

Talking Points: SF2726/HF2891
Klein/Murphy Gun Violence Research Bill



**Public Health Research is central to preventing gun violence
and making gun ownership SAFER in Minnesota.**

SUMMARY OF THE BILL

Minnesota's current state firearms law prohibits the Commissioner of Health from collecting data on individuals regarding lawful firearm ownership in the state or data related to an individual's right to carry a weapon. The bill:

- 1) amends that statute by adding the phrase "except for the purpose of public health research or epidemiologic investigation";
- 2) stipulates that the data must be "de-identified" to prevent a person's identity from being connected with information and ensuring that all personally identifiable information has been removed.

NEED FOR PUBLIC HEALTH RESEARCH TO PREVENT GUN VIOLENCE

Gun violence kills more Minnesotans than either opioid abuse or motor vehicle accidents,⁽¹⁾ yet current state law prohibits the Minnesota Department of Health from collecting vital data about it. The most recent firearm-related injury study on the Minnesota Department of Health's violence and injury prevention unit website is dated 2002.⁽²⁾ Gun deaths in Minnesota have increased over 30% since then.⁽³⁾

Data is the foundation of research, and law makers rely on research to create sound policies that protect Minnesotans. The National Academy of Sciences has noted that inadequate data and inadequate access to existing data are among the most critical barriers to understanding gun violence.⁽⁴⁾

Because of the current prohibition on data collection, we lack:

- basic data on gun ownership, storage, use and markets;
- access to gun-tracing data that can help illuminate the pathway from manufacture to criminal use;
- reliable, valid data that would clarify the protective, defensive and deterrent effects of firearms.

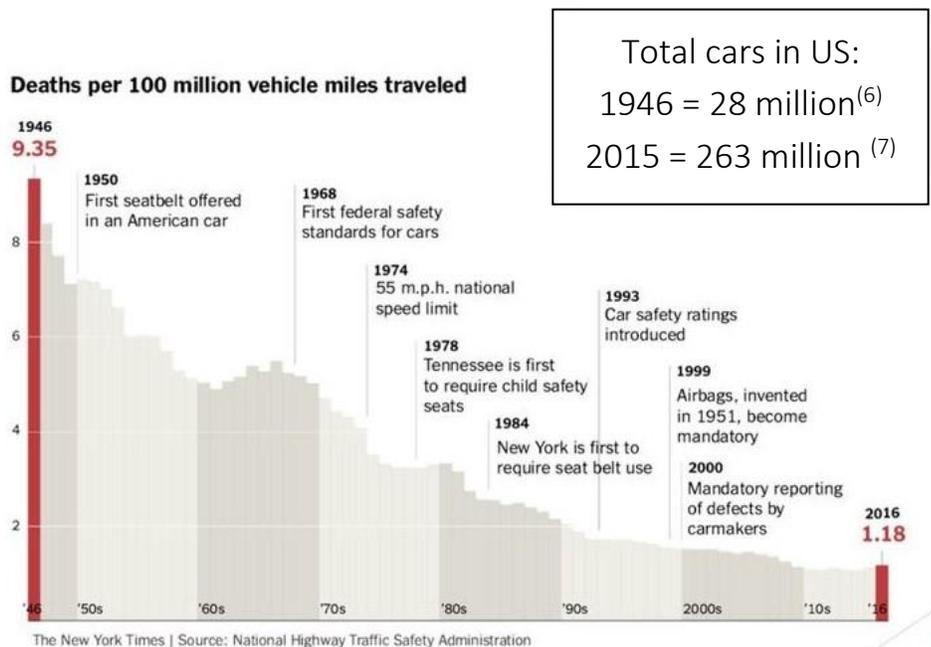
STATEMENT BY AMA PRESIDENT

"Gun violence today is a public health crisis in the United States; it knows no geographic, political or social bounds... An epidemiological analysis of gun violence is vital to address this public health crisis so our society can take action and prevent injury, death and other harms resulting from firearms. As in any urgent public health threat, we cannot devise effective solutions until we have a deeper understanding of the underlying causes that prompt gun violence. With more than 30,000 Americans dying each year from gun violence and firearm-related accidents, the time to act is now."

--President David O. Barbe, M.D, February 2018⁽⁵⁾

ANALOGY – MOTOR VEHICLE DEATHS

Collecting data on guns, gun owners, and gun violence is not a “slippery slope” to gun registration and confiscation in Minnesota. Reducing motor vehicle crash deaths was one of the great American public health achievements of the 20th century. As the chart below shows, deaths by motor vehicle crashes decreased nearly 90% between 1946 and 2016—even though the number of cars on the road *increased* over 800% during the same period. This was accomplished, in large part, by public health research into every aspect of the problem, which laid the foundation for policies, educational campaigns, and technological advances that have made vehicle ownership safer. We can apply the same principals to gun violence, and make gun ownership safer too. But it all begins with data collection and public health research.



GUN LOBBY ARGUMENTS AGAINST PASSAGE

Claim: This bill would violate the privacy of law abiding gun owners.

Truth: The bill stipulates that all data be “de-identified” before being made available. No information collected will be able to be connected to any given individual gun owner.

Claim: This bill would enable the Minnesota Department of Health to promote a gun control agenda.

Truth: Knowledge is power; prohibiting the collection of firearm data means we are choosing to be powerless in the face of an epidemic of gun violence. Data has no agenda.

NOTES:

(1) CDC

(2) Star Tribune <http://www.startribune.com/minnesota-doctors-embrace-gun-control/476181483/>

(3) CDC

(4) <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2610593/>

(5) <https://www.ama-assn.org/ama-agrees-w-hhs-secretary-cdc-should-conduct-gun-violence-research>

(6) Department of Transportation, <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/ohim/summary95/mv200.pdf>

(7) Statista, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/183505/number-of-vehicles-in-the-united-states-since-1990/>