



Original Investigation | Public Health

Firearm Ownership and Support for Political Violence in the United States

Garen J. Wintemute, MD, MPH; Andrew Crawford, PhD; Sonia L. Robinson, PhD, MPH; Elizabeth A. Tomsich, PhD; Paul M. Reeping, PhD, MS;
Julia P. Schleimer, MPH; Veronica A. Pear, PhD, MPH, MA

Abstract

IMPORTANCE Little is known about support for and willingness to engage in political violence in the United States. Such violence would likely involve firearms.

OBJECTIVE To evaluate whether firearm owners' and nonowners' support for political violence differs and whether support among owners varies by type of firearms owned, recency of purchase, and frequency of carrying a loaded firearm in public.

DESIGN, SETTING, AND PARTICIPANTS This cross-sectional nationally representative survey study was conducted from May 13 to June 2, 2022, among US adult members of the Ipsos KnowledgePanel, including an oversample of firearm owners.

EXPOSURE Firearm ownership vs nonownership.

MAIN OUTCOMES AND MEASURES Main outcomes concern (1) support for political violence, in general and to advance specific political objectives; (2) personal willingness to engage in political violence, by severity of violence and target population; and (3) perceived likelihood of firearm use in political violence. Outcomes are expressed as weighted proportions and adjusted prevalence differences, with *P* values adjusted for the false-discovery rate and reported as *q* values.

RESULTS The analytic sample comprised 12 851 respondents: 5820 (45.3%) firearm owners, 6132 (47.7%) nonowners without firearms at home, and 899 (7.0%) nonowners with firearms at home. After weighting, 51.0% (95% CI, 49.9%-52.1%) were female, 8.5% (95% CI, 7.5%-9.5%) Hispanic, 9.1% (95% CI, 8.1%-10.2%) non-Hispanic Black, and 62.6% (95% CI, 61.5%-63.8%) non-Hispanic White; the mean (SD) age was 48.5 (18.0) years. Owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to consider violence usually or always justified to advance at least 1 of 17 specific political objectives (owners: 38.8%; 95% CI, 37.3%-40.4%; nonowners: 29.8%; 95% CI, 28.5%-31.2%; adjusted difference, 6.5 percentage points; 95% CI, 4.5-9.3 percentage points; *q* < .001) but were not more willing to engage in political violence. Recent purchasers, owners who always or nearly always carry loaded firearms in public, and to a lesser extent, owners of assault-type rifles were more supportive of and willing to engage in political violence than other subgroups of firearm owners.

CONCLUSIONS AND RELEVANCE In this study of support for political violence in the United States, differences between firearm owners and nonowners without firearms at home were small to moderate when present. Differences were greater among subsets of owners than between owners and nonowners. These findings can guide risk-based prevention efforts.

JAMA Network Open. 2024;7(4):e243623. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3623

Key Points

Question How do firearm owners and nonowners in the United States differ in support for and willingness to engage in political violence, and how do these measures vary among subsets of firearm owners?

Findings In this survey study with 12 851 participants, firearm owners were only moderately more supportive of political violence than nonowners. Recent purchasers and owners who always or nearly always carried firearms in public were more supportive of and willing to engage in political violence than other subsets of firearm owners.

Meaning In this study, support for and willingness to engage in political violence differed more among subsets of firearm owners than between owners and nonowners; these findings could help to guide prevention efforts.

+ Invited Commentary

+ Supplemental content

Author affiliations and article information are listed at the end of this article.

Open Access. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the CC-BY-NC-ND License.

Introduction

Mortality from firearm violence in the United States has reached a level not seen since the 1990s, rising by 22.0% from 11.7 per 100 000 persons in 2019 to 14.3 per 100 000 persons in 2021, the most recent year with final data available.¹ Firearm purchasing also increased sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic; purchase-related background checks averaged 35.5% greater than expected levels from January 2020 through December 2023 (eFigure in [Supplement 1](#)).^{2,3} Recent studies⁴⁻⁶ (though not all⁷) have linked purchasing surges to subsequent increases in firearm-related deaths.

Political violence—the use of force to advance political objectives⁸—may soon become a leading contributor to firearm violence.⁹⁻¹¹ In the 2022 survey that provides the data for this study, 32.8% of adults considered violence usually or always justified to advance at least 1 of 17 specific political objectives; nearly 8% thought it very or extremely likely that they would be armed with a firearm in a future situation where political violence was justified.¹²

These findings raise urgent questions. Are firearm owners more supportive of political violence than nonowners? Are they more willing to engage in it? Among owners, are those who purchased firearms recently, during a time of polarization and social instability, more supportive of political violence? Owners who regularly carry loaded firearms in public are presumably willing to engage in defensive firearm violence; are they also more willing to engage in political violence? Assault-type firearms figure disproportionately in mass violence¹³ and will be weapons of choice in a future civil conflict; do their owners endorse political violence more strongly than others? We address these questions with data from a large nationally representative survey.

Methods

The questionnaire in this survey study was designed by the authors and administered online in English and Spanish from May 13 to June 2, 2022, by Ipsos.¹⁴ The study was approved by the UC Davis institutional review board and is reported following American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) reporting guidelines.¹⁵ The institutional review board waived the requirement for written or verbal consent. Instead, before accessing the questionnaire, participants viewed informed consent information that concluded “[by] continuing, you are agreeing to participate in this study” (eMethods in [Supplement 1](#)).

Participants

Respondents were drawn from the Ipsos KnowledgePanel (KP), which is widely used in firearm violence survey research.^{3,16-20} To establish a nationally representative panel, KP members are recruited on an ongoing basis through address-based probability sampling using the US Postal Service's Delivery Sequence File.²¹ Recruited adults in households without internet access are provided a web-enabled device and free internet service.

A probability-proportional-to-size procedure was used to select a study-specific sample from all panel members aged 18 years and older. Before potential participants accessed the questionnaire, they were asked, “Do you happen to keep any guns in your home or garage?” Those answering yes were asked, “Do any of these guns personally belong to you?” Recruitment remained open for firearm owners until a prespecified target of 5000 participants was reached. Given the expected prevalence of non-firearm ownership, this allowed for detection of a 3% difference in prevalence of support for political violence with a referent prevalence of 12%, 2-tailed $\alpha = .05$, and $1 - \beta = 0.8$. Preplanned oversamples were also obtained of veterans, California residents, and transgender persons.

A final survey weight variable provided by Ipsos adjusted for the initial probability of selection into KP, survey-specific nonresponse, the oversamples, and overcoverage or undercoverage using design weights with poststratification raking ratio adjustments. With weighting, the study sample is designed to be representative of the noninstitutionalized adult population of the United States described by the 2021 March supplement of the Current Population Survey.^{21,22}

Measures

Sociodemographic data were collected by Ipsos from profiles created and maintained by KP members. Survey questions (eAppendix in [Supplement 1](#)) addressed firearm ownership and use, including types of firearms owned, purchasing, and carrying; beliefs regarding the need for violence to effect social change and the possibility of civil war; and support for political violence.

