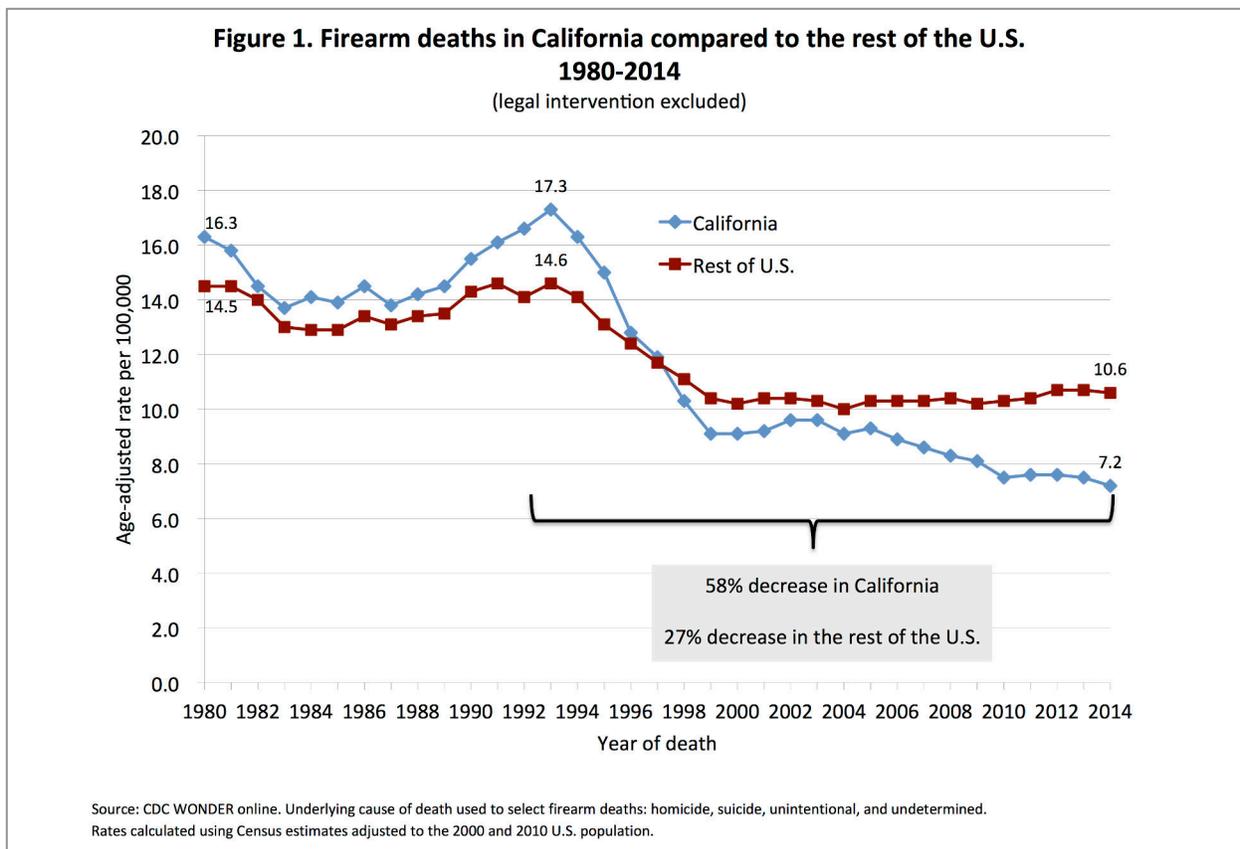


CALIFORNIA: STRONG GUN LAWS SAVE LIVES

Trends in California firearm mortality compared to the rest of the U.S.

Since the early 1990s, California has enacted more than 50 laws that regulate firearms in the state (Appendix 1). To evaluate the impact of these laws, firearm death rates in California were compared to those in the rest of the U.S. As the laws took effect, firearm mortality rates in California declined more rapidly than in the rest of the U.S.

Between 1980-2014 in the U.S., the firearm death rate peaked in 1993. From that year the firearm death rate in California began a steep decline (Figure 1) that continued through 2014. In the rest of the U.S., the firearm death rate decreased more slowly than in California, and there has been no decline since 2000.



From 1993-2014, the firearm death rate in California decreased 58%—from 17.3 to 7.2 deaths per 100,000 population. During the same time period, the firearm death rate in the rest of the U.S. decreased just 27%—from 14.6 to 10.6 deaths per 100,000.

