



Grand Challenges
for Social Work

Preventing Gun Violence

Preventing Gun Violence

Patricia Logan-Greene
State University of New York at Buffalo

Neil B. Guterman
New York University

GRAND CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE

Working Paper No. 27

December 2023

Grand Challenge: *Prevent gun violence*

GRAND CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORK INITIATIVE

The Grand Challenges for Social Work are designed to focus a world of thought and action on the most compelling and critical social issues of our day. Each grand challenge is a broad but discrete concept where social work expertise and leadership can be brought to bear on bold new ideas, scientific exploration and surprising innovations.

We invite you to review the following challenges with the goal of providing greater clarity, utility and meaning to this roadmap for lifting up the lives of individuals, families and communities struggling with the most fundamental requirements for social justice and human existence.

The Grand Challenges for Social Work are:

- Ensure healthy development of all youth
- Close the health gap
- Build healthy relationships to end violence
- Advance long and productive lives
- Eradicate social isolation
- End homelessness
- Eliminate racism
- Prevent gun violence
- Promote smart decarceration
- Reduce extreme economic inequality
- Build financial capability for all
- Harness technology for social good
- Create social responses to a changing environment
- Achieve equal opportunity and justice

Working Paper



GRAND CHALLENGES LEADERSHIP BOARD

Steve Anderson
University of Illinois at Champaign Urbana

Richard P. Barth (Past Chair)
University of Maryland

Melissa Begg^a
Columbia University

Quincy Bloxom
Erase the Divide LLC

Denise Burnette
Virginia Commonwealth University

Sarah Butts
National Association of Social Workers

Ilene Allinger Candreva
Tucci Learning Solutions, Inc.

Julie Cederbaum
University of Southern California

Jandel Crutchfield
The University of Texas at Arlington

William Elliott III
University of Michigan

Anthony Estreet
National Association of Social Workers

Catherine Gayle
Savannah State University

Neil B. Guterman
New York University

Melissa Haley
National Association of Black Social Workers

Schnavia Smith Hatcher^a
University of Alabama

Benjamin Henwood
University of Southern California

Carol Hood
Mental Health America of California

Sean Joe
Washington University in St. Louis

Charles Lewis
Congressional Research Institute for Social Work and Policy

Ron Manderscheid^a
University of Southern California & Johns Hopkins University

Mary McKay
Washington University in St. Louis

Laura Nissen
Portland State University

Desmond Patton
University of Pennsylvania

Carrie Pettus (Chair)^a
Wellbeing & Equity Innovations

Audrey Shillington
San José State University

Nancy Smyth
University at Buffalo

Marvin Southard
Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health and University of Southern California

Michael S. Spencer^a
University of Washington

Martell Teasley
University of Utah

Halaevalu Vakalahi
Council on Social Work Education

Lynn Videka
University of Michigan

Amy Ward
East Central University

Gautam Yadama
Boston College

^a Member of the Leadership Board's Executive Committee

^b Retired

Preventing Gun Violence¹

Patricia Logan-Greene and Neil B. Guterman

The United States presently has the highest rates of gun violence in the world, and both the widespread availability and accessibility of guns, and their uniquely lethal risks make gun violence a distinct and perilous national grand challenge. Given the places in which social workers deliver their services, our professional values, commitments and perspectives, we believe social workers are in special positions of opportunity to work to materially reduce this devastating national problem. Now is the time to state that gun violence prevention in the U.S. is one of the grandest challenges presently facing American society, our communities, and thus the profession of social work. We believe we can and must forge advances in social work practices and policies, offering the promise of saving lives, promoting physical and mental wellbeing, advancing social equity, and strengthening communities and the wider social fabric. In this position paper, we overview the problem of gun violence in the U.S. and outline a proposed initial research and action agenda to advance prevention, intervention practices, and policy advocacy most needed to forge progress in reducing gun violence in America.

Key words: gun violence, firearm violence, community violence, intimate partner violence, suicide, homicide, prevention, gun death, firearm death, mass shootings, Second Amendment

GUN VIOLENCE IS A GRAND AND URGENT SOCIETAL PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES

Gun violence² is a problem of staggering proportions in the United States and is presently reaching all-time highs. According to the most recent data available, there were 48,830 violent gun deaths in the U.S. in 2021 alone, and the per capita rate of gun deaths in the U.S. reached

¹ The authors wish to thank Deborah Gorman-Smith, Mark Kaplan, Karen Slovak, Mickey Sperlich, and Christopher St. Vil for their input on this draft, which we consider a working position paper, subject to updates, revisions, and edits.

² The terms “gun” and “firearm” are not synonyms. The term guns is broader and includes other mechanisms of firing a projectile, such as nail guns and water guns. The term firearm is more specific and technically more accurate. However, because the word “gun” is used more frequently in the public discourse, we use the terms interchangeably in this document.

13.6 per 100,000 in 2020, the highest rate since the surge in violent gun deaths witnessed in the mid-1990s (Gramlich, 2022). Tragically, since 2020, violent gun deaths have become the leading cause of death for children and adolescents, largely due to a steep rise in child-related gun homicides (Goldstick et al., 2022). As has become ever more apparent in the media, we have recently witnessed a dramatic rise in mass shooting incidents, with a 52.5% increase from 2020-2021 alone (Cunningham, 2023). Especially disturbing from a social justice and equity lens, violent gun deaths disproportionately affect African Americans, who experience an approximate 600% higher rate of homicide than other racial groups in the U.S. (Cunningham, 2023), underscoring the roles of systemic racism and structural inequities in shaping gun violence. It is important to note however, that the impact of gun violence is faced by all Americans, across all geographic, social, and economic loci (Cunningham, 2023). A recent survey, for example, found that one in five American adults report having had a family member killed by a gun, and one in six reports witnessing a shooting (KFF, 2023). To drive home the magnitude of this national problem to the public, journalist Nicholas Kristof accurately stated in 2015 that “more Americans have died from guns in the U.S. since 1968 than on the battlefields of all the wars in American history” (2015).

The colossal magnitude of violent gun deaths, the widespread availability and accessibility, and the unique lethality and risks of misuse of firearms in the U.S. make gun violence a distinct and perilous national grand challenge. Given where social workers are situated in schools, youth and community centers, mental health centers, intimate partner violence services, and legal and criminal justice settings, community-based violence intervention programs, and hospitals/trauma centers, we are in unique positions of opportunity to materially reduce the problem in the U.S. (Sperlich et al., 2019). With professional commitment, knowledge, and action, we take the position that now is the time to claim that the prevention of gun violence in the U.S. is one of the grandest challenges presently facing the profession of social work, and we can and must tackle the unique set of challenges and opportunities for social work practices and policies, ones that can save lives, promote physical and mental wellbeing, and strengthen communities and the wider social fabric.