Respondents were categorized as personal firearm owners, nonowners with firearms at home, and nonowners without firearms at home. The principal comparison in analyses by firearm ownership status is between owners and nonowners without firearms at home. Firearm owners were categorized based on the types of firearm they owned (the principal comparison is between assault-type rifle owners and handgun-only owners), recency of purchase (the principal comparison is between purchasers in 2020 or later and purchasers only in 2019 or earlier), and frequency of loaded firearm carrying when out in public (the principal comparison is between those who carry all or nearly all the time and those who do not carry or carry not often at all) (eMethods in [Supplement 1](#)).

Primary outcome measures concerned political violence. Violence was represented in the questionnaire by “force or violence,” defined as “physical force strong enough that it could cause pain or injury to a person.” “Force or violence to advance an important political objective that you support” represented political violence.

Respondents were asked about the extent to which they justified political violence “in general” and to advance 17 specified political objectives. Nine objectives were presented to all respondents and 8 were paired, with respondents randomized 1:1 for each pair to see 1 item; each respondent was presented with 13 of 17 objectives.

Respondents who considered political violence to be at least sometimes justified for at least 1 political objective were asked about their personal willingness to engage in political violence—by type of violence, against members of 9 target populations, and by social context. Questions about future firearm use in political violence were asked of all respondents.

Implementation

Respondents were randomized 1:1 to receive response options in order from negative to positive valence (eg, from do not agree to strongly agree) or the reverse throughout the questionnaire. When a question presented multiple statements requiring responses, the order of those statements was randomized unless ordering was necessary.

We used unipolar response arrays without a midpoint (eg, do not agree, somewhat agree, strongly agree, very strongly agree). The literature disagrees on including such midpoints.^{23,24} We were persuaded by the studies reviewed by Chyung et al,²⁴ which suggest that midpoints facilitate satisficing (eMethods in [Supplement 1](#)).

Statistical Analysis

To generate prevalence estimates, we calculated weighted percentages and 95% CIs using PROC SURVEYFREQ in SAS version 9.4 (SAS Institute) and Complex Samples Frequencies in SPSS statistics version 28 (IBM Corp). To compute adjusted prevalence differences and 95% CIs, we defined outcomes dichotomously and used PROC SURVEYREG, using robust standard errors to correct for design effects and heteroskedasticity in binary outcomes. We considered several models (eMethods in [Supplement 1](#)), choosing the final model based on concordance with theory, findings from prior research, and fit statistics. *P* values were corrected for multiple comparisons by controlling the false-discovery rate (FDR) using the Benjamini-Hochberg method.²⁵ The resulting values are known as FDR-adjusted (or FDR-corrected) *P* values or as *q* values²⁶; we use the latter term here. These *q* values represent the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; they represent the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose *q* values were at or below the given *q* value. A *q* < .05 indicates statistical significance.

Results

Of 15 449 persons invited to participate in the main sample, 8620 (including 2380 firearm owners) completed the survey, yielding a 55.8% completion rate. Another 3440 firearm owners completed the survey as part of oversamples. Item nonresponse ranged from less than 0.1% to 2.5%.

The analytic sample comprised 12 851 respondents: 5820 (45.3%) firearm owners, 6132 (47.7%) nonowners without firearms at home, and 899 (7.0%) nonowners with firearms at home. After weighting, 63.9% (95% CI, 62.9%-65.0%) were nonowners without firearms at home, 25.6% (95% CI, 24.8%-26.5%) were firearm owners, and 10.4% (95% CI, 9.7%-11.2%) were nonowners with firearms at home. Half (51.0%; 95% CI, 49.9%-52.1%) were female, 8.5% (95% CI, 7.5%-9.5%) Hispanic, 9.1% (95% CI, 8.1%-10.2%) non-Hispanic Black, and 62.6% (95% CI 61.5%, 63.8%) non-Hispanic White (eTable 1 in [Supplement 1](#)); the weighted mean (SD) age was 48.5 (18.0) years. Compared with both types of nonowners, firearm owners were older and more frequently male and working full time (eTable 1 in [Supplement 1](#)). Compared with nonrespondents (eTable 2 in [Supplement 1](#)), respondents were older; were more frequently male, non-Hispanic White, and married; had higher education and income; and were less often working.

Need for Violence and Likelihood of Civil War

Firearm owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to agree strongly or very strongly with all 3 statements of the need for violence to effect social change (eg, "Our American way of life is disappearing so fast that we may have to use force to save it": adjusted difference, 6.0 [95% CI, 4.0-8.0] percentage points; $q < .001$). They also more often agreed strongly or very strongly with a prediction of civil war "in the next few years" (adjusted difference, 4.4 [95% CI, 2.5-6.3] percentage points; $q < .001$) (**Table 1**).

Political Violence

Firearm owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to consider violence usually or always justified to advance at least 1 of 17 specified political objectives (owners: 38.8%; 95% CI, 37.3%-40.4%; nonowners: 29.8%; 95% CI, 28.5%-31.2%; adjusted difference, 6.5 [95% CI, 4.5-9.3] percentage points; $q < .001$) (**Table 2**). Owners were more likely to consider violence usually or always justified to "preserve an American way of life based on Western European traditions," "preserve the American way of life I believe in," "oppose the government when it tries to take private land for public purposes," "reinforce the police," and "stop illegal immigration" (Table 2; eTable 3 in [Supplement 1](#)).

There were no differences between firearm owners and nonowners without firearms at home in the proportions very or completely willing to "damage property," "threaten or intimidate a person," "injure a person," or "kill a person"; these proportions did not exceed 4% (**Table 3**). There were also no differences in the proportions very or completely willing to commit violence against members of 9 target populations, and these proportions were below 3% (eTable 4 in [Supplement 1](#)). Owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to be very or completely willing to engage in violence on their own (adjusted difference, 3.6 [95% CI 2.5-4.7] percentage points; $q < .001$) but not as part of a group (eTable 5 in [Supplement 1](#)).

Owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to consider it very or extremely likely that, in a future situation where they considered political violence justified, "I will be armed with a gun" (adjusted difference, 12.5 [95% CI, 10.9-14.1] percentage points; $q < .001$); and "I will carry a gun openly, so that people know I am armed" (adjusted difference, 5.7 [95% CI, 4.4-6.9] percentage points; $q < .001$), but not that "I will threaten someone with a gun" or that "I will shoot someone with a gun" (**Table 4**).

Subgroups of Firearm Owners

Among firearm owners, 20.3% (95% CI, 18.9%-21.6%) owned assault-type rifles, 32.8% (95% CI, 31.2%-34.4%) were recent purchasers, and 9.0% (95% CI, 7.9%-10.0%) were always or nearly always carriers (eTable 6 in Supplement 1). Assault-type rifle owners and recent purchasers were younger and more frequently male than their comparators; always or nearly always carriers were younger (eTable 6 in Supplement 1).

