

G.O.V.



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During the hearing on February 20, 2015 in the Senate Committee on Health and Welfare, testimony was given how domestic violence by firearm is a major problem in Vermont.

While domestic violence homicides by any means is unfortunate, only 1/3 (4) of the total homicides in Vermont in 2013 (12) were domestic violence homicides by firearm.

That number is 0.000639% of the Vermont population, truly not an epidemic level.

Massachusetts, a state where only 14% of the population LEGALLY own firearms, was used as evidence, yet when we investigate homicides in JUST Springfield MA, we see that in 2014, there were more homicides (15) in ONE CITY in Massachusetts, than in the ENTIRE state of Vermont (12) where upwards of 70% of the homes have at least one firearm.

Anthony Fay, reporter for WWLP in Springfield MA, posted "As part of our coverage of crime in western Massachusetts, 22News has put together this map and interactive timeline, providing information and showing the location of homicides in the city of Springfield in 2014."

Springfield, MA Homicides, 2014<<http://wwlp.com/2014/05/22/springfield-ma-homicides-2014/>>

Yet if we look at domestic violence in Massachusetts, we see a similar trend of domestic violence and suicide. Of the 20 domestic violence deaths in Massachusetts in 2014, there were 11 victims and 9 associated suicides.

Massachusetts has some of the most restrictive gun laws in the nation, an Assault Weapon Ban, Firearm Identification Cards, Universal Background Checks, and an intrusive licensing process that treat law-abiding citizens as if they were criminals, and yet, 60% of all homicides committed in Massachusetts are by firearm.

It appears legislation does NOT reduce the number of suicides in domestic violence situations in Massachusetts, why does anyone expect it to work in Vermont?

Please, **DO NOT PASS S.31**, because passing this bill will undermine the effectiveness of the Vermont version of the New Hampshire Gun Shop Project that The Gun Owners of Vermont is working to establish!

It requires TRUST in the system by the participants and the cooperation of the state.

This project has been a great success in New Hampshire and will be able to help reduce suicides in Vermont.

What we need is education not legislation!

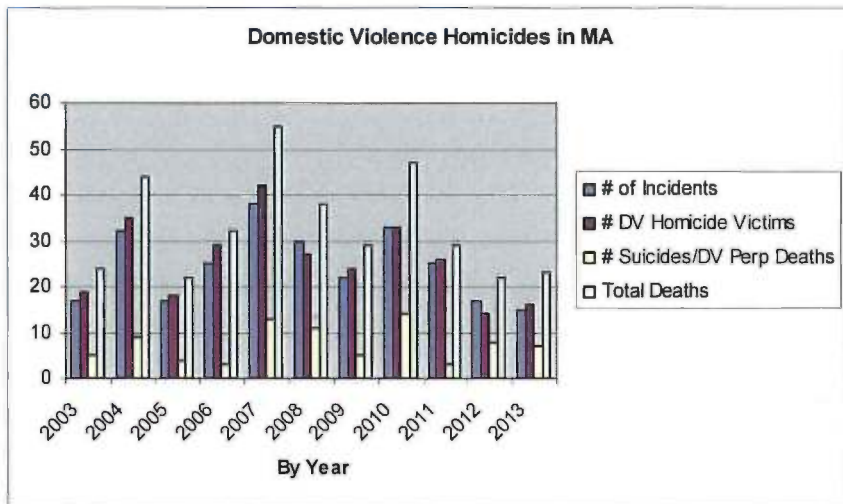
Please see the associated documents:

VT Homicide Statistics 2014.doc

Massachusetts 2003-YTD_DVH.pdf



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOMICIDES IN MASSACHUSETTS TRACKING ANALYSIS 2003-YTD 2013 (9/30/2013)



These cases of domestic violence homicides follow national trends:

- the vast majority of victims are women;
- nearly all the killers of both men and women were men;
- most male domestic violence homicide victims were killed by men because they were friends, family members or new partners of the domestic violence victims.
- in the majority of cases where the homicide perpetrator is a woman, there is evidence to suggest that she was the victim of domestic violence who acted in a self-defense.

Our analysis of the homicides over the past 10 years shows that despite histories of domestic violence, very few victims of domestic violence homicide had received services from a local domestic violence programs and that few if any of the murderers, ever participated in batterer's intervention programs.

