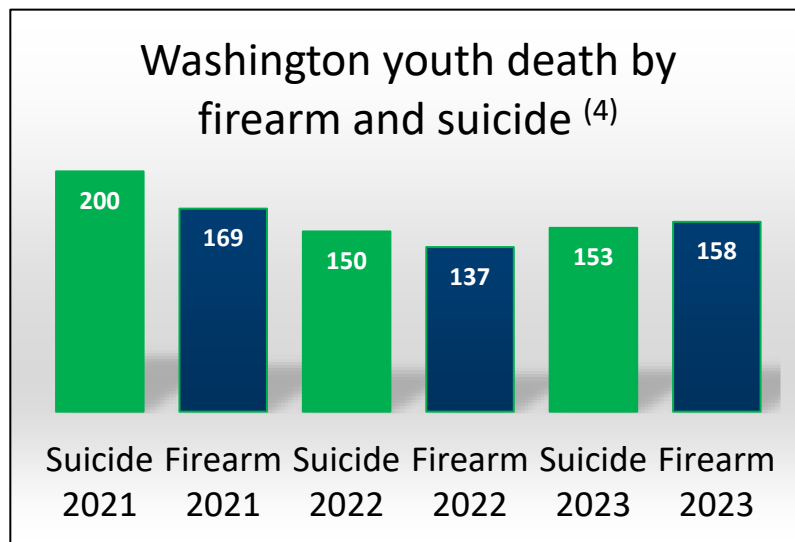


WSPTA recognizes the need for children and youth to feel safe at home and at school. Firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children.⁽¹⁾ Mass shootings, school shootings, suicides, and intentional and accidental deaths continue. We must act to prevent and reduce the trauma of gun violence and suicide for our Washington children, youth, and families.

Background

- According to the Washington Post⁽²⁾, more than 370,000 American students have experienced gun violence at school since Columbine.
- 4.6 million children live in a home with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm.⁽³⁾
- In Washington, suicide (primarily by firearm) is now the leading cause of death for youths 10-24, killing more than 150 children per year.⁽⁴⁾
- Black American children and teens are dying at 10 times the rate of white American children and teens.⁽⁵⁾
- Washington's black demographic comprises 4% of the population but 20% of the homicide victims.⁽⁶⁾ Similar proportions exist for Indigenous and Latinx communities.⁽⁷⁾
- LGBTQ+ youth are 5 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.⁽⁸⁾
- Disabled people are significantly more likely to experience violent crime than those without disabilities.⁽⁹⁾
- Living in a home with a firearm increases youth suicide risk four-fold.⁽¹⁰⁾
- Roughly 80% of youth suicides use a family member's gun.⁽¹¹⁾
- Suicides are 5 times less likely when neither guns nor ammunition is available.⁽¹²⁾
- Assault weapons are used in the most-deadly shootings and are a serious threat to both our children and law enforcement.⁽¹³⁾



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For More Information

WSPTA Advocacy Director
ptaadvocacydir@wastatepta.org

Marie Sullivan, WSPTA Legislative Consultant
legconsultant@wastatepta.org

For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our [website](#).

Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that prevent and reduce gun violence and suicide including:

- Fund school-based mental health services
- Require permits for firearm purchases
- Incentivize safe storage of firearms and medications
- Restrict bulk weapons purchases
- Prohibit firearms in sensitive places including parks and public buildings
- Fund community-based prevention and intervention programs

Citations

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- (4) Data from Washington State DOH in email sent to G Loosmore on 04/17/24 - contact WSPTA Advocacy Director for citation (PTAadvocacydir@wastatepta.org)
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- (7) <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1500/IV-HOM2014.pdf>
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- (12) Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. [Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries](#). *Journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005;293(6):707-714 Table 5.
- (13) https://agportal-s3bucket.s3.amazonaws.com/uploadedfiles/Home/Office_Initiatives/Legislative_Agenda/2020/AW%20Ban%20Web.pdf