All 3 subgroups were more likely than their comparators to agree strongly or very strongly with the civil war prediction (assault-type rifle owners: adjusted difference 7.2 [95% CI 2.9-11.5] percentage points; recent purchasers: adjusted difference, 5.4 [95% CI 2.4-8.5] percentage points; always or nearly always carriers: adjusted difference: 9.4 [95% CI, 4.1-14.8] percentage points) (eTable 7 in Supplement 1). Recent purchasers and always or nearly always carriers were also more likely to agree strongly or very strongly with all 3 statements on the need for violence to effect social change (adjusted differences ranging from 5.0-8.1 percentage points for recent purchasers and from 10.6-16.6 percentage points for always or nearly-always carriers) (eTable 7 in Supplement 1).

Recent purchasers and always or nearly always carriers were more likely than their comparators to consider political violence usually or always justified to advance at least 1 of 17 political objectives (recent purchasers: adjusted difference, 7.4 [95% CI, 3.8-11.0] percentage points; $q < .001$; always or

Table 1. Firearm Ownership Status and Agreement With Statements Regarding Violence to Effect Social Change and the Likelihood of Civil War

Level of agreement	Firearm ownership status					
	Owner		Nonowner with firearms at home		Nonowner without firearms at home	
	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
"If elected leaders will not protect American democracy, the people must do it themselves, even if it requires taking violent actions."						
Do not agree	2484	41.7 (40.1 to 43.3)	488	50.9 (47.1 to 54.8)	3457	55.1 (53.5 to 56.6)
Somewhat agree	1931	34.2 (32.7 to 35.7)	256	30.1 (26.5 to 33.6)	1626	28.4 (27.1 to 29.8)
Strongly or very strongly agree	1369	24.1 (22.7 to 25.5)	150	19.0 (15.8 to 22.3)	959	16.5 (15.4 to 17.7)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^a	5.4 (3.4 to 7.5)		3.2 (−0.6 to 6.9)		[Reference]	
q Value ^b	<.001		.28		NA	
"Our American way of life is disappearing so fast that we may have to use force to save it."						
Do not agree	3005	48.4 (46.8 to 50.1)	498	52.5 (48.7 to 56.4)	3815	61.0 (59.5 to 62.5)
Somewhat agree	1694	30.7 (29.2 to 32.2)	245	29.2 (25.7 to 32.7)	1442	25.2 (23.9 to 26.6)
Strongly or very strongly agree	1082	20.8 (19.5 to 22.2)	147	18.3 (15.0 to 21.5)	788	13.7 (12.6 to 14.8)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^a	6.0 (4.0 to 8.0)		4.1 (0.5 to 7.8)		[Reference]	
q Value ^b	<.001		.11		NA	
"Because things have gotten so far off track, true American patriots may have to resort to violence in order to save our country."						
Do not agree	4011	67.5 (66.0 to 69.0)	659	71.7 (68.1 to 75.3)	4769	77.2 (75.9 to 78.6)
Somewhat agree	1207	21.7 (20.4 to 23.1)	165	20.5 (17.3 to 23.7)	893	16.2 (15.0 to 17.4)
Strongly or very strongly agree	551	10.8 (9.7 to 11.8)	66	7.8 (5.6 to 10.0)	365	6.6 (5.8 to 7.3)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^a	3.5 (2.1 to 4.9)		1.9 (−0.6 to 4.4)		[Reference]	
q Value ^b	<.001		.32		NA	
"In the next few years, there will be civil war in the United States."						
Do not agree	2788	45.0 (43.4 to 46.6)	410	44.8 (41.0 to 48.6)	3169	50.8 (49.3 to 52.3)
Somewhat agree	2198	38.7 (37.1 to 40.3)	357	39.2 (35.4 to 43.0)	2162	36.5 (35.1 to 38.0)
Strongly or very strongly agree	787	16.3 (15.0 to 17.7)	122	16.0 (12.9 to 19.1)	685	12.6 (11.6 to 13.7)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^a	4.4 (2.5 to 6.3)		1.7 (−1.8 to 5.1)		[Reference]	
q Value ^b	<.001		.57		NA	

Abbreviation: NA, not applicable.

^a Adjusted models include age, race and ethnicity, sex, income, education, census division, political ideology, rurality, homeownership, marital status, alcohol consumption, military service, and arrest history. Adjusted differences are for the strongly or very strongly agree comparison.

^b The q value represents the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; it represents the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose q values were at or below the given q value.

Table 2. Firearm Ownership Status and Justification for Political Violence, in General and for 9 Specific Objectives

Level of justification ^a	Firearm ownership status					
	Owner		Nonowner with firearms at home		Nonowner without firearms at home	
	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
In general...to advance an important political objective that you support						
Never justified	4846	81.7 (80.4 to 83.0)	755	81.0 (77.4 to 84.0)	5023	78.9 (77.6 to 80.2)
Sometimes justified	888	16.4 (15.2 to 17.7)	125	15.8 (13.1 to 19.0)	939	17.8 (16.6 to 19.0)
Usually or always justified	75	1.9 (1.4 to 2.5)	18	3.2 (1.8 to 5.7)	153	3.3 (2.7 to 4.0)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	−0.3 (−1.0 to 0.5)		1.3 (−0.9 to 3.4)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.64		.48		NA	
To advance ≥1 of 17 objectives						
Usually or always justified	2243	38.8 (37.3 to 40.4)	280	32.8 (29.2 to 36.5)	1821	29.8 (28.5 to 31.2)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	6.9 (4.5 to 9.3)		4.2 (−0.02 to 8.5)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	<.001		.17		NA	
To return Donald Trump to the presidency this year						
Never justified	5223	89.1 (88.0 to 90.1)	795	87.7 (84.7 to 90.2)	5464	88.4 (87.3 to 89.4)
Sometimes justified	259	5.2 (4.5 to 5.9)	48	6.0 (4.3 to 8.3)	315	6.5 (5.7 to 7.4)
Usually or always justified	293	5.7 (4.9 to 6.7)	49	6.3 (4.5 to 8.7)	268	5.1 (4.4 to 5.8)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	1.2 (0.1 to 2.4)		1.3 (−1.1 to 3.7)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.15		.54		NA	
To stop an election from being stolen						
Never justified	4131	71.3 (69.8 to 72.7)	686	75.7 (72.1 to 78.9)	4650	76.0 (74.7 to 77.3)
Sometimes justified	1115	19.0 (17.8 to 20.3)	144	16.6 (13.9 to 19.7)	939	16.1 (15.0 to 17.2)
Usually or always justified	529	9.7 (8.7 to 10.7)	63	7.7 (5.8 to 10.2)	461	7.9 (7.1 to 8.8)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	1.4 (0.0 to 2.9)		1.2 (−1.5 to 3.9)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.17		.58		NA	
To stop people who do not share my beliefs from voting						
Never justified	5586	95.5 (94.7 to 96.2)	858	94.4 (92.0 to 96.2)	5651	91.5 (90.5 to 92.4)
Sometimes justified	138	3.1 (2.5 to 3.7)	28	4.6 (3.0 to 6.9)	262	5.5 (4.8 to 6.3)
Usually or always justified	55	1.4 (1.0 to 2.0)	8	1.0 (0.5 to 2.2)	144	3.0 (2.5 to 3.7)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	−0.4 (−1.1 to 0.3)		−0.8 (−1.9 to 0.3)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.55		.35		NA	
To prevent discrimination based on race or ethnicity						
Never justified	3877	65.9 (64.3 to 67.4)	584	62.7 (58.8 to 66.4)	3914	62.2 (60.7 to 63.7)
Sometimes justified	1518	26.8 (25.4 to 28.3)	242	28.4 (25.0 to 32.0)	1611	27.8 (26.4 to 29.2)
Usually or always justified	384	7.3 (6.5 to 8.2)	66	8.9 (6.7 to 11.7)	520	10.0 (9.1 to 11.0)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.2 (−1.2 to 1.5)		0.2 (−2.7 to 3.0)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.89		.95		NA	
To preserve an American way of life based on Western European traditions						
Never justified	3892	68.7 (67.2 to 70.1)	683	76.9 (73.5 to 80.0)	4704	78.3 (77.0 to 79.6)
Sometimes justified	1469	24.1 (22.7 to 25.4)	171	18.4 (15.6 to 21.5)	1042	17.0 (15.8 to 18.1)
Usually or always justified	395	7.3 (6.5 to 8.2)	34	4.7 (3.2 to 7.0)	274	4.7 (4.1 to 5.4)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	1.8 (0.6 to 3.0)		1.0 (−1.2 to 3.2)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.02		.58		NA	
To preserve the American way of life I believe in						
Never	2559	45.3 (43.7 to 47.0)	493	55.2 (51.4 to 59.0)	3636	60.9 (59.4 to 62.4)
Sometimes	2315	38.6 (37.1 to 40.2)	301	33.1 (29.6 to 36.8)	1797	28.8 (27.5 to 30.2)
Usually or Always	931	16.1 (14.9 to 17.3)	101	11.7 (9.3 to 14.5)	650	10.3 (9.4 to 11.2)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	2.9 (1.2 to 4.5)		2.5 (−0.5 to 5.4)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.004		.28		NA	