The Exceptional American Context of Gun Violence and Legal Backdrop

The extent of gun violence and the wide availability of firearms in the U.S. are without peer or parallel anywhere across the globe: With the highest per capita rate of gun ownership in the world, the U.S. holds almost half of the world’s civilian-owned guns despite being less than five percent of the world’s population (Council on Foreign Affairs, 2022). Further, the U.S. has the highest rates of gun homicides and suicides among all higher-income countries globally: while the overall U.S. homicide rate is 750% higher than other high-income nations, the U.S. gun homicide rate is 2,490% higher. Although the overall suicide rate in the U.S. is similar to other high-income countries, the U.S. gun suicide rate is 980% higher (Grinshteyn & Hemenway, 2019).

A direct line can be drawn between the availability and accessibility of guns within the U.S. and the incidence of gun violence. One comparative cross-sectional state-level analysis found that state gun law permissiveness is associated with significantly higher rates of mass shootings and that a 10% increase in gun ownership is associated with a 35% increase in mass shootings (Reeping et al., 2019). Another study found that the top quartile of states with the most stringent

gun laws had significantly lower firearm suicide and homicide rates compared to those in the bottom quartile states (i.e., with the most permissive gun laws) (Fleegler et al., 2013).

The origin of the uniquely extensive problem of gun availability and gun violence in America can be squarely focused on our nation’s founding legal framework, and, in particular, the Second Amendment of the Constitution, which the courts have interpreted as providing an established individual-, and not merely collective-level, right to own a firearm (Schmidt, 2007; Hardy, 2011). This legal right is relatively unparalleled globally as presently only three out of 200 national constitutions afford citizens an individual right to bear arms – Guatemala, Mexico, and the U.S. Importantly, most countries that had historically afforded this individual right of citizens have since repealed such rights (Elkins, 2022). In the absence of a repeal of the Second Amendment to the Constitution or the overturning of its historical interpretation according to individuals’ rights to own guns in the U.S., communities across the U.S. will continue to confront legal challenges to reducing the widespread availability of firearms in the U.S. This is particularly so as we have witnessed expansions of individual-level gun rights with such recent landmark decisions as the 2008 Supreme Court decision *District of Columbia v. Heller*, which explicitly clarified a private citizen’s right to a handgun at home for self-defense. However, the Court also pointed out therein that there are conditions that circumscribe or regulate that right, just as other individual constitutional rights are circumscribed. As the decision stated:

“Like most rights, the Second Amendment right is not unlimited. It is not a right to keep and carry any weapon whatsoever in any manner whatsoever and for whatever purpose: For example, concealed weapons prohibitions have been upheld under the Amendment or state analogues. The Court’s opinion should not be taken to cast doubt on longstanding prohibitions on the possession of firearms by felons and the mentally ill, or laws forbidding the carrying of firearms in sensitive places such as schools and government buildings, or laws imposing conditions and qualifications on the commercial sale of arms (*District of Columbia et al. v. Heller*, 2008).

Spitzer (2017) has importantly noted that gun control laws and gun rights have historically gone “hand in hand” since the founding of the nation, and that “it is only in recent decades, as the gun debate has become more politicized and more ideological that this relationship has been reframed as a zero-sum struggle” (Spitzer, 2017, p. 56), further stating that “the default regarding guns in American history is gun regulation rather than non-regulation” (Spitzer, 2022). Although legal advances are thus available and possible that promote public safety and minimize firearm misuse, the present Supreme Court presently appears inclined to roll back gun possession restrictions. For example, in the 2022 *New York State Rifle & Pistol Association v. Bruen* case struck down a “special need” cause to carry a concealed weapon in public and established a new legal test of a “historical tradition” for any gun regulations, threatening any modern legal prohibitions for firearm access. Given this, advocacy in strengthening such restrictions around legal, safe access and use, as well as enforcement of illegal possession of firearms, will no doubt continue to be at the forefront of the nation’s policy challenges to reduce gun violence, suicides, and deaths in the U.S. (Alschuler, 2023; Webster & Gostin, 2022).

GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND SOCIAL WORK

Working Paper



In the face of the evolving and changing legal backdrop to gun laws, social work's values, roles, service foci, skills, and professional acumen can and must play a significant role in forging real-world progress to reduce gun violence in the U.S. We assert that social workers face a professional and ethical imperative, an enormous opportunity, and a unique role in striving to reduce gun violence. We begin by emphasizing that while all gun-related violence shares the common feature of access to and the use/misuse of firearms, the manifestations of gun violence are multifaceted, and indeed, in some senses, gun violence can be understood as intersecting with an omnibus bundle of problems, which we briefly outline below.

Suicide

The majority of annual deaths involving guns in the U.S. are from suicide. In 2021, 54% of firearm deaths were suicides (Gramlich, 2022). While this relative proportion has decreased compared to homicides in recent years, the raw numbers have increased. The firearm suicide deaths in 2021 represented an 8.4% increase compared to 2020, with especially large increases for Native Americans (48%). Firearms are the leading cause of suicide deaths in the U.S. because they are uniquely lethal. According to a recent analysis of national data from 2007-2014, 89.6% of suicide attempts utilizing guns resulted in death, compared to an average overall fatality rate of 8.5% for all methods combined (Conner et al., 2019). Importantly, men, especially older White men, are more likely to attempt suicide with a firearm compared to women and are, therefore, more likely to die from an attempt. However, women report higher rates of non-fatal suicide attempts. Thus, suicide prevention efforts in the U.S. must include a focus on firearm access in both research and practice.

Intimate Partner Violence

Intimate partner violence (IPV) and guns are related in particularly lethal ways. Having a gun in the home appears to increase both the severity of IPV and the likelihood of fatality (Zeoli et al., 2016). A landmark study in 2003 found that perpetrator firearm access was associated with a fivefold increase in deaths for the victim (Campbell et al., 2003). Additionally, the mere presence of a firearm can itself be a potent threat within a violent relationship, one that has been shown to increase PTSD symptom severity (Sullivan & Weiss, 2017) and sleep disturbances, in part because of specific fears about the vulnerable state of being asleep (Jackson et al., 2020). Moreover, a history of violence towards a partner is related to the future perpetration of gun violence, which is part of why multiple policy mechanisms at the state and federal level target purchases and possession among individuals with IPV convictions. Despite this awareness, prohibitions on new purchases for those with IPV convictions remain more consistent than the removal of guns already in an individual's possession (Frattaroli et al., 2021; Goodyear et al., 2020).

Community Violence

Urban communities facing high levels of poverty, racism, and structural inequalities may incentivize engagement in criminal activities as one of only a small number of visibly profitable industries available, thus contributing to high levels of crime-related violence, including firearm injuries and deaths, especially for young Black males (Bottiani et al., 2021). Day-to-day neighborhood-level shootings may vary in their type, whether intentional, planned shootings as a

result of conflict, impulsive shootings that result when transactions or interactions go sour, or accidental or “collateral” shootings of uninvolved bystanders in the area.

In general, gun-related violent crime has fallen steadily from a peak in the 1990s, however there are presently early signs that the trend may be reversing, especially for gun-related homicides (Kegler et al., 2022). As many firearm deaths in urban areas are related to the drug trade or other illicit activities, there is a need for interventions that can encourage desistance from crime simultaneously with avoiding firearms.