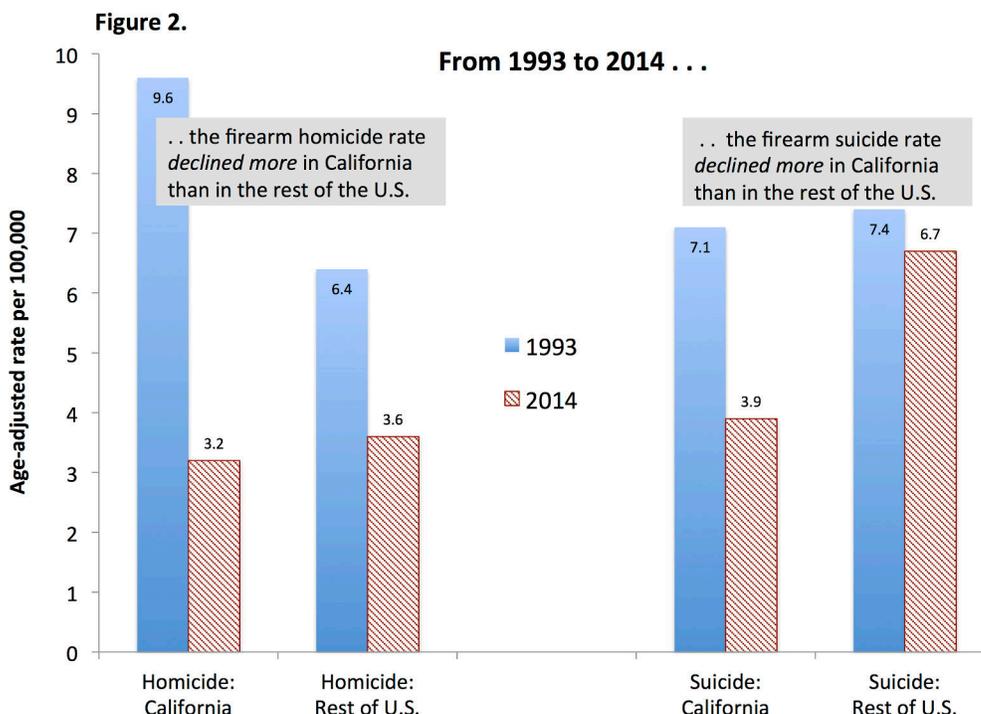
Most firearm deaths are suicides (Table 1). From 1993-2014, California's firearm suicide rate declined 45%—from 7.1 to 3.9 deaths per 100,000—compared to just a 9.5% decline for the rest of the U.S. (Figure 2). Firearm homicide rates have decreased more than firearm suicide rates. California's firearm homicide rate declined 67%—from 9.6 to 3.2 deaths per 100,000—compared to a 44% decline for the rest of the U.S.

Table 1. Firearm deaths: rate and number in California and the rest of the U.S., 1993 and 2014

Year of death	All firearm deaths (excluding legal intervention)		Firearm homicide		Firearm suicide	
	California	Rest of U.S.	California	Rest of U.S.	California	Rest of U.S.
	Rate* (No. deaths)	Rate* (No. deaths)	Rate* (No. deaths)	Rate* (No. deaths)	Rate* (No. deaths)	Rate* (No. deaths)
1993	17.3 (5,424)	14.6 (33,853)	9.6 (3,183)	6.4 (15,070)	7.1 (2,075)	7.4 (16,865)
2014	7.2 (2,853)	10.6 (30,282)	3.2 (1,233)	3.6 (9,712)	3.9 (1,582)	6.7 (19,752)

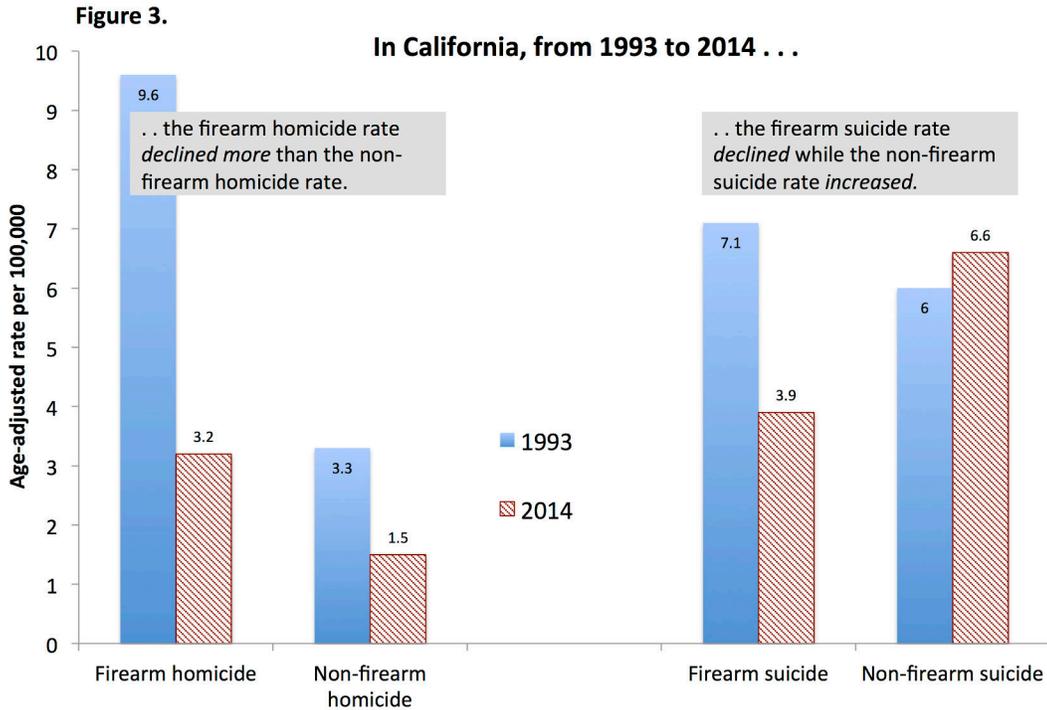
*Age-adjusted rate per 100,000 population.