(continued)

Table 2. Firearm Ownership Status and Justification for Political Violence, in General and for 9 Specific Objectives (continued)

	Firearm ownership status					
	Owner		Nonowner with firearms at home		Nonowner without firearms at home	
Level of justification ^a	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
To oppose Americans who do not share my beliefs						
Never	5364	91.8 (90.8 to 92.6)	831	90.1 (87.2 to 92.4)	5471	87.9 (86.8 to 88.9)
Sometimes	355	6.5 (5.7 to 7.4)	50	7.2 (5.3 to 9.6)	461	8.8 (7.9 to 9.7)
Usually or Always	86	1.7 (1.3 to 2.2)	17	2.7 (1.5 to 4.8)	160	3.3 (2.8 to 4.0)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	−0.3 (−1.1 to 0.5)		0.7 (−1.2 to 2.5)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.64		.65		NA	
To oppose the government when it does not share my beliefs						
Never justified	4709	80.4 (79.0 to 81.6)	759	81.6 (78.1 to 84.6)	5073	81.9 (80.6 to 83.1)
Sometimes justified	934	16.5 (15.4 to 17.8)	113	15.4 (12.6 to 18.6)	797	14.5 (13.4 to 15.7)
Usually or always justified	138	3.1 (2.5 to 3.8)	20	3.1 (1.8 to 5.0)	179	3.6 (3.0 to 4.3)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	3.1 (−0.6 to 1.2)		0.9 (−1.0 to 2.7)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.67		.57		NA	
To oppose the government when it tries to take private land for public purposes						
Never justified	3263	55.1 (53.5 to 56.7)	557	59.6 (55.8 to 63.4)	4015	64.7 (63.3 to 66.2)
Sometimes justified	1926	33.2 (31.7 to 34.7)	265	31.4 (27.9 to 35.2)	1559	26.3 (25.0 to 27.7)
Usually or always justified	588	11.8 (10.7 to 12.9)	71	8.9 (6.9 to 11.5)	473	8.9 (8.0 to 9.9)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	2.8 (1.2 to 4.4)		0.7 (−2.1 to 3.4)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.004		.75		NA	

Abbreviation: NA, not applicable.

^a Participants were responding to this question, "What do you think about the use of force or violence in the following situations?"^b Adjusted models include age, race and ethnicity, sex, income, education, census division, political ideology, rurality, homeownership, marital status, alcohol consumption, military service, and arrest history. Adjusted differences are for the usually or always justified comparison.^c The q value represents the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; it represents the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose q values were at or below the given q value.

nearly always carriers: adjusted difference, 19.0 [95% CI, 12.7-25.4] percentage points; $q < .001$) (eTable 8 in [Supplement 1](#)). Considering objectives individually, recent purchasers were more likely to justify violence for 4 of 17, and always or nearly always carriers were more likely to justify violence for 9 of 17 than their comparators (eTables 8 and 9 in [Supplement 1](#)). Assault-type rifle owners differed from handgun-only owners solely in being more likely to justify violence "to oppose the government when it tries to take private land for public purposes" (adjusted difference, 5.9 [95% CI, 2.3-9.4] percentage points; $q = .03$).

Recent purchasers and always or nearly always carriers were, more frequently than their comparators, very or completely willing "to kill a person" to advance a political objective (recent purchasers: adjusted difference, 1.7 [95% CI, 0.6-2.9] percentage points; $q = .01$; always or nearly always carriers: adjusted difference, 3.4 [95% CI, 1.1-5.7] percentage points; $q = .01$) (eTable 10 in [Supplement 1](#)). Always or nearly-always carriers were also more willing to injure a person (adjusted difference, 3.2 [95% CI, 0.6-5.7] percentage points; $q = .04$). Assault-type rifle owners and handgun-only owners did not differ on these measures.

There were no differences between the 3 subgroups of interest and their comparators in willingness to engage in violence against members of specified target populations (eTable 11 in [Supplement 1](#)). Assault-type rifle owners, recent purchasers, and always or nearly always carriers were all more willing than their comparators to engage in political violence on their own (eTable 12 in [Supplement 1](#)). Recent purchasers and always or nearly always carriers were also more willing to organize a group to commit political violence.

Respondents in all 3 subgroups of interest also more frequently considered it very or extremely likely that, in a future situation where they considered political violence to be justified, they would be armed (adjusted differences ranging from 14.3 percentage points for recent purchasers to 50.8 percentage points for always or nearly-always carriers) and would carry a gun openly (adjusted differences ranging from 5.0 percentage points for recent purchasers to 16.9 percentage points for always or nearly always carriers) (Table 5; eTables 13 and 14 in Supplement 1). Always or nearly always carriers more frequently thought it very or extremely likely that they would shoot someone (adjusted difference, 6.7 [95% CI, 3.6-9.8] percentage points; $q < .001$).

Weighted prevalences are noteworthy here: 32.2% (95% CI, 28.7%-36.0%) of assault-type rifle owners and 62.5% (95% CI, 56.7%-68.0%) of always or nearly always carriers thought it very or extremely likely that they would be armed in such a future situation; 8.8% (95% CI, 5.7%-13.5%) of always or nearly always carriers thought it very or extremely likely that they would shoot someone.