Mass Shootings

Although mass shootings often propel the public perception of and policy-making around gun violence, they comprise only a small fraction of annual deaths from firearms – approximately 0.5% in 2019 (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Moreover, there is no single accepted definition of a mass shooting, and different databases may require a minimum of four fatalities, whereas others require only three victims, including individuals who survive (Booty et al., 2019). This lack of consistent accounting makes it difficult to establish precise analyses of trends and causes for mass shootings. However, there is a general consensus that the frequency of mass shootings in the U.S. is both unique among developed nations and on the rise (Silva, 2022). Mass shootings that occur at schools are particularly horrifying and are on the rise (Katsiyannis et al., 2023).

Moreover, mass shootings take a tremendous toll on the health and well-being of communities both where they occur and among the populace at large, who understandably may conclude that these events can occur at any time (Carlson, 2023). In a recent survey from the American Psychological Association, one-third of adults in the U.S. reported that fear of mass shootings prevented them from going to certain public events they deemed as too dangerous (American Psychological Association, 2019). Mass shootings at school significantly impact parents and youth, even when not directly exposed (Cimolai et al., 2021; Soni & Tekin, 2020).

Race- and Hate-Based Violence

This history of firearms and firearm policy in the US is inextricably connected with political violence and racism (e.g., Carlson, 2020). Some historians have argued that the Second Amendment reflected the founders’ views that the population must be ready to fight a tyrannical government – a notion that seems quaint in the era of advanced weapons of war. However, the creation and application of firearm policies could also be seen as maintaining hegemony by white landowners, particularly against the threat of uprising by oppressed slaves and former slaves (Cramer, 1994). A direct line from this can be traced to current expressions of political and hate-based gun violence in the U.S., evidenced by the rise in membership and activities of right-wing militias and extremist groups (Doxsee, et al., 2022). Another manifestation of this is the growing frequency of hate-crimes against minorities in the U.S., which frequently involve firearms. The majority of bias-motivated crimes in the U.S. are against racial or ethnic minorities – 80% between 2011 and 2015 (Masucci & Langton, 2017) – and non-Hispanic Blacks and Hispanics are more likely to be victimized with a weapon, including firearms, than non-Hispanic Whites (Tessler et al., 2021). Other minorities are often targets of violent hate crimes, including

Jews (Mills, 2020), and members of the AAPI and LGBTQ communities (Burks et al., 2013; Wirtz et al., 2020).

Police- and Other State-Sanctioned Violence

In recent years, police brutality caught on camera against Black Americans has served to raise the prominence of the issue in the national discourse, highlighting not just discriminatory and harmful police practices but also a host of injustices and structural violence experienced by minorities in the U.S. (Delgado, 2020). In a recent review of police interaction with Black Americans, McLeod and coauthors (2020) noted that 23% of victims of fatal police shootings are Black despite being only 13% of the population. Evidence suggests this inflicts a tremendous toll on Black Americans' wellbeing and mental health (e.g., Alang et al., 2022) and fuels the already deep-seated and historical distrust of law enforcement agencies in the U.S. Although the overall death toll from guns in the context of police intervention is small among total deaths – 537 deaths in 2021 – the disproportionate toll on Black Americans is a social justice concern and deaths are likely underreported or misrepresented in official data (Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study, 2019).

Unintentional Injuries

The statistics on unintentional firearms injuries are likely unreliable, especially for injuries that do not result in deaths (Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence, 2020). There are indicators that incidents may be both under- and over-reported in different cases – individuals involved in criminal activities may avoid hospitals, others may do so due to lack of insurance, and some may conceal the intentional nature of their injuries from authorities. Mindful of these potential sources of reporting bias, an estimated 27,000 people are identified as admitted to hospitals for unintentional gun injuries each year in the U.S. (Gani et al., 2017), and 486 deaths were classified as unintentional firearm deaths in 2019 by the CDC (1.2% of all gun fatalities). A 2017 analysis suggested that the most common causes of unintentional firearm deaths were playing with a gun, believing it was not loaded, and hunting accidents (Solnick & Hemenway, 2019). Although young children are especially vulnerable when they have access to a gun, parents of older children (ages 10-18) are more likely to store their guns unsafely (unlocked, loaded, or both), which may explain in part why that age group has higher rates of accidental injuries (Solnick & Hemenway, 2019).

Summary

Although the manifestations and causes of gun deaths are varied, the involvement of firearms and the qualitatively unique risk of extreme harm firearms present suggest gun-specific interventions that might be shared, as we note further below. As an example, preventing firearm access by unauthorized individuals through safe storage and removal of firearms from the homes of individuals in crisis, could prevent multiple types of deaths. Critically, social workers commonly deliver services in settings and situations where we may assess and potentially intervene in ways that can prevent gun-related violence risk, as we discuss further below.

GUN VIOLENCE INTERSECTS WITH OTHER GRAND CHALLENGES FOR SOCIAL WORK

Working Paper



Despite the unique lethality risks that guns present, gun violence and its manifestations also intersect with other Grand Challenges the profession of social work confronts. Gun violence risk, for example, tends to be higher in urban communities and those structurally marginalized and characterized by poverty, histories of redlining and racial segregation, and economic and social exclusion (Jacoby et al., 2018; Johnson et al., 2021; Larsen et al., 2017). Some of the strategies that may serve to reduce gun violence will therefore overlap with those of other identified Grand Challenges for Social Work, most particularly those that aim at Eliminating Racism (Teasley et al., 2021), Reducing Extreme Economic Inequality (Lien et al., 2016), and Building Healthy Relationships to End Violence and Ending Gender-Based Violence (Edleson et al., 2015). Further, social workers often serve those suffering the effects of gun violence and co-occurring behavioral and mental health conditions. Studies have reported, for example, both correlational and prospective predictive relationships between gun violence exposure and internalizing behaviors such as anxiety and depression (e.g., Gaylord et al., 2011), as well as post-traumatic symptomatology, and externalizing behaviors (like increased aggression), including subsequent risk for future victimization, gun carrying, and violence perpetration (Aspholm et al., 2019; Beardlee et al., 2018; Guterman et al., 2003; Quimby et al., 2018). Finally, social workers frequently work with clients who may face high suicide risk in such settings as schools, mental health clinics, hospitals, youth or other community centers (Feldman & Freedenthal, 2006; Moore et al., 2012; Moore et al., 2016). As such, social workers are exceptionally well positioned to intervene to reduce gun violence and its effects, while synergistically addressing related grand challenges in social work. Considering one of many potential examples of such synergistic interactions, illicit gun use tends to be concentrated in specific low-income neighborhoods (Braga et al., 2010), and guns are often used as instruments for illicit economic activities. Thus, progress in reducing economic inequality should contribute to reducing gun use in lower income neighborhoods. Conversely, the presence of gun violence in neighborhoods has been shown to be linked with economic divestment, thereby inhibiting economic activity and jobs (Golash-Boza & Oh, 2021). Thus, preventing gun violence promises to increase the likelihood of economic investment, jobs, and promoting a salutary cycle that can strengthen neighborhoods and communities over time.

