

The "Wednesday Word"

May 25, 2022

"More Guns Per Capita than Any Other Country in the World"



Today's Wednesday Word was originally going to be a piece on graduations and the notion that upon graduating, anything is possible. That plan was scrapped after yet another horrific school shooting yesterday in these United States of America. This "land that we love", this bastion of democracy and justice that too many of know as a land that often has been lacking not only in love, but in democracy, and in justice, as well. Over the past few days 10 mostly older African Americans were gunned down at a grocery in Buffalo; Taiwanese churchgoers in California were shot at by an individual angered over conflicts between China and Taiwan (but for the heroic actions of the lone casualty, many other lives likely would have been taken); 2 people were killed and 3 others were injured following gunshots at a Texas flea market; several high school graduations were marred by gun violence; and the list goes on and on. This insanity must stop.

Gun violence in this country is beyond out of control. While the mass shootings grab the headlines and our awareness for a day or two, they are so often pushed to the back of our consciousness by the next day's events be they more tragedy or merely inane distractions. More time and attention has been paid to a high profile slap that occurred two months ago than to the actual loss of lives that continue to ravage our communities. So many of us become numb to the gun violence we hear about every day. That is why the pictures of some of the people mentioned earlier, appear above.

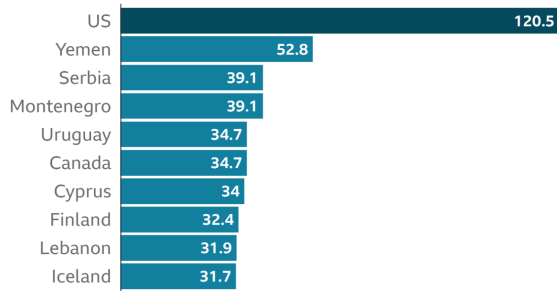
Here are several sobering data points:

- With the exception of Brazil, more gun murders are committed in the U.S. than in any other country on the planet.¹
- Eight out of every ten murders and suicides in the US involve a firearm.²

- “The US ratio of 120.5 firearms per 100 residents, up from 88 per 100 in 2011, far surpasses that of other countries around the world.”³

Top 10 civilian gun-owning countries

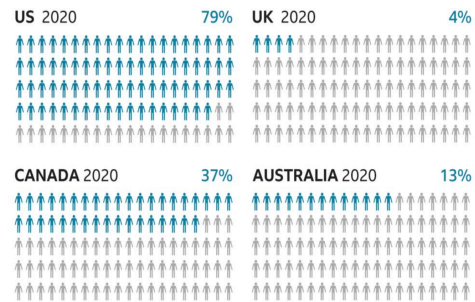
Estimated number of firearms per 100 residents



Source: Small Arms Survey, 2018

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An international comparison of gun-related killings as a % of all homicides



Source: CDC, House of Commons, Statistics Canada, Australian Institute of Criminology

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There is a lot to unpack here:

- Gun ownership in the U.S. is often conflated with 2nd Amendment rights.
- Congress has the ability to ban assault rifles (weapons of choice in mass shootings) and restrict access to guns of all types.
- More detailed background checks along with an improved mental health care delivery system could significantly reduce the incidences of murder and mass shootings.
- Crimes of passion are far less deadly where guns are not involved.

The constant barrage of daily gun murders in our cities, suburbs, and rural communities, now find that no longer are our “thoughts and prayers” sufficient. We must all take action; not arms, to ameliorate this maddening cycle of assault. Pick any one of the preceding statements and begin the work of addressing the concern more fully. Educate yourself and others on what the 2nd Amendment actually says. Write your congressperson and other elected officials demanding gun reform and additional funding and support for mental health care. If you own a weapon, be responsible with it. There is so much we can do. We must do so now, since its already way past too late.

Please stay well and please stay safe.

Dereck J. Rovaris, Sr., Ph.D.
AABHE, Immediate Past President

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¹<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/gun-deaths-by-country>

²<https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>

³<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-41488081>