Table 3. Firearm Ownership Status and Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence, by Type of Violence

Level of willingness ^a	Firearm ownership status					
	Owner		Nonowner with firearms at home		Nonowner without firearms at home	
	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
To damage property						
Not asked the question	854	15.4 (14.2 to 16.6)	155	16.4 (13.6 to 19.2)	1530	25.5 (24.2 to 26.8)
Not willing	4370	73.9 (72.5 to 75.4)	668	74.2 (70.8 to 77.6)	3992	63.7 (62.2 to 65.2)
Somewhat willing	436	8.1 (7.1 to 9.0)	58	7.1 (5.1 to 9.1)	424	7.6 (6.8 to 8.5)
Very or completely willing	134	2.6 (2.1 to 3.1)	14	2.3 (0.9 to 3.7)	154	3.2 (2.6 to 3.8)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.2 (−0.6 to 1.0)		−0.0 (−1.6 to 1.6)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.75		.97		NA	
To threaten or intimidate a person						
Not asked the question	854	15.4 (14.2 to 16.6)	155	16.4 (13.6 to 19.2)	1530	25.5 (24.2 to 26.8)
Not willing	4400	74.8 (73.4 to 76.2)	672	74.2 (70.7 to 77.6)	4081	65.0 (63.5 to 66.4)
Somewhat willing	441	7.8 (6.9 to 8.7)	57	8.1 (5.8 to 10.5)	379	7.3 (6.4 to 8.1)
Very or completely willing	97	2.0 (1.5 to 2.4)	10	1.3 (0.4 to 2.2)	103	2.2 (1.7 to 2.7)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.5 (−0.02 to 1.2)		−0.4 (−1.5 to 0.7)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.40		.64		NA	
To injure a person						
Not asked the question	854	15.4 (14.3 to 16.6)	155	16.4 (13.6 to 19.2)	1530	25.5 (24.2 to 26.8)
Not willing	4447	75.3 (73.9 to 76.7)	686	76.3 (72.8 to 79.4)	4173	66.8 (65.3 to 68.2)
Somewhat willing	373	7.2 (6.4 to 8.1)	46	6.4 (4.5 to 8.9)	285	5.5 (4.8 to 6.3)
Very or completely willing	110	2.1 (1.6 to 2.6)	7	0.9 (0.4 to 2.1)	100	2.2 (1.7 to 2.8)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.4 (−0.4 to 1.1)		−0.8 (−1.8 to 0.1)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.55		.21		NA	
To kill a person						
Not asked the question	854	15.4 (14.3 to 16.6)	155	16.5 (13.7 to 19.3)	1530	25.5 (24.2 to 26.8)
Not willing	4584	77.9 (76.6 to 79.3)	703	78.9 (75.8 to 82.1)	4310	69.5 (68.1 to 70.8)
Somewhat willing	242	4.6 (3.9 to 5.3)	21	2.8 (1.3 to 4.2)	156	3.1 (2.5 to 3.7)
Very or completely willing	110	2.0 (1.6 to 2.5)	13	1.8 (0.7 to 3.0)	101	1.9 (1.5 to 2.4)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.3 (−0.4 to 1.0)		0.2 (−1.1 to 1.5)		[Reference]	
q Value ^c	.58		.88		NA	

Abbreviation: NA, not applicable.

^a Participants were responding to this question: "In a situation where you think force or violence is justified to advance an important political objective...How willing would you personally be to use force or violence in each of these ways?" These questions were only asked of respondents who considered political violence to be at least sometimes justified for at least 1 of 17 specified political objectives.

^b Adjusted models include age, race and ethnicity, sex, income, education, census division, political ideology, rurality, homeownership, marital status, alcohol

consumption, military service, and arrest history. Adjusted differences are for the very or completely willing comparison.

^c The q value represents the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; it represents the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose q values were at or below the given q value.

JAMA Network Open. 2024;7(4):e243623. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3623

April 9, 20248/14

Downloaded from jamanetwork.com by Washington University - St Louis user on 09/19/2025

Discussion

This study sought to evaluate whether firearm owners were more likely than nonowners to view political violence as justified and more willing to engage in political violence. Firearm owners have ready access to firearms; positive findings would suggest threats to the public's health and safety and potentially to the future of the United States.

For firearm owners as a whole, our findings are mixed. Owners were more likely than nonowners without firearms at home to endorse a need for violence to effect social change. They were more likely (by 6.9 percentage points, after adjustment) to justify violence to achieve at least 1 of 17 political objectives. This difference is only moderate, in our view; the same survey found much larger differences associated with sociodemographic characteristics,¹² political party affiliation, and political ideology.^{27,28} And with 1 exception, a statistically significant but very small (1.1 percentage point) increase in the likelihood that they would shoot someone, owners reported no greater overall willingness to engage in political violence. That said, their greater willingness to commit violence as individuals is troubling; action by individuals is a leading form of domestic violent extremism.²⁹

Findings for the subgroups we examined raise the greatest concern. Recent purchasers and always or nearly always carriers were more likely than their comparators to see political violence as justified, more willing to engage in it, more willing to kill to advance political objectives, and more

Table 4. Firearm Ownership Status and Future Likelihood of Firearm Possession and Use in a Situation in Which Political Violence Is Perceived as Justified

Degree of likelihood ^a	Firearm ownership status					
	Owner		Nonowner with firearms at home		Nonowner without firearms at home	
	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
I will be armed with a gun.						
Not likely	4188	68.2 (66.6 to 69.8)	751	81.6 (78.2 to 84.7)	5422	87.3 (86.2 to 88.3)
Somewhat likely	768	14.5 (13.4 to 15.7)	102	12.7 (10.3 to 15.7)	456	8.8 (7.9 to 9.8)
Very or extremely likely	829	17.2 (15.9 to 18.6)	40	5.6 (3.9 to 8.1)	194	3.9 (3.3 to 4.6)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	12.5 (10.9 to 14.1)		2.4 (0.0 to 4.7)		[Reference]	
<i>q</i> Value ^c	<.001		.17		NA	
I will carry a gun openly, so that people know I am armed.						
Not likely	4938	82.6 (81.2 to 83.9)	816	90.6 (87.9 to 92.8)	5754	93.5 (92.6 to 94.2)
Somewhat likely	487	9.2 (8.3 to 10.2)	56	6.4 (4.7 to 8.7)	202	4.1 (3.4 to 4.8)
Very or extremely likely	356	8.2 (7.1 to 9.3)	20	2.9 (1.7 to 4.9)	109	2.5 (2.0 to 3.1)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	5.7 (4.4 to 6.9)		1.1 (−0.7 to 2.8)		[Reference]	
<i>q</i> Value ^c	<.001		.47		NA	
I will threaten someone with a gun.						
Not likely	5669	97.4 (96.7 to 98.0)	874	98.2 (96.7 to 99.0)	5963	97.8 (97.2 to 98.2)
Somewhat likely	76	1.5 (1.1 to 2.0)	14	1.4 (0.8 to 2.6)	58	1.2 (0.9 to 1.7)
Very or extremely likely	36	1.1 (0.7 to 1.7)	2	0.4 (0.1 to 1.8)	45	1.0 (0.7 to 1.4)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	0.4 (−0.2 to 0.9)		−0.2 (−1.0 to 0.6)		[Reference]	
<i>q</i> Value ^c	.36		.78		NA	
I will shoot someone with a gun.						
Not likely	5525	94.8 (93.9 to 95.5)	871	97.2 (95.2 to 98.4)	5912	96.7 (96.0 to 97.3)
Somewhat likely	176	3.6 (3.0 to 4.3)	16	2.2 (1.2 to 4.0)	109	2.3 (1.8 to 2.8)
Very or extremely likely	81	1.7 (1.3 to 2.2)	6	0.6 (0.2 to 1.7)	45	1.0 (0.7 to 1.5)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^b	1.1 (0.5 to 1.7)		0.3 (−0.6 to 1.1)		[Reference]	
<i>q</i> Value ^c	.002		.70		NA	