BREAKDOWN OF DV HOMICIDE DEATHS	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Totals	Percentage
DV Homicide Victims	19	35	18	29	42	27	24	33	26	15	15	283	
Female DV Victims	11	22	7	15	28	17	14	20	13	11	11	169	59.9%
Male DV Victims	2	4	4	0	1	2	2	0	7	1	1	24	8.7%
Female - Assoc w/DV Victim	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	5	1	0	0	10	3.6%
Male - Assoc w/DV Victim	1	6	2	7	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	30	10.8%
Children - Assoc w/DV Victim	1	2	1	2	5	2	3	3	3	1	2	25	8.3%
Family Member or Other (non-IPV)	1	0	2	3	2	2	1	1	0	0	0	12	4.3%
Perpetrators killed (includes self-defense by DV victim)	2	1	2	1	3	0	0	1	0	1	0	11	4.0%
Bystander (including police)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.4%
TBD (inconclusive in murder-suicide case)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.4%
DV Homicide Perpetrator Deaths	5	35	18	0	13	11	5	14	3	8	7	119	
DV Homicide Perpetrator Suicides (w/murder or attempted murder of victim)	5	35	18	0	12	8	5	12	1	6	7	109	92%
DV Perpetrator Suicides (w/out murder or attempted murder of victim)	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	1	0	5	4%
Additional DV Perpetrator Deaths (i.e, police)	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	5	4%
Total Number of incidents	17	32	17	25	38	30	22	33	25	18	14	271	
DVH perpetrators												279	
female	3	3	4	1	4	2	2	4	6	2	1	32	11%
male	14	31	14	26	34	30	20	29	20	16	12	246	88%
Tbd	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0%



JDI's Definition of Domestic Violence Homicide and Death:

Beginning in 2005 Jane Doe Inc. reconsidered its definition of domestic violence homicide and used the new definition in identifying all incidents that occurred in 2003 and subsequent years. The definition was modified in order to capture the full picture and context of domestic violence homicides. Homicides were considered domestic violence related *if*

- the homicide victim and perpetrator were current or former spouses or intimate partners, adults or teens with a child in common, or adults or teens in a current or former dating relationship
- the homicide victim was a bystander or intervened in an attempted domestic violence homicide and was killed (including friends, family members, new intimate partners, law enforcement officers or other professionals attempting to assist the victim of domestic violence, roommates and co-workers)
- the motive for the murder was reported to have included jealousy, in the context of an intimate partner or dating relationship, or
- a relationship existed between the homicide perpetrator and adult or teen victim that could be defined as exhibiting a pattern of power and control (including family or household members and caregivers).

Furthermore, in order to meet our goal of capturing the full picture of deaths due to domestic violence, we have also included the suicides of perpetrators.

Chart Key:

Domestic Violence Homicide Deaths include the total number of homicide victims, suicides and additional perpetrator deaths.

DV Victims include the homicide victim who was also the domestic violence victim.

Associated with DV Victim the homicide victim who was not the domestic violence victim; typically includes children, bystanders and others who were targeted or murdered because of their association with the domestic violence victim.

Perpetrator deaths are divided into three categories:

- those that attempted and/or committed murder of the domestic violence victim
- those that did not attempt or commit murder of the domestic violence victim
- those that were killed by police intervention, someone besides the domestic violence victim or other circumstance

Incidents are defined as any occurrence of domestic violence related homicide and/or suicide.

NOTE: Cases with multiple victims and/or multiple perpetrators explain why the number of incidents, perpetrators and murders are not equal in all circumstances.

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The 2013 Vermont Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Report gives a very bleak outlook on violent domestic crime in Vermont.

- 50% of all Vermont homicides are domestic violence related.
- 56% of all Vermont domestic violence related homicides were committed with firearms.
- 65% of violent crime occurs in Vermont homes. It is the most frequent location of violent crime.

The statement that 56% of Vermont’s domestic violence homicides were committed with a firearm is a troubling statistic to be sure, until you look past the **percentages** and at the actual number of domestic violence homicides by firearm;

Year	VT Total DV Homicides	Vermont DV Homicides by Firearm	VT % Firearm Related DV	% Change by Year
2009	2	0	0%	0
2010	3	1	33%	100%
2011	4	3	75%	200%
2012	4	1	25%	-67%

In 2009, Vermont had ZERO firearm homicides of any kind, show us another state that can equal that!

But, 2010 saw an increase in firearm homicides by 100%, 2011 increased 200%!

People must be dying in the streets left and right!

This is alarming news until the actual numbers are seen.

The change from 0 to 3 is a 300% increase, yet it is still only 3 out of 600,000 inhabitants!

The message that is publicized by the media, anti-gun groups and politicians is that Vermont has a “gun violence” epidemic and “something” has to be done!

In 2010 and 2012, Vermont's TOTAL firearm homicide was 2/100th of 1 PERCENT (0.0002) of the US total!

But, in both years, the Vermont Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission Reports, state domestic firearm homicide percentages were 51% and 50% respectively.

As a matter of fact, Vermont's Domestic Violence Homicide Rate for the last 4 years is 0.16 per 100,000!

While ANY death is saddening, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) states that Vermont averages over **5000** deaths per year by ALL CAUSES, but the emphasis in Montpelier each year has been on gun control.

Data Table 1 shows a snapshot comparison between Vermont and neighboring states in total homicides and firearm homicides from 2009 to 2012.

Data Table 1:

Yrs	State	Avg. homicides	Avg. by firearms
2009-12	New York	774	463
2009-12	New Jersey	362	252
2009-12	Massachusetts	171	101
2009-12	Connecticut	128	93
2009-12	Rhode Island	27	15
2009-12	Maine	25	12
2009-12	New Hampshire	13	6
2009-12	Vermont	8	2

Since 2009, Vermont has averaged TWO firearm homicides per year.