For these reasons, although ameliorating the effects of gun violence will be an essential element of many social workers' efforts with traumatized clients, preventing gun violence before-the-fact holds powerful potential to interrupt an "upstream" driver of other downstream problems, ones that can themselves cascade further downward, like economic divestment, increasing social isolation, unemployment and poverty, exacerbating a further downward spiral of more entrenched and seemingly intractable multiple intertwined problems of concern. By preventing gun violence, then, social work can significantly reduce not only victimization, but perpetration of subsequent violence and overuse of the carceral system, itself expensive and rendering its own coercive, unjust and oppressive consequences (see Clear et al., 2003; Pettus-Davis & Epperson, 2015).

THE NEED TO ADVANCE SOCIAL WORK SCHOLARSHIP ON GUN VIOLENCE AND ITS PREVENTION

Until very recently, there has been minimal explicit attention to gun violence by social work researchers and our professional associations (Logan-Greene et al., 2018), although there have

been some nascent developments. In a literature review of all social work journals, Aspholm et al. (2019) identified only 41 articles that focused on interpersonal gun violence over the prior ten years. They also noted significant methodological flaws in this body of research, and very few articles that could meaningfully inform preventive gun violence social work strategies. As another indicator, between 2009 (the first year for which abstracts are searchable online) and 2016 there were no more than three abstracts at the annual Society for Social Work Research conference that included the words “gun” or “firearm”, and in some years there was only one or none. This started to tick up in the following years, and a high-water mark was seen in 2019 when 24 abstracts included “gun or “firearm,” although firearms were not central to the research question in many studies. Despite this, it is important to acknowledge that a small number of excellent social work researchers have been studying the topic for decades, often publishing their findings in non-social work journals.

Not surprisingly, during this same period, there has been minimal professional guidance for social work practitioners about addressing gun violence. Aside from statements following prominent mass shootings, the National Association of Social Workers was largely silent on the issue, until they published two social justice briefs on gun violence in 2017 and 2019 (Arp et al., 2017; Lanyi et al., 2019). To our knowledge, these were the first written works for practicing social workers that centrally addressed gun violence prevention from a national social work association. Despite this, during this time many social work practitioners addressed firearm violence frequently in their practice, especially in the context of lethality assessments, although evidence suggests few have received any relevant training in their degree programs (Sperlich et al., 2022). There have been calls to improve clinical guidance for social work practitioners on gun violence, especially suicide prevention (Joe & Niedermeier, 2008; Logan-Greene et al., 2018).

Social work is not the only discipline that has underattended the issue of gun violence, and there are larger forces that have suppressed firearm related scholarship for decades. Most prominently, the notorious Dickey Amendment of 1996 prohibited federal research dollars from spending on research that might be perceived as advocating for gun control, which, in effect, reduced federal funding on gun violence research by 96% (Alcorn, 2017). Despite this, a small but determined group of researchers continued to publish important studies on firearms, often funded by private foundations, although the pace of publications has lagged in sheer numbers compared to overall increases in the peer-reviewed literature. Alcorn (2017) noted that the number of researchers focused on the topic of gun violence has plateaued since the 1990s. This situation may be improving, however, as Congress clarified in 2018 that a ban on gun violence advocacy did not extend to a ban on gun violence research per se. The following year, \$25 million in federal funding was allocated to gun violence research (Subbaraman, 2020), and a handful of federal Funding Opportunity Announcements have recently focused on gun violence. In the current political era, gun rights and regulations violence remain politically divisive issues. Therefore, it is difficult to predict how federal funding for research will change in years ahead.

**ENVISIONING HOW WE CAN ADDRESS THE GRAND CHALLENGE OF GUN VIOLENCE:
SETTING AN AGENDA FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH, TEACHING AND ACTION**

Despite some uncertainty in the funding environment for gun violence research, the multifaceted problem of gun violence and its drivers presents the social work profession and social work scholars, teachers, and practitioners with significant opportunities for advancing research, pedagogy, policy, and practice. While not intended as a comprehensive inventory of the types of questions that hold major social work practice and policy implications, a few fundamental questions and issues are critical around which advancing research can materially serve to reduce lethal gun violence in the U.S.

On the policy front, while in the foreseeable future the Second Amendment is highly unlikely to be repealed or profoundly reinterpreted to rescind an individual’s right to possess guns, can social work knowledge, activism, and advocacy nonetheless contribute to reducing the risk of misuse and deadly violence while respecting legal and safe access and use of firearms? In what ways may states, municipalities, and the federal government advance laws that protect safety within the present legal understandings of Second Amendment rights? Furthermore, how can the advancement of such laws take into consideration the disproportionate outcomes of such policies by race? There are multiple critical questions under these larger *access, safe use* and *risk reduction* domains urgently requiring evidence that social work research can contribute to advancing, and we invite social work scholars to map and prioritize the full set of questions for which evidence will illuminate the pathways here.

As one important example, recent research has begun to identify trends in the 19 states (as of this writing) that have passed and are implementing Extreme Risk Protection Orders (or “red flag” laws) which, with the approval of a judge, permit the temporary removal of firearms from the possession of a person deemed at very high risk of harming oneself or others (Kvisto & Phalen, 2018; Zeoli et al., 2022). Additionally, some states have legal provisions for prohibiting or removing guns in the case of a Domestic Violence Restraining Order, and these states vary along such questions as to who can remove guns, for how long, and who temporarily holds and where are removed guns stored (Zeoli et al., 2019). Multiple consequential and unanswered questions arise about social workers’ roles or potential roles in implementing such newly developing laws. For example, most states only permit law enforcement or family members to file ERPOs that result in the temporary removal of firearms, so, in these jurisdictions, how might social workers effectively partner with families and/or law enforcement in ethical, equitable and safe ways to effectively reduce firearm violence risk? Some states, such as New York, also permit health workers, including licensed social workers, and school personnel to file an ERPO. Providing some promising very early findings on this front, one study found that 84.1% and 87.1% of social workers were willing to contact law enforcement about ERPO’s in Washington State for risks of harm to self or harm to others, respectively (Conrick et al., in press). And, in states that have not yet passed ERPO laws, can social workers contribute to advocacy and knowledge to promote the equitable and effective development of such laws across more states? Swanson (2020) has cautioned for a need to ensure that ERPOs do not disproportionately target African American men, given systemic bias and racism in systems that issue them (Swanson, 2020).