Abbreviation: NA, not applicable.

^a Participants were responding to this question: "Thinking now about the future and all the changes it might bring, how likely is it that you will use a gun in any of the following ways in the next few years—in a situation where you think force or violence is justified to advance an important political objective?"

^b Adjusted models include age, race and ethnicity, sex, income, education, census division, political ideology, rurality, homeownership, marital status, alcohol

consumption, military service, and arrest history. Adjusted differences are for the very or extremely likely comparison.

^c The q value represents the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; it represents the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose q values were at or below the given q value.

Table 5. Variation Among Firearm Owners by Type of Firearms Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior in Future Likelihood of Firearm Possession and Use in a Situation in Which Political Violence is Perceived as Justified

Likelihood ^c	Types of firearm owned ^a				Recency of firearm purchase				Carrying loaded firearm when out in public in the past year ^b			
	Assault-type rifle				2020 or Later				2019 or Earlier			
	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)	Unweighted No.	Weighted % (95% CI)
I will be armed with a gun.												
Not likely	589	52.5 (48.6 to 56.4)	1002	69.4 (66.2 to 72.4)	938	51.3 (48.3 to 54.3)	3199	76.7 (75.0 to 78.4)	147	29.4 (24.5 to 34.9)	3705	78.1 (76.4 to 79.7)
Somewhat likely	150	15.3 (12.6 to 18.3)	192	16.1 (13.7 to 18.9)	281	18.8 (16.4 to 21.4)	473	12.3 (11.1 to 13.7)	36	8.0 (5.5 to 11.5)	564	14.1 (12.8 to 15.6)
Very or extremely likely	319	32.2 (28.7 to 36.0)	167	14.5 (12.3 to 17.1)	442	29.9 (27.1 to 32.9)	369	10.9 (9.7 to 12.4)	266	62.5 (56.7 to 68.0)	288	7.8 (6.8 to 8.9)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^d	15.8 (11.2 to 20.3)		[Reference]		14.3 (11.3 to 17.3)		[Reference]		50.8 (45.2 to 56.5)		[Reference]	
q Value ^e	<.001		NA		<.001		NA		<.001		NA	
I will carry a gun openly, so that people know I am armed.												
Not likely	855	78.3 (74.7 to 81.5)	1179	83.6 (80.8 to 86.2)	1283	73.7 (70.7 to 76.5)	3587	87.0 (85.5 to 88.4)	323	65.4 (58.5 to 71.7)	4053	87.1 (85.7 to 88.4)
Somewhat likely	101	9.2 (7.3 to 11.5)	115	10.1 (8.1 to 12.5)	212	13.1 (11.2 to 15.3)	267	7.3 (6.3 to 8.4)	39	8.2 (5.7 to 11.5)	333	8.5 (7.5 to 9.7)
Very or extremely likely	102	12.5 (9.8 to 15.9)	68	6.3 (4.7 to 8.3)	165	13.2 (10.9 to 15.8)	184	5.7 (4.7 to 6.9)	85	26.4 (20.2 to 33.7)	167	4.3 (3.6 to 5.2)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^d	5.9 (2.4 to 9.4)		[Reference]		5.0 (2.8 to 7.3)		[Reference]		16.9 (11.3 to 22.5)		[Reference]	
q Value ^e	.03		NA		<.001		NA		<.001		NA	
I will threaten someone with a gun.												
Not likely	1029	96.3 (94.0 to 97.7)	1332	97.3 (95.9 to 98.3)	1605	95.5 (93.8 to 96.8)	3982	98.3 (97.5 to 98.8)	429	94.9 (90.6 to 97.2)	4493	98.2 (97.4 to 98.7)
Somewhat likely	15	1.8 (0.9 to 3.5)	20	1.6 (1.0 to 2.6)	34	2.6 (1.7 to 3.9)	40	1.0 (0.7 to 1.4)	12	2.2 (1.2 to 4.1)	43	1.0 (0.7 to 1.5)
Very or extremely likely	14	1.9 (0.9 to 3.9)	8	1.0 (0.5 to 2.3)	22	1.9 (1.1 to 3.2)	14	0.8 (0.4 to 1.6)	7	2.9 (1.1 to 7.7)	17	0.8 (0.4 to 1.5)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^d	-0.1 (-1.5 to 1.3)		[Reference]		0.4 (-0.5 to 1.4)		[Reference]		0.2 (-1.6 to 2.0)		[Reference]	
q Value ^e	.98		NA		.50		NA		.86		NA	
I will shoot someone with a gun.												
Not likely	981	92.1 (89.6 to 94.0)	1295	94.3 (92.5 to 95.7)	1536	91.1 (89.1 to 92.8)	3911	96.6 (95.7 to 97.2)	381	83.4 (78.2 to 87.6)	4440	97.1 (96.4 to 97.7)
Somewhat likely	47	4.7 (3.3 to 6.7)	51	4.4 (3.2 to 6.1)	80	5.7 (4.4 to 7.4)	93	2.5 (2.0 to 3.3)	34	7.7 (5.2 to 11.3)	91	2.3 (1.8 to 3.0)
Very or extremely likely	30	3.2 (1.9 to 5.2)	16	1.3 (0.7 to 2.3)	45	3.2 (2.2 to 4.6)	34	0.9 (0.6 to 1.4)	32	8.8 (5.7 to 13.5)	23	0.5 (0.3 to 0.9)
Adjusted prevalence difference (95% CI) ^d	1.8 (0.3 to 3.3)		[Reference]		1.3 (0.3 to 2.4)		[Reference]		6.7 (3.6 to 9.8)		[Reference]	
q Value ^e	.23		NA		.05		NA		<.001		NA	

Abbreviation: NA, not applicable.

^a Assault-type rifle owners could own firearms of other types; handgun-only owners could not own firearms of other types. Full results are shown in eTable 13 in [Supplement 1](#).

^b Results for those who selected less than half, about half, or more than half the time appear in eTable 14 in [Supplement 1](#).

