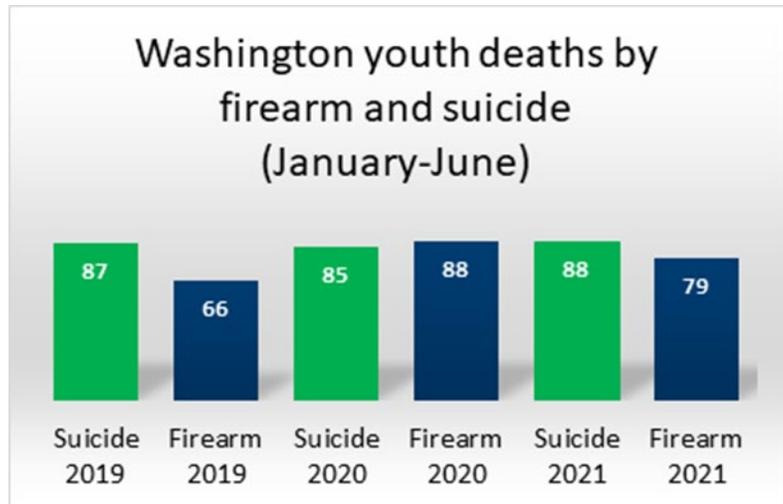


WSPTA recognizes the essential need for children to be safe at home and school. Gun violence, and the potential for it, represents a threat to the mental and physical well-being and safety of children and youth in Washington. Responsible legislation can prevent children from accessing firearms, reduce 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
- Nationally, Black children and teens die at 10 times the rate of white 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
- The majority 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

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For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website

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