As a second example, even less is known about ways to effectively and equitably reduce or restrict access in the informal and illegal gun market, and yet a large proportion of gang-related

gun violence deaths are committed using such weapons (Cook et al., 2015). Promising evidence is emerging on the strategy of deploying street outreach workers, who are often viewed as “credible messengers” to engage and deter individuals from gang and/or retaliatory violence, fueling growing interest in policies to support such strategies in communities throughout the U.S. It is as yet unclear whether such strategies serve to reduce access to illegal firearms, as such work often aims to defuse potentially lethal interactions just before they occur and to alter risky attitudes around the use of violence and firearms (Webster et al., 2013; Whitehill et al., 2014; Wicall et al., 2020). Given this, what role might social workers play as effective collaborators with street outreach workers, who are most commonly paraprofessional members of the local community and often former gang members with direct street experience of such violence? How can credible messengers, and allied social workers work in productive collaboration with law enforcement, where inherent tensions around immediate goals, tactics, and information sharing may be misaligned, and how might policies and funding for such programs promote effective collaboration across these key agents? Ultimately, the acknowledgement and acceptance of credible messengers by law enforcement has the potential to generate new public safety approaches, and social workers may play a key role in their development. More broadly, policy-level changes include a mix of the provision of social services, employment opportunities, and equitable and effective law enforcement (Abt, 2019), and yet precious little is known about the effective deployment and use of credible messengers and related supports necessary in high-risk community settings to effectively drive down urban gun violence.

These are but two promising areas where social work policy knowledge is critically needed, and we are confident evidence here and in other social work policy-relevant areas can tangibly contribute to better informed decision-making that can reduce gun violence risks.

On the practice front, can direct social work practice knowledge be developed to aid in engaging, assessing, and intervening to reduce risk for future gun violence or victimization, and increase protective elements that can prevent engagement in situations at high risk of gun violence and victimization?

Whether aware or not, social work practitioners commonly interact with individuals who face some risk for gun violence, for example, in providing mental health services to those who may face the risk of suicidality, risk of violence perpetration, or victimization. Social workers encounter individuals at heightened risk for gun violence and/or victimization across many common fields of social work practice: in mental health clinics, schools, youth and community centers, domestic violence serving agencies, emergency rooms, and health care settings more broadly. Despite this, very little is known about effective and equitable gun risk assessment practices, and what social work practitioners might do when they identify a client at significant risk of gun violence or victimization (Bright, 2022; Logan-Greene et al., 2018). Examples of domains where evidence-based practices are urgently needed and can be developed include:

- Gun accessibility and safety assessment protocols. These need to be established and integrated into lethality and risk assessment protocols – for both legal and non-legal firearms. These protocols can be used in mental health in/outpatient settings, schools, community centers, youth development and community centers (like YMCAs), afterschool programming, etc. However, the assessments must also be accompanied by

guidance for practitioners for how they can and should intervene in the cases of high-risk individuals.

- Practice protocols for social workers who accompany police. These programs are increasingly used to prevent the misuse of policing tools like arrests and shootings for individuals involved in mental health crises, however there is little evidence-informed guidance available on their practice (Shapiro et al., 2015).
- As noted previously, social workers working with street outreach workers or “credible messengers” in high risk community settings. These interventions may or may not include social workers as the primary outreach workers, and to date, the evidence for their overall effectiveness is quite promising but also mixed (Braga et al., 2018; Buggs et al., 2022; Hardiman et al., 2019). Thus, research is needed to identify the most effective community violence prevention methods.
- Developing and testing interventions for court-involved individuals. One example involves prosecutor-led diversion programs for individuals arrested for illegal possession (Epperson et al., 2023). This could also include deradicalization for individuals who hold violent beliefs but who have no committed crimes (e.g., Kohler, 2016).

Developing evidence-informed practice and policy strategies will necessarily entail cross-disciplinary collaboration, with such sectors as law enforcement and the courts, legal and policy advocates, those in the medical system, public health and educational systems, and long-standing collaborations with other disciplines in mental health such as psychology, psychiatry and psychiatric nursing. The development of such evidence-informed practice and policy innovations will also necessarily require collaborations with community members with lived experiences and exposures to gun violence, its risks and consequences, whether these are with street outreach workers, former gang members, survivors and family members of gun violence victims, and those living in high-risk settings for gun violence exposure.

In addition to the development of knowledge that promises to advance policies and practices to reduce gun violence, we see a number of social work education-relevant goals that can be achieved within the next ten years. Among the most urgent achievable goals on the present horizon, we see:

- A need to increase practice and policy education on gun-related content in Baccalaureate, Master’s, Doctoral, and Continuing Education curricula in Schools of Social Work, to raise awareness, knowledge, and fundamental skills in understanding the challenges and risks of gun violence faced by those whom we serve. Although empirical evidence is sparse, interview and survey data suggest that few practitioners receive education on firearm violence per se during their coursework, perhaps leading to the unfortunate misperception that this is not an issue that social workers should address.
- A need to collaboratively develop and test training interventions that can prepare frontline practitioners to assess for and respond to risks of gun violence. Trainings may be specific to or inclusive of firearm suicide, accidental injury, and perpetration/victimization with firearms. However, teaching social workers to ask

questions should be accompanied by information on what to do when high-risk conditions are present. As in other areas of lethality and community violence exposure, the absence of such practice protocols or guidelines may be a major inhibitor for social workers to explore this risk area in their clients' lives (c.f., Guterman & Cameron, 1999).

- Develop and test protocols for firearm assessment and intervention across practice settings. Significant work has been done on this in some practice areas, such as domestic violence (e.g., Messing, 2019); however, this research lags for most mental health practitioners.

These are but a few of the potential significant opportunities social work research, teaching and practice face in the immediate term that can contribute to driving down the epidemic of gun violence in America.

CONCLUSION

At the time of writing, there have been more mass shootings in 2023 than there have been days, although deaths from those events continue to be vastly outnumbered by other firearm fatalities and non-fatal shootings (Gun Violence Archive, 2023). Social workers cannot continue to be silent as this epidemic rages on. Instead, we must urgently leverage our considerable skills, unique insights and special positioning to work towards eradicating these preventable injuries. In recent years, multiple interdisciplinary national organizations have formed to address these issues, sometimes with virtually no social work representation. An emerging set of interdisciplinary gun violence prevention initiatives presents social work with an important opportunity to partner with allied professions and advocacy organizations that can advance necessary knowledge, policies and practices that reduce gun violence and associated risks and consequences. For example, the American Academy of Pediatrics has recently convened a multi-professional advocacy organization, Gun Violence Prevention Research Roundtable, that brings policy advocates and leaders across multiple professions to inform and guide Congressional decision-making on gun violence prevention research. Likewise, a new National Collaborative on Gun Violence Research recently hosted the first national conference on firearm injury prevention, an initiative social workers have been enthusiastically invited to join.

Given our expertise on issues that are central to firearm violence, including mental health, racism and social inequities, the engagement of social work scholars, practitioners and allied professions is both urgent and indispensable. We urge social work researchers, practitioners, and leaders to give firearm violence prevention the immediate and sustained attention it requires.

