

Two Months and Two Years after Newtown – Public Opinion on Gun Policy

Public support for gun policies in 2013 and 2015, and estimated effectiveness of the policy in 2015.

Percent in Favor (Effectiveness Score)*			Policy Item
2013	2015a	2015b	
			<i>Assault-weapon and ammunition</i>
69	63	86 (42)	Banning the sale of military-style, semiautomatic assault weapons that are capable of shooting more than 10 rounds of ammunition without reloading
68		84 (41)	Banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition clips or magazines that allow some guns to shoot more than 20 bullets before reloading
69		84 (41)	Banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition clips or magazines that allow some guns to shoot more than 20 bullets before reloading
56			Banning the possession of military-style, semiautomatic assault weapons that are capable of shooting more than 10 rounds of ammunition without reloading if the government is required to pay gun-owners the fair market value of their weapons
55	60		Banning the possession of large-capacity ammunition clips or magazines that allow some guns to shoot more than 10 bullets before reloading if the government is required to pay gun-owners the fair market value of their ammunition clips
			<i>Prohibited person policies</i>
75			Prohibiting a person convicted of two or more crimes involving alcohol or drugs within a 3-year period from having a gun for 10 years
81			Prohibiting a person convicted of violating a domestic-violence restraining order from having a gun for 10-years
83	73		Prohibiting a person convicted of a serious crime as a juvenile from having a gun for 10 years
70	66		Prohibiting a person under the age of 21 from having a handgun
86			Prohibiting a person on the terror watch list from having a gun
			<i>Prohibiting people who have been convicted of each of these crimes from having a gun for 10 years:</i>
71	68		Public display of a gun in a threatening manner excluding self-defense
74	71		Domestic violence
53	56		Assault or battery that does not result in serious injury or involve a lethal weapon
38	42		Drunk and disorderly conduct
58	54		Carrying a concealed gun without a permit
26			Indecent exposure
			<i>Background check policies</i>
89	84	97 (54)	Requiring a background check system for all gun sales to make sure a purchaser is not legally prohibited from having a gun
66			Increase federal funding to states to improve reporting of people prohibited by law from having a gun to the background-check system
76			Allow law enforcement up to 5 business days, if needed, to complete a background check for gun buyers
75			Requiring health care providers to report people who threaten to harm themselves or others to the background-check system to prevent them from having a gun for 6 months
85	82	94 (48)	Requiring state to report a person to the background check system who is prohibited from buying a gun either because of involuntary commitment to a hospital for psychiatric treatment or because of being declared mentally incompetent by a court of law
79			Requiring the military to report a person who has been rejected from service because of mental illness or drug or alcohol abuse to the background-check system to prevent them from having a gun
			<i>Policies affecting gun dealers</i>
85	79		Allowing the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms to temporarily take away a gun dealer's license if an audit reveals record-keeping violations and the dealer cannot account for 20 or more guns

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73	72	92 (32)	Allowing cities to sue licensed gun dealers when there is strong evidence that the gun dealer's careless sales practices allowed many criminals to obtain guns
69	79		Allowing the information about which gun dealers sell the most guns used in crimes to be available to the police and the public so that those gun dealers can be prioritized for greater oversight
76	71		Requiring a mandatory minimum sentence of 2 years in prison for a person convicted of knowingly selling a gun to someone who cannot legally have a gun
			Other gun policies
77	72		Requiring people to obtain a license from a local law enforcement agency before buying a gun to verify their identity and ensure that they are not legally prohibiting from having a gun
44			Providing government funding for research to develop and test "smart guns" designed to fire only when held by the owner of the gun or other authorized user
67	69		Requiring by law that a person lock up the guns in the home when not in use to prevent handling by children or teenagers without supervision
53			Allowing police officers to search for and remove guns from a person, without a warrant, if they believe the person is dangerous because of a mental illness, emotional instability, or a tendency to be violent
32	39		Allowing people who have lost the right to have a gun due to mental illness to have that right restored if they are determined not to be dangerous
		92 (42)	Maximize enforcement efforts to prevent gun violence and prosecute gun crime
		18 (-7)	Put armed police officers in every school

Percent Not in Favor (Effectiveness Score)*			Policy Item
2013	2015a	2015b	
			Assault-weapon and ammunition
31 **	37 **	14 (4)	Banning the sale of military-style, semiautomatic assault weapons that are capable of shooting more than 10 rounds of ammunition without reloading
32 **		16 (5)	Banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition clips or magazines that allow some guns to shoot more than 20 bullets before reloading
31 **		16 (5)	Banning the sale of large-capacity ammunition clips or magazines that allow some guns to shoot more than 20 bullets before reloading
			Background check policies
11 **	16 **	3 (39)	Requiring a background check system for all gun sales to make sure a purchaser is not legally prohibited from having a gun
15 **	18 **	6 (24)	Requiring state to report a person to the background check system who is prohibited from buying a gun either because of involuntary commitment to a hospital for psychiatric treatment or because of being declared mentally incompetent by a court of law
			Policies affecting gun dealers
21 **	28 **	8 (3)	Allowing cities to sue licensed gun dealers when there is strong evidence that the gun dealer's careless sales practices allowed many criminals to obtain guns
			Other gun policies
		8 (7)	Maximize enforcement efforts to prevent gun violence and prosecute gun crime
		82 (-17)	Put armed police officers in every school

* "Effectiveness Score" for the policy making gun violence a LOT worse (-100) to a LOT better (+100). No effect = 0.

** Percent in favor subtracted from 100. Therefore, may include responses of no opinion.

References

2013: Barry, C.L., et al., After Newtown – public opinion on gun policy and mental illness, NEJM (2013),
 2015a: Barry, C.L., et al., Two years after Newtown—public opinion on gun policy revisited, Prev.Med. (2015),
 2015b: Sorenson, S.B., Assessing views about gun violence reduction policy: A look at type of violence and expected effectiveness, Prev. Med. (2015), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jypmed.2015.04.025>