, 2007 (32 killed, 17 wounded); Columbine High School, April 20, 1999 (13 killed, 23 wounded), and the Long Island Railroad, December 7, 1993 (6 killed, 19 wounded).
- Six states and the District of Columbia limit the capacity of magazines.
- “Based on production data from firearm manufacturers, there are roughly 300 million firearms owned by civilians in the United States as of 2010. Of these, about 100 million are handguns,” reported Just Facts.¹
- According to the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), in one year, 31,224 people died from gun violence and 66,769 people survived gun injuries.
- For 2009, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that nonfatal firearm incidents and victims were 352,810.
- The National Center for Victims of Crime states that, “victims and victimizers of violence are admitted into acute care settings, such as hospital emergency departments or trauma centers. The majority of cases will be gunshot or knife wounds, and require acute trauma care.”

RATIONALE

Firearms, especially handguns, remain a leading instrument of violent injury. As the largest single group of clinical health care professionals within the health system, licensed registered nurses are on the front lines of the health care system and witness firsthand the devastation from the injuries sustained as a result of gun violence.

There remains a strong need to address the endless cycle of gun violence and inadequate access to mental health services.

¹ Web page: Just Facts, February 11, 2013. <http://www.justfacts.com/guncontrol.asp>