REFERENCES

- Abt, T. (2019). *Bleeding out: The devastating consequences of urban violence—and a bold new plan for peace in the streets*. Hachette UK.
- Alang, S., VanHook, C., Judson, J., Ikiroma, A., & Adkins-Jackson, P. B. (2022). Police brutality, heightened vigilance, and the mental health of Black adults. *Psychology of Violence, 12*(4), 211-220.
- Alcorn, T. (2017). Trends in research publications about gun violence in the United States, 1960 to 2014. *JAMA Internal Medicine, 177*(1), 124-126.
- Alschuler, A. W. (2023). Twilight-Zone originalism: The Supreme Court’s peculiar reasoning in *New York State Pistol & Rifle Association v. Bruen*. Bruen (January 19, 2023). University of Chicago Coase-Sandor Institute for Law & Economics. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=4330457
- American Psychological Association. (2019, August 15). One-third of US adults say fear of mass shootings prevents them from going to certain places or events. Author. <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/08/fear-mass-shooting>
- Arp, J., Gonzales, R., Herstand, M., & Wilson, M. (2017). Gun violence in the American culture (NASW Social Justice Brief). Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=HlcEGsb8cy0%3D&portalid=0>
- Aspholm, R. R., Vil, C. S., & Carter, K. A. E. (2019). Interpersonal gun violence research in the social work literature. *Health & Social Work, 44*(4), 224–231. <https://doiorg.proxy.library.nyu.edu/10.1093/hsw/hlz021>
- Beardslee, J. Mulvey, E., Schubert, C., Allison, P., Infante, A., & Pardini, D. (2018). Gun- and non-gun-related violence exposure and risk for subsequent gun carrying among male juvenile offenders, *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, 57*, 274-279. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaac.2018.01.012>.
- Bethune, S., & Lewan, E. (August 15, 2019). One-third of US adults say fear of mass shootings prevents them from going to certain places or events. American Psychological Association. Available at <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2019/08/fear-mass-shooting>
- Booty, M., O’Dwyer, J., Webster, D., McCourt, A., & Crifasi, C. (2019). Describing a “mass shooting”: The role of databases in understanding burden. *Injury epidemiology, 6*(1), 1-8.
- Bottiani, J. H., Camacho, D. A., Lindstrom Johnson, S., & Bradshaw, C. P. (2021). Annual research review: Youth firearm violence disparities in the United States and implications for prevention. *Journal of child psychology and psychiatry, 62*(5), 563-579.
- Braga, A.A., Papachristos, A.V. & Hureau, D.M. (201). The concentration and stability of gun

- violence at micro places in Boston, 1980–2008. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology*, 26, 33–53. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10940-009-9082-x>
- Braga, A. A., Weisburd, D., & Turchan, B. (2018). Focused deterrence strategies and crime control: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis of the empirical evidence. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 17(1), 205-250.
- Bright, C. L. (2022). The problem of gun violence in the United States. *Social Work Research*, 46(3), 183-184.
- Buggs, S. A., Webster, D. W., & Crifasi, C. K. (2022). Using synthetic control methodology to estimate effects of a Cure Violence intervention in Baltimore, Maryland. *Injury prevention*, 28(1), 61-67.
- Burks, A. C., Cramer, R. J., Henderson, C. E., Stroud, C. H., Crosby, J. W., & Graham, J. (2018). Frequency, nature, and correlates of hate crime victimization experiences in an urban sample of lesbian, gay, and bisexual community members. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 33(3), 402-420.
- Campbell, J. C., Webster, D., Koziol-McLain, J., Block, C., Campbell, D., Curry, M. A., ... & Laughon, K. (2017). Risk factors for femicide in abusive relationships: Results from a multisite case control study. In *Domestic Violence* (pp. 135-143). Routledge.
- Carlson, J. (2020). *Policing the second amendment: Guns, law enforcement, and the politics of race*. Princeton University Press.
- Carlson, J. (2023, March 5). From a society of survivors to a survivor society: Examining gun trauma in the U.S. *Footnotes*, 50(4). <https://www.asanet.org/footnotes-article/society-survivors-survivor-society-examining-gun-trauma-us/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (2022). Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. Available from URL: www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars
- Cimolai, V., Schmitz, J., & Sood, A. B. (2021). Effects of mass shootings on the mental health of children and adolescents. *Current Psychiatry Reports*, 23, 1-10. Doi: 10.1007/s11920-021-01222-2
- Clear, T.R., Rose, D.R., Waring, E., & Scully, K. (2003). Coercive mobility and crime: A preliminary examination of concentrated incarceration and social disorganization. *Justice Quarterly*, 20(1), 33-64.
- Conner, A., Azrael, D., & Miller, M. (2019). Suicide case-fatality rates in the United States, 2007 to 2014: A nationwide population-based study. *Annals of internal medicine*, 171(12), 885-895.

- Conrick, K.M., Gause, E., Rowhani-Rahbar, A., Rivara, F.P., Moore, M. (In press). Social Workers' perspectives on Extreme Risk Protection Orders. *Social Work*.
- Council on Foreign Affairs (October 20, 2022) U.S. Gun Policy: Global Comparisons. <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/us-gun-policy-global-comparisons#:~:text=The%20United%20States%2C%20with%20less,one%20in%20firearms%20per%20capita.>
- Cramer, C. E. (1994). The racist roots of gun control. *Kansas Journal of Law & Public Policy*, 4, 17.
- Cunningham, R. (2023). Firearm injury in the United States: Facts, myths and a public health path forward, presentation at the New York University School of Global Public Health, February 27, 2023.
- Delgado, M. (2020). *State-sanctioned violence: Advancing a social work social justice agenda*. Oxford University Press.
- District of Columbia et al. v Heller, 07-209 (2008) <https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/554/570>
- Doxsee, C., Jones, S. G., Thompson, J., Hwang, G., & Halsted, K (2022). Pushed to extremes: Domestic terrorism amid polarization and protest, Center for Strategic and International Studies, May 17, 2022. https://csis-website-prod.s3.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/publication/220517_Doxsee_PushedtoExtremes_DomesticTerrorism_0.pdf?VersionId=SdmZXk20Ymr7YNuRz3_hHVqMpyfbcM2t
- Edleson, J. L., Lindhorst, T., & Kanuah, V., K. (2015). Ending gender-based violence: A grand challenge for social work, Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 15. <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WP15.pdf>
- Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence (2020). Unintentional shootings. Retrieved September 27, 2022 from <https://efsgv.org/learn/type-of-gun-violence/unintentional-shootings/>
- Elkins, Z. (2022). Gun rights and the world's constitutions, in Utter, G. H. (ed.), *Guns and Contemporary Society: The Past, Present, and Future of Firearms and Firearm Policy*, Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger ABC-CLIO pp. 103-110.
- Epperson, M. W., Sawh, L., Patel, S., Pettus, C., & Grier, A. (2023). Examining Case Dismissal Outcomes in Prosecutor-Led Diversion Programs. *Criminal Justice Policy Review*, 34(3), 236-260.
- Feldman, B. N., & Freedenthal, S. (2006). Social work education in suicide intervention and prevention: An unmet need? *Suicide & Life-Threatening Behavior*, 36(4), 467–480. <https://doi.org/10.1521/suli.2006.36.4.467>