^c Participants were responding to this question: "Thinking now about the future and all the changes it might bring, how likely is it that you will use a gun in any of the following ways in the next few years—in a situation where you think force or violence is justified to advance an important political objective?"

^d Adjusted models include age, race and ethnicity, sex, income, education, census division, political ideology, rurality, homeownership, marital status, alcohol consumption, military service, and arrest history. Adjusted differences are for the very or extremely likely comparison.

^e The q value represents the probability that the given difference would be a false discovery; it represents the expected proportion of false positives that would be seen among the collection of all differences whose q values were at or below the given q value.

willing to organize a violent group. Pandemic-era purchasers, as compared with other firearm owners, were found in a small opt-in survey to possess many characteristics associated with an increased risk for violence.³⁰ An early-2020 study by our group found an association at the state level between the size of increases in firearm purchasing in the first months of the pandemic and the size of subsequent increases in violence,⁵ but that association was not maintained over time.⁷

It is plausible based on our findings that some recent purchasers have been arming up for anticipated civil conflict. Our findings strongly suggest that large numbers of armed individuals who are at least potentially willing to engage in political violence are in public places across the United States every day.

Notwithstanding these results and their implications, the overarching finding here—that majorities of firearm owners and nonowners alike repeatedly reject political violence—is a hopeful one, in our view. It invites comparison to the similarly repeated finding that differences between owners and nonowners in support for firearm violence prevention measures are often small and occasionally nonexistent.³¹⁻³⁴ Our results suggest a joint effort by firearm owners and nonowners to publicly repudiate political violence and help identify, dissuade, deter, and incapacitate likely perpetrators.

Limitations

This study has limitations. The findings are cross-sectional and subject to sampling error and nonresponse bias. Respondents and nonrespondents differed in age and gender, which are associated with support for political violence.¹² Many important outcomes had response counts of less than 100 and weighted prevalences below 5%, and some adjusted prevalence differences were small. In such cases, findings should be interpreted with caution. Prevalences of support for political violence to advance 1 or more of 17 specific political objectives were in part a function of the specific objectives presented; a different list might have produced different results. The large sample notwithstanding, the estimates remain vulnerable to bias from sources such as inattentive or strategic responses. Widely publicized mass shootings occurred in Buffalo, New York, and Uvalde, Texas, while the survey was in the field and may have affected respondents' views on firearms and violence.

Conclusions

Our findings suggest that differences in support for political violence between firearm owners as a whole and nonowners without firearms at home are moderate, where they exist. Owners who have recently purchased firearms, always or nearly always carry firearms in public, or (to a lesser extent) own assault-type rifles report greater support for and willingness to engage in political violence than others. Prevention efforts should focus in part on these groups.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Accepted for Publication: January 30, 2024.

Published: April 9, 2024. doi:[10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3623](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.3623)

Open Access: This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the [CC-BY-NC-ND License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). © 2024 Wintemute GJ et al. *JAMA Network Open*.

Corresponding Author: Garen J. Wintemute, MD, MPH, Department of Emergency Medicine, UC Davis School of Medicine, 2315 Stockton Blvd, Sacramento, CA 95817 (gjwintemute@ucdavis.edu).

Author Affiliations: Department of Emergency Medicine, UC Davis School of Medicine, Sacramento, California (Wintemute, Crawford, Robinson, Tomsich, Reeping, Schleimer, Pear); UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program, Sacramento, California (Wintemute, Crawford, Robinson, Tomsich, Reeping, Schleimer, Pear); California Firearm Violence Research Center, Sacramento (Wintemute, Crawford, Robinson, Tomsich, Reeping, Schleimer, Pear).

Author Contributions: Dr Wintemute had full access to all of the data in the study and takes responsibility for the integrity of the data and the accuracy of the data analysis.

Concept and design: Wintemute, Robinson, Tomsich, Pear.

Acquisition, analysis, or interpretation of data: Wintemute, Crawford, Robinson, Reeping, Schleimer, Pear.

Drafting of the manuscript: Wintemute, Robinson, Reeping.

Critical review of the manuscript for important intellectual content: Crawford, Robinson, Tomsich, Reeping, Schleimer, Pear.

Statistical analysis: Wintemute, Crawford, Robinson.

Obtained funding: Wintemute.

Supervision: Wintemute.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures: Dr Wintemute reported receiving grants from the Joyce Foundation, the Heising-Simons Foundation, the California Wellness Foundation and core support from the California Firearm Violence Research Center and the UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program during the conduct of the study and serving as a paid member of the National Firearms Commerce and Trafficking Assessment Task Force of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives outside the submitted work. No other disclosures were reported.

Funding/Support: This research was supported by grants from the Joyce Foundation, the Heising-Simons Foundation, and the California Wellness Foundation, and by funds from the California Firearm Violence Research Center and the UC Davis Violence Prevention Research Program.

Role of the Funder/Sponsor: The funders had no role in the design and conduct of the study; collection, management, analysis, and interpretation of the data; preparation, review, or approval of the manuscript; and decision to submit the manuscript for publication.

Meeting Presentations: A portion of this work was presented at the 2023 National Research Conference for the Prevention of Firearm-Related Harms; November 1, 2023; Chicago, Illinois.

Data Sharing Statement: See [Supplement 2](#).

Additional Information: Earlier versions of the eFigure in [Supplement 1](#) have appeared in Wintemute,¹¹ 2021, with data through September 2021; and Wintemute et al,¹² 2023, with data through May 2023. The version presented here (with data through December 2023) has not been published previously.

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS. Accessed March 21, 2024. <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/index.html>
2. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Firearm checks (NICS). Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://www.fbi.gov/services/cjis/nics>
3. Miller M, Zhang W, Azrael D. Firearm purchasing during the COVID-19 pandemic: results from the 2021 National Firearms Survey. *Ann Intern Med*. 2022;175(2):219-225. doi:10.7326/M21-3423
4. Laqueur HS, Kagawa RMC, McCort CD, Pallin R, Wintemute G. The impact of spikes in handgun acquisitions on firearm-related harms. *Inj Epidemiol*. 2019;6:35. doi:10.1186/s40621-019-0212-0
5. Schleimer JP, McCort CD, Pear VA, et al. Firearm purchasing and firearm violence in the first months of the coronavirus pandemic in the United States. *medRxiv*. Preprint posted online July 11, 2020. doi:10.1101/2020.07.02.20145508
6. Levine PB, McKnight R. Firearms and accidental deaths: evidence from the aftermath of the Sandy Hook school shooting. *Science*. 2017;358(6368):1324-1328. doi:10.1126/science.aan8179
7. Schleimer JP, McCort CD, Shev AB, et al. Firearm purchasing and firearm violence during the coronavirus pandemic in the United States: a cross-sectional study. *Inj Epidemiol*. 2021;8(1):43. doi:10.1186/s40621-021-00339-5
8. Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project. ACLED definitions of political violence and protest. Accessed February 28, 2024. https://acleddata.com/acleddatanew/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/ACLED_Event-Definitions_v1_April-2019.pdf
9. Kleinfeld R. The rise of political violence in the United States. *J Democracy*. 2021;32(4):160-176. doi:10.1353/jod.2021.0059
10. Walter BF. *How Civil Wars Start*. Crown; 2022.
11. Wintemute GJ. Guns, violence, politics: the gyre widens. *Inj Epidemiol*. 2021;8(1):64. doi:10.1186/s40621-021-00357-3

