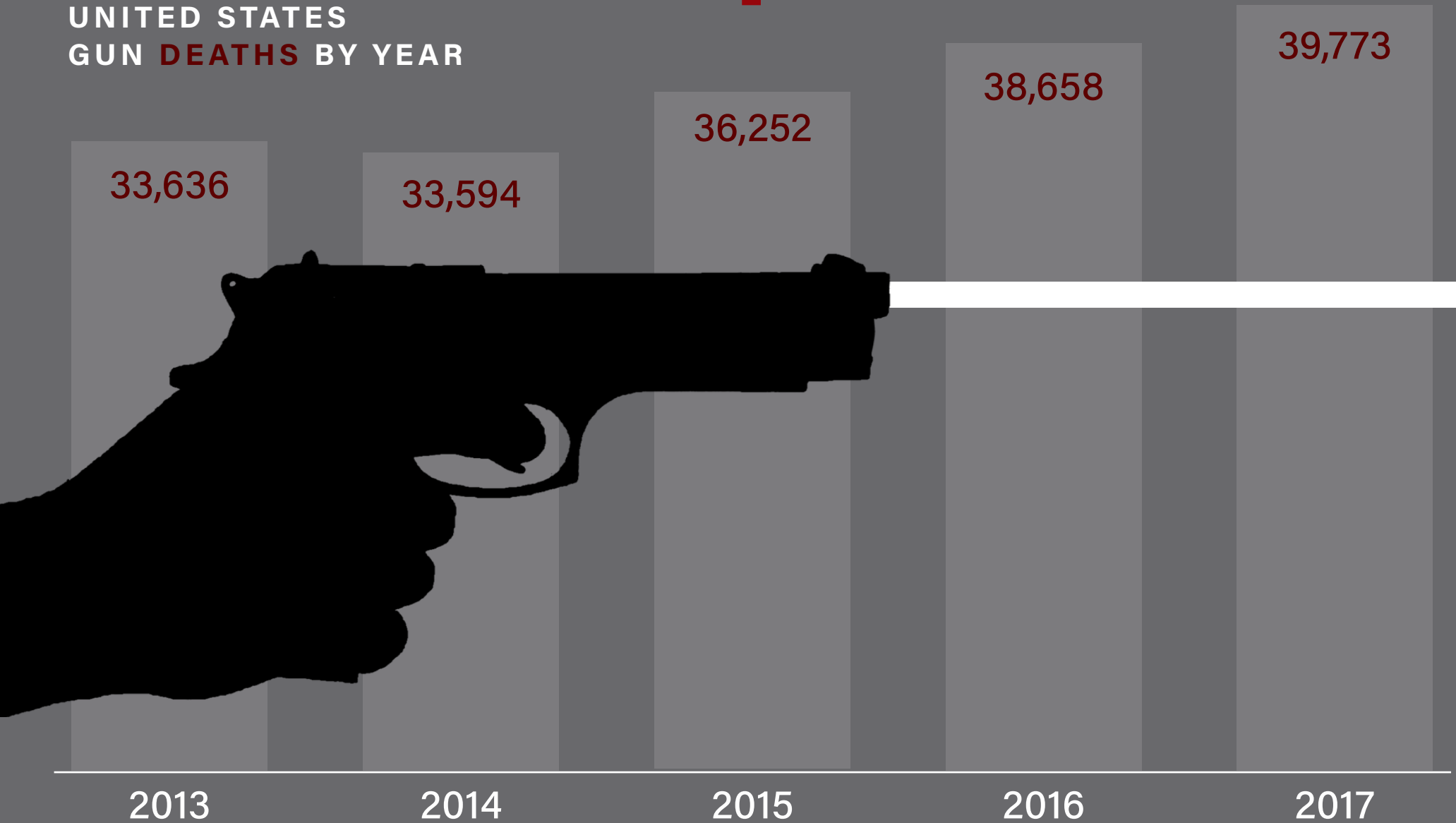


# GUN VIOLENCE

IN AMERICA



UNITED STATES  
GUN DEATHS BY YEAR



Within the United States, there is an increasing rate of gun violence not seen in any other nation in the world. In a single year, there are approximately 30,000 gun related deaths in the United States. Of those 30,000 gun related fatalities, 56% were ruled suicides and 40% were homicides. The last 4% were determined to be either accidents or gun deaths where the intent could not be established (Ludwig, 2017). In the 1990s, research funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) revealed that households with guns were more likely to experience homicide and suicide. According to Luca et al., (2020), between 1989 and 2014, mass shootings were responsible for approximately 0.13% of all gun deaths and 0.34% of all gun

homicides. Although mass shootings are responsible for a minute amount of gun related deaths overall, the impact of mass shootings on state and federal legislation far outweighs the impact of individual gun homicides. According to Ludwig (2017, p. 12097), "Within the United States, gun deaths – particularly homicides – contribute to disparities in life expectancy between whites and minority groups, particularly African-Americans." Additionally, casualties from gun violence more often affect younger individuals which leads to higher rates of premature deaths within the United States. In addition to the untimely deaths of gun related homicide victims, injuries from gun violence put a \$2.3 billion strain on the United States healthcare system every year. Compared to any first world country in the world, the United States has the highest rates of gun related homicides and suicides. Furthermore, American citizens are ten times more likely to die from gun violence when compared to people from 22 other first world countries.

Although this is true, the literature notes that there are other factors that must also be looked at when it comes to individuals who commit mass shootings. According to Metzl and MacLeish (2015), there are numerous studies that indicate laws and policies which allow access to guns during periods of emotional distress are more directly related to higher instances of gun violence than mental health issues alone. It is important to note other factors that may trigger an individual with mental illness to commit gun related crimes since

**"approximately 3% to 5% of all crimes committed in the United States involve individuals with mental health issues."**

**One-third of gun deaths are homicides. The U.S. gun homicide rate is 25 times that of other high-income countries.**

In the United States, certain media sources, news outlets and political parties are quick to blame mental health issues as the cause for mass shootings. This reoccurring theme is in part due to the fact that since 1970, 60% of the individuals who committed mass shootings exhibited such symptoms as acute paranoia, depression and delusions shortly before committing the mass shootings.

Additionally, gun related crimes committed by individuals with mental illness are lower than the national average of individuals who commit gun related crimes without any mental health diagnosis.

The issue of gun violence within the United States has had an immensely polarizing effect on the Nation and the elected officials who are entrusted with creating laws and policies concerning guns. As elected officials continue to overlook the need for gun violence research and stricter gun laws, mass casualties will continue to afflict communities throughout the United States. It is vital to the safety of all Americans that the federal government restore funding for gun violence research. As a result of proper funding, society and lawmakers alike will have the ability to accurately assess the actions needed in order to reduce gun violence in the United States.