- Fleegler, E. W., Lee, L. K., Monuteaux, M. C., Hemenway, D., & Mannix, R. (2013). Firearm legislation and firearm-related fatalities in the United States. *JAMA internal medicine*, *173*(9), 732-740.
- Frattaroli, S., Zeoli, A. M., & Webster, D. W. (2021). Armed, prohibited and violent at home: Implementation and enforcement of restrictions on gun possession by domestic violence offenders in four US localities. *Journal of Family Violence*, *36*(5), 573-586.
- Gani, F., Sakran, J. V., & Canner, J. K. (2017). Emergency department visits for firearm-related injuries in the United States, 2006–14. *Health Affairs*, *36*(10), 1729-1738.
- Gaylord-Harden, N.K., Cunningham, J.A. & Zelencik, B. (2011). Effects of exposure to community violence on internalizing symptoms: Does desensitization to violence occur in African American youth?. *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology*, *39*, 711–719, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10802-011-9510-x>
- Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study 2019 Police Violence US Subnational Collaborators. (2021). Fatal police violence by race and state in the USA, 1980–2019: a network meta-regression. *The Lancet*, *398*(10307), 1239-1255.
- Golash-Boza, T., & Oh, H. (2021). Crime and neighborhood change in the nation’s capital: From disinvestment to gentrification. *Crime & Delinquency*, *67*(9), 1267-1294.
- Goldstick, J. E., Cunningham, R. & Carter, P. M. (2022). Current causes of death in children and adolescents in the United States, *New England Journal of Medicine*, *386* (20), 1955-1956
- Goodyear, A., Rodriguez, M., & Glik, D. (2020). The role of firearms in intimate partner violence: Policy and research considerations. *Journal of Public Health Policy*, *41*(2), 185-195.
- Gramlich, J. (2022). What the data says about gun deaths in the U.S. February 3, 2022, Pew Research Center, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/>, (accessed March 29, 2023).
- Grinshteyn, E. & Hemenway, D (2019). Violent death rates in the US compared to those of the other high-income countries, 2015, *Preventive Medicine*, *123*, 20–26. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ypmed.2019.02.026>.
- Gun Violence Archive (2023). Number of deaths in 2023. Accessed April 12, 2023, from <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org/>.
- Guterman, N. B., & Cameron, M. (1999). Young clients’ exposure to community violence: How much do their therapists know? *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, *69*(3), 382-391.
- Guterman, N.B., Cameron, M., & Hahm, H.C. (2003). Community violence exposure and associated behavior problems among children and adolescents in residential treatment.

Journal of Aggression, Maltreatment, & Trauma, 6(2), 111-135.

- Hardiman, E. R., Jones, L. V., & Cestone, L. M. (2019). Neighborhood perceptions of gun violence and safety: Findings from a public health-social work intervention. *Social work in public health*, 34(6), 492-504.
- Hardy, D. T. (2011). The rise and demise of the collective right interpretation of the second amendment. *Cleveland State Law Review*, 59(3), 315-360.
- Jackson, D. B., Lynch, K. R., & Testa, A. (2020). Intimate partner violence, firearms, and sleep disturbances: The influence of coercive control and partner firearm ownership. *Sleep Health*, 6(6), 723-730.
- Jacoby, S. F., Dong, B., Beard, J. H., Wiebe, D. J. Morrison, C. N. (2018). The enduring impact of historical and structural racism on urban violence in Philadelphia, *Social Science & Medicine*, 199, pp. 87-95. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2017.05.038>.
- Joe, S., & Niedermeier, D. (2008). Preventing suicide: A neglected social work research agenda. *British Journal of Social Work*, 38(3), 507-530.
- Johnson, B. T., Sisti, A., Bernstein, M., Chen, K., Hennessy, E. A., Acabchuk, R. L., & Matos, M. (2021). Community-level factors and incidence of gun violence in the United States, 2014–2017. *Social Science & Medicine*, 280, 113969, ISSN 0277-9536, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.113969>.
- Katsiyannis, A., Rapa, L. J., Whitford, D. K., & Scott, S. N. (2023). An examination of US school mass shootings, 2017–2022: Findings and implications. *Advances in neurodevelopmental disorders*, 7(1), 66-76.
- Kegler, S. R., Simon, T. R., Zwald, M. L., Chen, M. S., Mercy, J. A., Jones, C. M., ... & Dills, J. (2022). Vital Signs: Changes in Firearm Homicide and Suicide Rates—United States, 2019–2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 71(19), 656.
- KFF (2023). One in five adults say they've had a family member killed by a gun, including suicide, and one in six have witnessed a shooting; among Black adults, a third have experienced each. Retrieved April 11, 2023, <https://www.kff.org/other/press-release/one-in-five-adults-say-theyve-had-a-family-member-killed-by-a-gun-including-suicide-and-one-in-six-have-witnessed-a-shooting-among-black-adults-a-third-have-experienced-each/>
- Kivisto, A. J., & Phalen, P. L. (2018). Effects of risk-based firearm seizure laws in Connecticut and Indiana on suicide rates, 1981–2015. *Psychiatric Services*, 69(8), 855-862.
- Koehler, D. (2016). *Understanding deradicalization: Methods, tools and programs for countering violent extremism*. Taylor & Francis.

- Kristof, N. (2015). Lessons from the Virginia Shooting, *New York Times*, August 26, 2015.
- Lanyi, B., Gonzales, R., & Wilson, M. (2019). Tools for social workers to prevent gun violence: Safe storage of guns in the home, extreme risk protection orders, and other methods of gun violence prevention [Social Justice Brief]. Retrieved from <https://www.socialworkers.org/LinkClick.aspx>
- Larsen DA, Lane S, Jennings-Bey T, Haygood-El A, Brundage K, Rubinstein RA (2017). Spatio-temporal patterns of gun violence in Syracuse, New York 2009-2015. *PLoS ONE* 12(3), e0173001. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0173001>
- Lien, L., Romich, J. L., and Sherraden, M. (2016). Reversing extreme inequality. Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative, Working Paper No. 16, <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/WP16-with-cover-2.pdf>
- Logan-Greene, P., Sperlich, M., & Finucane, A. (2018). Social work practice and gun safety in the United States: Are we doing enough?. *Advances in social work*, 18(4), 1165-1186.
- Lubben, J., Gironda, M., Sabbath, E., Kong, J., Johnson, C. (2015, February) Social isolation presents a grand challenge for social work, Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 7, <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WP7-with-cover.pdf>
- Masucci, M., & Langton, L. (2017). Hate crime victimization, 2004-2015 (Special Report No. NCJ 50653). Washington, D. C.: Bureau of Justice Statistics, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice.
- McLeod, M. N., Heller, D., Manze, M. G., & Echeverria, S. E. (2020). Police interactions and the mental health of Black Americans: A systematic review. *Journal of racial and ethnic health disparities*, 7(1), 10-27.
- Mills, C. E. (2020). A common target: anti-Jewish hate crime in New York City communities, 1995-2010. *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency*, 57(6), 643-692.
- Moore, M., Ekman, E., & Shumway, M. (2012). Understanding the critical role of social work in safety net medical settings: Framework for research and practice in the emergency department. *Social Work in Health Care*, 51, 140-148.
- Moore, M., Whiteside, L.K., Dotolo, D., Wang, J., Ho, L., Conley, B., Forrester, M., Fouts, S.O., Vavilala, M.S., & Zatzick, D.F. (2016). The role of social work in providing mental health services and care coordination in an urban trauma center emergency department. *Psychiatric Services*, 67(12), 1348-1354.
- "New York State Rifle & Pistol Association, Inc., Et Al. v. Bruen, Superintendent of New York State Police, Et Al" (US Supreme Court, 2022).

