

Gun control and homicides in the USA

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Does gun ownership lead to increased crime? This question is hotly debated, especially in the United States. Proponents of gun control point to gun-related violence, while proponents of the right to bear arms argue that gun ownership has a deterrent effect. David Schindler and Christoph Koenig found that purchase delays also had 3% lower homicide rates.

Empirically, going beyond mere correlations and establishing the causal effect of gun ownership on crime is a difficult endeavor. In Discussion Paper David Schindler (Tilburg Law and Economics Center) and his co-author Christoph Koenig (University of Bristol) use the demand shock after the 2012 shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School to study the effect of [purchase](#) delay laws on homicides. The fear of tighter gun control legislation led to record sales of firearms across the US in the six months following the shooting.

The authors show, however, that states with purchase [delay](#) laws, which typically impose a mandatory waiting period before buyers can obtain their firearm, witnessed a smaller increase in handgun sales than states without such laws.

In a second step, they demonstrate that states with purchase delays also had 3% lower homicide rates compared to states allowing instant handgun access during the period in question. Consistent with the idea that purchase delays prevent impulsive crime, they find that the observed effect was mostly due to a reduction in impulsive assaults and [domestic violence](#).

More information: Christoph Koenig et al. Impulse Purchases, Gun Ownership and Homicides: Evidence from a Firearm Demand Shock, *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2018). [DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.3272156](https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3272156)

Provided by Tilburg University

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