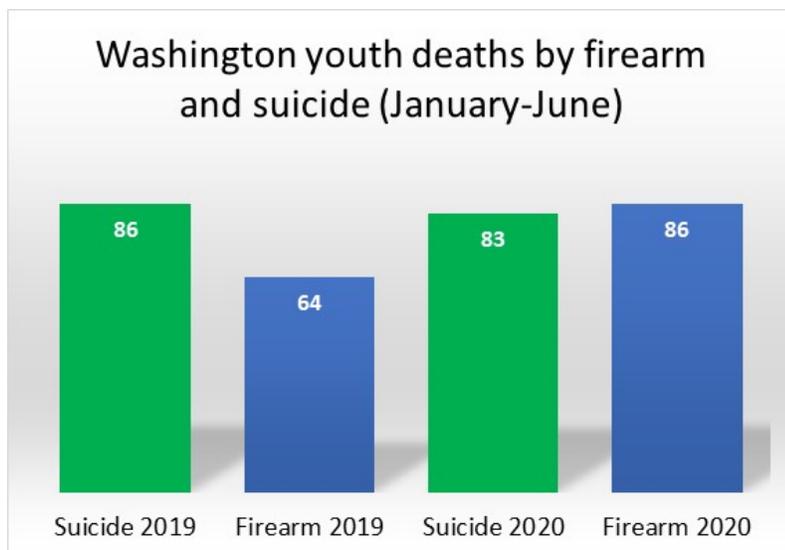


WSPTA recognizes the essential need for children to be safe at home and school. Gun violence, and the potential for it, represents a threat to the mental and physical well-being and safety of children and youth in Washington. Responsible legislation can prevent children from accessing firearms, reduce suicide by the use of a gun, and prevent those who should not own firearms from having them.

Background

- Firearms are the second leading cause of death for American children.¹
- 4.6 million children live in a home with at least one unlocked and loaded firearm.²
- In Washington, suicide (primarily by firearm) is now the leading cause of death for youths 10-24, killing over 150 children per year.³
- Black American children and teens are dying at 10 times the rate of white American children and teens.⁴ Washington's black demographic comprises 4% of the population but 20% of the homicide victims.⁵ Similar proportions exist for Indigenous and Latinx communities.⁶
- LGBTQ+ youth are 5 times more likely to attempt suicide than their heterosexual peers.⁷
- Access to unlocked firearms increases youth suicide risk almost 10-fold.⁸
- Roughly 80% of youth suicides use a family member's gun.⁹
- Suicides are 5x less likely when neither guns nor ammunition is available.¹⁰



Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA advocates for the implementation of the policies Washington voters approved in I-1639 that reduce dangerous access to firearms. In addition, WSPTA supports legislation that:

- Identifies, addresses, and mitigates the disproportionate impact on communities of color, LGBTQ+, and other affected groups.
- Funds community-based prevention strategies.
- Funds school mental health supports and a statewide anonymous reporting system.
- Encourages school districts to partner with gun safety experts to educate their communities and promote safe firearm storage.
- Prohibits the sale or transfer of military-style assault weapons.

Washington State PTA affirms the policies outlined in the National PTA positions statements on [Gun Safety and Violence Prevention](#) and [Firearms](#).

For More Information

Lizzy Sebring, 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

Citations

1. Goyat et al., State Gun Laws and Pediatric Firearm-Related Mortality, Pediatrics, August 2019. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/144/2/e20183283>
2. Azrael D., Cohen J., Salhi C., & Miller M. "Firearm Storage in Gun-Ownning Households with Children: Results of a 2015 National Survey". Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine. (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-018-0261-7>
3. Preliminary data from Washington State DOH in email sent to G Loosmore from DeGrauw, Xinyao, 8/24/20.
4. Fowler et al., Childhood Firearm Injuries in the United States, Pediatrics, June 2017. <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2017/06/15/peds.2016-3486#T1>
5. <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/content/uploads/2019/11/18061938/WashingtonGunViolence-Factsheet.pdf>
6. <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1500/IV-HOM2014.pdf>
7. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/pdfs/ss6509.pdf>
8. King County Department of Health (2013) The Impact of Firearms on King County's Children: 1999-2012. https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/data/~/_media/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/documents/impact-firearms-children-report.ashx
9. King County (2018) LOK-IT-UP. <https://www.kingcounty.gov/depts/health/violence-injury-prevention/violence-prevention/gun-violence/LOK-IT-UP.aspx>
10. 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, e.g., see Table 5.