Source: CDC WONDER online. Underlying cause of death used to select all firearm deaths (excluding legal intervention), firearm homicide, and firearm suicide for California residents and the rest of the U.S. excluding California.



Source: CDC WONDER online. Underlying cause of death used to select firearm homicide and firearm suicide. Rates calculated using Census estimates adjusted to the 2000 and 2010 U.S. population.

To further evaluate the impact of California's firearm laws, the firearm and non-firearm rates of homicide and suicide were compared. In California, from 1993-2014, the rate of firearm homicide decreased *more* than the rate of non-firearm homicide (Figure 3). In fact, the firearm suicide rate *declined* substantially (-45%), while the non-firearm suicide rate *increased* 10%. This suggests that California's strong firearm laws have helped reduce firearm deaths.



Source: CDC WONDER online. Underlying cause of death used to select firearm and non-firearm homicide and suicide. Rates calculated using Census estimates adjusted to the 2000 and 2010 U.S. population.

Data compiled and summarized by Griffin Dix, Ph.D. (Oakland/Alameda County Chapter) and Loren Lieb, M.P.H. (San Fernando Valley Chapter). March 8, 2016.

Appendix 1. Overview of California Firearm Laws

Illegal Gun Possession, Gun Trafficking and Gun Crimes

- Background checks are required for all gun sales/transfers, including private party sales.
- The California Department of Justice (CalDOJ) maintains records of gun sales.
- Persons with certain mental health determinations, felons, and persons guilty of certain violent misdemeanors are prohibited from purchasing a gun.
- Law enforcement must provide the CalDOJ with data for tracing illegal or crime guns.
- Gun shows are regulated. CalDOJ maintains a record of gun shows and vendors.
- Handgun purchases are limited to one per month in order to reduce gun trafficking.
- CalDOJ checks to see if “prohibited persons,” such as those who have become felons, previously purchased a handgun. Guns illegally owned can be seized.
- Local law enforcement has discretion in issuing permits to carry concealed weapons.
- New pistol models must have microstamping, which prints identifying marks on cartridge cases.
- Law enforcement or immediate family members can seek a court order to temporarily prohibit a person who is a risk to himself or others from purchasing or possessing a firearm.

Domestic Violence and Firearms

- Persons under a restraining order must relinquish firearms and may not purchase them.
- Police may temporarily seize guns at the scene of domestic violence incidents.
- Courts may prohibit firearms possession due to domestic violence, harassment or stalking.

Unsafe Firearms

- Handguns sold must pass a state safety test. CalDOJ maintains a roster of approved handguns.
- New pistol models must have chamber load indicators and magazine disconnect safeties.
- Sale or transfer of new military-style assault weapons, .50 caliber sniper rifles and large capacity magazines is prohibited.

Gun Manufacturers and Dealers

- Gun manufacturers must have a state license, tight security on premises and conduct background checks on employees.
- All gun sales must be conducted through a federally licensed firearms dealer who conducts a background check on the buyer.
- Gun dealers and manufacturers who sell/ship firearms must check the receiver’s federal and state firearms license with the CalDOJ to prevent illegal transfers from out of state.
- It is illegal to sell ammunition to persons prohibited from possessing firearms.

Children, Families, and Public Safety

- Gun buyers must pass a written safety test, obtain a firearm safety certificate, and perform a safe handling demonstration before purchase. Proof of residency and thumbprint are required.
- Gun owners can be held criminally responsible for child access and misuse of their guns.
- Dealers must equip the firearms they sell with CalDOJ-approved child safety locks.

Source: California Brady Campaign Chapters and Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. For more information see: www.SmartGunLaws.org/california-state-law-summary/