Vermont's Homicide rate has been amongst the lowest, if not THE lowest, in the nation for many years (we switch back and forth with North Dakota 49th / 50th).

Firearm homicides have taken only EIGHT out of TWENTY THOUSAND total deaths in Vermont from 2009-2012.

Of those 8 total over 4 years, 5 were considered "domestic violence", even though at 4 of the events did NOT occur in the home.

2009: The two domestic violence related adult homicides both occurred in public parking lots adjacent to shopping malls.

2011: Of the 4 domestic violence related homicides of adults, 2 occurred in residences.

The definition of “domestic” has been broadened ever wider in order to encompass more “incidents”. It may be that a “drive-by-shooting” or home invasion or burglary will be considered “domestic” because the victim was simply at home. It is also documented that deaths caused by Law Enforcement Officers in the line of duty ARE classified as a “domestic violence death” for statistical purposes.

This tactic fuels the controversy over the “ever increasing” domestic violence “problem”. Logic dictates that if you keep increasing the number of event types that are considered domestic, your overall occurrences will naturally go up... and up... and up.

According to the 2013 state of Vermont Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission report 46% of the victims of domestic violence in the last 19 years are MEN.

The Commission report shows a total of 63 firearm deaths due to domestic violence over the last 19 years.

That equates to 3.5 firearm deaths related to domestic violence per year.

The American Heritage Dictionary defines a “victim” as “One who is harmed or killed by another, especially by someone committing a criminal or unlawful act”.

The report INCLUDES 3 deaths caused by Law Enforcement Officers in the line of duty in the total, if we remove those 3 perpetrators as they are not TRULY “victims” in justifiable homicides, we end up with an average of 3.3 firearm deaths related to domestic violence per year.

When compared to the fact that we have averaged only TWO firearms deaths per year over the last 4 reported years, and that domestic violence is supposedly 50% of the total homicides per year, something doesn’t quite add up.

Case in point, the CDC and FBI statistics peg Vermont’s total homicide rate at an average of 10 per year for ALL causes from 1998 to 2010. How can domestic homicides be 50% of 10, if the average is 3.3 by their own report? The actual percentage should be closer to 33%.

Using percentages in reports instead of actual figures allows distortion of the facts to display Vermont as having a much larger problem.

We were curious as to why the 2013 Commission, as well as every preceding one, always chose to go back to 1994 to generate these reports. Even the CDC and FBI do not publish this data because it is outdated.

Could it be that in order to achieve that 50% domestic violence total, they HAD to go back to the 1990's when the crime rates across the nation were twice what they are now?

The answer is YES.

See Data Table 3 for a detailed breakdown by year of homicides in Vermont and those that are firearm related.

Pay careful attention to the trend lines in graph 1 for these statistics.

Firearm homicides are not increasing, in fact, they have decreased by 27%.

Overall homicides are not increasing, in fact, they have decreased by 40%.

See Data Table 4 for a detailed breakdown by year of homicides in Vermont of the numbers and annual percentages of those that are domestic violence related.

Note the grouping into 5 year blocks that indicates how the downward trend in graph 2 of firearm related domestic violence homicides were manipulated by grouping them in with previous (*always higher*) rates. That is how statisticians skew a decreasing trend into an increasing or stationary trend.

Each 5 year block shows an overall decrease in percentage of firearm usage in domestic violence cases.

Domestic violence deaths are not increasing, in fact, they have decreased by 38% since 1994.

See Data Table 5 for a detailed breakdown by year of domestic violence homicides in Vermont of the numbers and annual percentages of those that are firearm related.

Pay careful attention to the trend lines in graph 3 for these statistics.

Domestic violence homicides are not increasing, in fact, they have decreased by 40%.

Domestic violence homicides by firearms are not increasing, in fact, they have decreased by 50%.

As shown by compiling the Vermont Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission's 2013, and all previous reports, ALL homicide rates in Vermont are showing a DECREASING trend over time, not increasing as we are lead to believe year after year.

Even though Vermont's population has increased by over 33,000 since the late 90's, our economy has been in decline, our taxes continue to rise at an alarming rate, our drug problems are now national news, over a thousand new bills get proposed at the Statehouse each year, and almost 350,000 background checks since 1999 have been run by Vermont FFLs, *our homicide rates still continue to drop*, much to the chagrin of those who do not understand, nor tolerate firearms or their owners.

It is estimated that between 50-75% of Vermont homes have at least one firearm in them, and the criminal element is well aware of this fact. If for some reason gun control, in whatever form it takes was implemented restricting the rights of law-abiding Vermonters, the overall violent crime rate would rapidly outpace that of domestic violence that we discuss here.

Regardless of the relentless media pressure and the voices of outside money bankrolling "grassroots" anti-gun groups in Vermont, **"gun violence" is not a crisis.**

It is not an emergency.

It is not an epidemic.

Vermont, as a whole, is still the **safest state in the Union** BECAUSE of our firearms and the good people that own them.