12. Wintemute GJ, Robinson SL, Crawford A, et al. Views of democracy and society and support for political violence in the USA: findings from a nationally representative survey. *Inj Epidemiol*. 2023;10(1):45. doi:10.1186/s40621-023-00456-3
13. Koper CS. Assessing the potential to reduce deaths and injuries from mass shootings through restrictions on assault weapons and other high-capacity semiautomatic firearms. *Criminol Public Policy*. 2020;19:147-170. doi:10.1111/1745-9133.12485
14. Ipsos. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://www.ipsos.com/en>
15. American Association for Public Opinion Research. Code of Professional Ethics and Practices. April 2021. Accessed March 21, 2024. <https://www-archive.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/AAPOR-Code-of-Ethics.aspx>
16. Schleimer JP, Kravitz-Wirtz N, Pallin R, Charbonneau AK, Buggs SA, Wintemute GJ. Firearm ownership in California: a latent class analysis. *Inj Prev*. 2020;26(5):456-462. doi:10.1136/injuryprev-2019-043412
17. Kravitz-Wirtz N, Aubel A, Schleimer J, Pallin R, Wintemute G. Public concern about violence, firearms, and the COVID-19 pandemic in California. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2021;4(1):e2033484. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2020.33484
18. Simonetti JA, Azrael D, Zhang W, Miller M. Perspectives on clinician-delivered firearm safety counseling during routine care: Results of a national survey. *Prev Med*. 2022;158:107039.
19. Miller M, Azrael D. Firearm storage in US households with children: findings from the 2021 National Firearm Survey. *JAMA Netw Open*. 2022;5(2):e2148823. doi:10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.48823
20. Salhi C, Azrael D, Miller M. Patterns of gun owner beliefs about firearm risk in relation to firearm storage: a latent class analysis using the 2019 National Firearms Survey. *Inj Prev*. 2020;injuryprev-2019-043624. doi:10.1136/injuryprev-2019-043624
21. Ipsos. KnowledgePanel: a methodological overview. 2020. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ipsosknowledgepanelmethodology.pdf>.
22. Ipsos. KnowledgePanel sampling and weighting methodology. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/kpsamplingandweighting.pdf>
23. Westwood SJ, Grimmer J, Tyler M, Nall C. Current research overstates American support for political violence. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2022;119(12):e2116870119. doi:10.1073/pnas.2116870119
24. Chyung SY, Roberts K, Swanson I, Hankinson A. Evidence-based survey design: the use of a midpoint on the Likert scale. *Perform Improv*. 2017;56(10):15-23. doi:10.1002/pfi.21727
25. Benjamini Y, Hochberg Y. Controlling the false discovery rate: a practical and powerful approach to multiple testing. *J R Stat Soc B*. 1995;57(1):289-300. doi:10.1111/j.2517-6161.1995.tb02031.x
26. Storey JD. The positive false discovery rate: a bayesian interpretation and the q-value. *Ann Stat*. 2003;31(6):2013-2035. doi:10.1214/aos/1074290335
27. Wintemute GJ, Crawford A, Robinson A, Schleimer JP, Tomsich EA, Pear VA. Party affiliation, political ideology, views of American democracy and society, and support for political violence: findings from a nationwide population-representative survey. *SocArXiv*. Preprint posted online October 21, 2022. doi:10.31235/osf.io/n9b36
28. Wintemute GJ, Robinson SL, Tomsich EA, Tancredi DJ. MAGA Republicans' views of American democracy and society and support for political violence in the United States: findings from a nationwide population-representative survey. *PLoS One*. 2024;19(1):e0295747. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0295747
29. Department of Homeland Security. Strategic framework for countering terrorism and targeted violence. September 2019. Accessed February 28, 2024. <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/dhs-strategic-framework-countering-terrorism-and-targeted-violence>.
30. Hicks BM, Vitro C, Johnson E, et al. Who bought a gun during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States?: associations with QAnon beliefs, right-wing political attitudes, intimate partner violence, antisocial behavior, suicidality, and mental health and substance use problems. *PLoS One*. 2023;18(8):e0290770. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0290770
31. Teret SP, Webster DW, Vernick JS, et al. Support for new policies to regulate firearms. Results of two national surveys. *N Engl J Med*. 1998;339(12):813-818. doi:10.1056/NEJM199809173391206
32. Barry CL, McGinty EE, Vernick JS, Webster DW. After Newtown—public opinion on gun policy and mental illness. *N Engl J Med*. 2013;368(12):1077-1081. doi:10.1056/NEJMp1300512
33. Barry CL, Stone EM, Crifasi CK, Vernick JS, Webster DW, McGinty EE. Trends in public opinion on US gun laws: majorities of gun owners and non-gun owners support a range of measures. *Health Aff (Millwood)*. 2019;38(10):1727-1734. doi:10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00576
34. Stone EM, Crifasi CK, Ward JA, et al. National support for gun policies among U.S. adults in 2019 and 2021. *Prev Med*. 2022;164:107242. doi:10.1016/j.jypmed.2022.107242

SUPPLEMENT 1.

eAppendix. Questions From the 2022 American Life Survey That Supplied Data for This Study

eMethods.

eFigure. Observed and Expected Monthly Counts of National Instant Criminal Background Check System Background Checks for Firearm Purchases, January 2014–December 2023

eTable 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Firearm Ownership Status

eTable 2. Comparison of Respondents and Nonrespondents

eTable 3. Firearm Ownership Status and Justification for Political Violence for 8 Additional Specific Objectives

eTable 4. Firearm Ownership Status and Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence, by Target of Violence

eTable 5. Firearm Ownership Status and Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence Alone or in a Group

eTable 6. Demographic Characteristics of Firearm Owners by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior

eTable 7. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Beliefs Regarding Violence to Effect Social Change and The Likelihood of Civil War

eTable 8. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Beliefs Regarding Justification for Political Violence, in General and for 9 Specific Objectives

eTable 9. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Beliefs Regarding Justification for Political Violence for 8 Additional Specific Objectives

eTable 10. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence, by Type of Violence

eTable 11. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence, by Target of Violence

eTable 12. Variation Among Firearm Owners (by Types of Firearm Owned, Recency of Purchase, and Carrying Behavior) in Personal Willingness to Engage in Political Violence Alone or in a Group

eTable 13. Variation Among Firearm Owners by Types of Firearm Owned in Future Likelihood of Firearm Possession and Use in a Situation where Political Violence Is Perceived as Justified

eTable 14. Variation Among Firearm Owners by Carrying Behavior in Future Likelihood of Firearm Possession and Use in a Situation where Political Violence Is Perceived as Justified

eReferences.

SUPPLEMENT 2.

Data Sharing Statement