https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/20-843_7j80.pdf

- Pettus-Davis, C. & Epperson, M. (2015). From Mass incarceration to smart decarceration, Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative, Working Paper No. 4. [From mass incarceration to smart decarceration \(grandchallengesforsocialwork.org\)](https://www.grandchallengesforsocialwork.org).
- Quimby, D., Dusing, C. R., Deane, K., DiClemente, C. M., Morency, M. M., Miller, K. M., Thomas, A., & Richards, M. (2018). Gun exposure among Black American youth residing in low-income urban environments. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 44(4), 322–346. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095798418773188>.
- Reeping P M, Cerda, M, Kalesan B, Wiebe D J, Galea S, Branas C C et al. State gun laws, gun ownership, and mass shootings in the US: Cross sectional time series. *BMJ* 2019; 364 :1542 doi:10.1136/bmj.1542
- Schmidt, C. J. (2007). An international human right to keep and bear arms, 15 Wm. & Mary Bill Rts. J. 983 (2007), <https://scholarship.law.wm.edu/wmborj/vol15/iss3/8>
- Shapiro, G. K., Cusi, A., Kirst, M., O’Campo, P., Nakhost, A., & Stergiopoulos, V. (2015). Co-responding police-mental health programs: A review. *Administration and policy in mental health and mental health services research*, 42, 606-620.
- Silva, J. R. (2022). Global mass shootings: comparing the United States against developed and developing countries. *International Journal of Comparative and Applied Criminal Justice*, 1-24.
- Solnick, S. J., & Hemenway, D. (2019). Unintentional firearm deaths in the United States 2005–2015. *Injury epidemiology*, 6(1), 1-7.
- Soni, A., & Tekin, E. (2020). How do mass shootings affect community wellbeing? (No. w28122). National Bureau of Economic Research. doi: 10.3386/w28122
- Sperlich, M., Logan-Greene, P., & Finucane, A. (2022). “If Not Us, Then Who?”: Frontline Social Workers’ Perspectives on Gun Violence. *Journal of Evidence-Based Social Work*, 19(1), 77-97.
- Sperlich, M., Logan-Greene, P., Slovak, K., & Kaplan, M. S. (2019). Addressing gun violence: A social work imperative. *Health & Social Work*, 44(4), 217-220.
- Spitzer, R. J. (2022). The gun rights 2.0 movement: Public policy consequences, National Firearm Injury Prevention Conference, Washington, D.C. December 1.
- Spitzer, R. J. (2017). Gun law history in the United States and Second Amendment rights. *Law & Contemporary Problems*, 80, 55.
- Subbaraman, N. (2020). United States to fund gun-violence research after 20-year freeze.

Nature, 577(7788), 12-12.

- Sullivan, T. P., & Weiss, N. H. (2017). Is firearm threat in intimate relationships associated with posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms among women?. *Violence and gender*, 4(2), 31-36.
- Swanson, J. W. (2020). The color of risk protection orders: Gun violence, gun laws, and racial justice. *Injury Epidemiology*, 7(1), 1-6.
- Teasley, M. L., McCarter, S., Woo, B., Conner, L. R., Spencer, M. S., and Green T. (2021) Eliminate Racism, <https://grandchallengesforsocialwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Eliminate-Racism-Concept-Paper.pdf>
- Tessler, R. A., Langton, L., Rivara, F. P., Vavilala, M. S., & Rowhani-Rahbar, A. (2021). Differences by victim race and ethnicity in race-and ethnicity-motivated violent bias crimes: A national study. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 36(13-14), 6297-6318.
- Webster, D. W., & Gostin, L. O. (2022). The Supreme Court expands Second Amendment rights as the nation experiences historic levels of firearms violence. *JAMA*, 328(12), 1187-1188.
- Webster, D. W., Whitehill, J. M., Vernick, J. S., & Curriero, F. C. (2013). Effects of Baltimore's Safe Streets Program on gun violence: A replication of Chicago's CeaseFire Program. *Journal of Urban Health*, 90(1), 27-40.
- Whitehill, J. M., Webster, D. W., Frattaroli, S., & Parker, E. M. (2014). Interrupting violence: how the CeaseFire Program prevents imminent gun violence through conflict mediation. *Journal of Urban Health*, 91(1), 84-95.
- Wical, W., Richardson, J., & Bullock, C. (2020). A credible messenger: The role of the violence intervention specialist in the lives of young black male survivors of violence. *Violence & Gender*, 7(2), 1-4.
- Wirtz, A. L., Poteat, T. C., Malik, M., & Glass, N. (2020). Gender-based violence against transgender people in the United States: a call for research and programming. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 21(2), 227-241.
- Zeoli, A. M., Frattaroli, S., & Ma, W. (2022). Do extreme risk protection orders have a population-level association with firearm suicide? Presented at 2022 National Research Conference on Firearm Injury Prevention, November 30, 2022.
- Zeoli, A. M., Frattaroli, S., Roskam, K., & Herrera, A. K. (2019). removing firearms from those prohibited from possession by domestic violence restraining orders: a survey and analysis of state laws. *Trauma, Violence, & Abuse*, 20(1), 114-125.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1524838017692384>
- Zeoli, A. M., Malinski, R., & Turchan, B. (2016). Risks and targeted interventions: Firearms in

intimate partner violence. *Epidemiologic Reviews*, 38(1), 125-139.

Working Paper



ABOUT GRAND CHALLENGE

Prevent gun violence. The magnitude of violent gun deaths, in concert with the widespread accessibility of guns and the risks of firearm misuse make gun violence a distinct grand challenge in the United States. Gun violence prevention intersects with the work that social workers do and the various contexts in which they operate, making the profession uniquely positioned to address the multi-faceted nature of the problem. In recognition of the urgent need and great opportunities for social work address the challenge, this network will advance a body of research, disseminate practice knowledge, identify policy solutions, and develop essential education.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

PATRICIA LOGAN-GREENE is Associate Professor in the School of Social Work at the State University of New York at Buffalo.

NEIL B. GUTERMAN is Paulette Goddard Professor and Dean Emeritus at New York University Silver School of Social Work.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Jessica Puterbaugh of [SCP](#) designed the cover.

SUGGESTED CITATION

Logan-Greene, P. & Guterman, Neil B. (2023). *Preventing Gun Violence* (Grand Challenges for Social Work Initiative Working Paper No. 27). Baltimore, MD: Grand Challenges for Social Work.

CONTACT

Grand Challenges for Social Work
GCSocialWork@ssw.umaryland.edu