

These 11 Examples of Defensive Gun Use Undermine Push for More Gun Control

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COMMENTARY Firearms
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Firearms are used far more often for lawful purposes than they are used to commit acts of criminal violence. victorass88 / Getty Images

Key Takeaways

While COVID-19-related bills have taken up much of the national spotlight, several gun control bills are primed for passage this week in the House.

Almost every major study on the issue found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times a year.

The gun control bills currently before Congress would impose significant and unnecessary burdens on law-abiding Americans.

March is Women's History Month, yet Congress appears ready to celebrate in the worst way possible by creating more barriers for women who seek to exercise their Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms.

While COVID-19-related bills have taken up much of the national spotlight, several gun control bills are primed for passage this week in the House. This is hardly surprising, given that just last month, President Joe Biden called on Congress to enact a plethora of new federal gun legislation.

Unfortunately, however, none of these proposals is meaningfully directed at the root causes of gun violence. Many gun control advocates have fooled themselves—and far too many others—into believing that we create safer communities by placing increasingly burdensome restrictions on the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding citizens.

The reality, however, is that firearms are used far more often for lawful purposes than they are used to commit acts of criminal violence.

Almost every major study on the issue found that Americans use their firearms in self-defense between 500,000 and 3 million times a year, according to a 2013 report by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We have good reason to believe that many of these defensive gun uses aren't reported to police, much less make the local or national news.

For this reason, The Daily Signal each month publishes an article highlighting some of the previous month's many news stories on defensive gun use that you may have missed—or that might not have made it to the national spotlight in the first place. (Read accounts from 2019 and 2020 [here](#).)

The examples below represent only a small portion of the news stories on defensive gun use that we found in February. You may explore more by using The Heritage Foundation's interactive Defensive Gun Use Database.

- **Feb. 1, Memphis, Tennessee:** A motorist was putting air in his tires at a gas station when a would-be carjacker jumped in the car and tried to use the remote starter, police said. When the driver leapt through the passenger-side window to stop the thief, he saw the man was armed. They fought over the gun until an armed customer drew his own firearm to defend the driver, spurring the carjacker to run.

- **Feb. 3, Las Vegas:** A man with a history of violence against police tried to steal another man's firearm at a gun range, prompting three armed employees to escort him from the building and call police. When two deputy sheriffs arrived, the man attacked one of them with a screwdriver, stabbing her and breaking a bone in her face. Three employees and the second deputy drew their firearms, fatally shooting the attacker. Assistant Clark County Sheriff Brett Zimmerman told reporters that the employees' actions "helped our officer and could've saved our officer's life."
- **Feb. 7, Mason, Tennessee:** A woman used her firearm to defend herself from her boyfriend during an ongoing dispute. The man—who reportedly was armed and had made threats of violence in the past—got into an altercation with the woman earlier in the day at her workplace, police said, but left before officers arrived. Later, in the middle of the night, the boyfriend showed up at her home and confronted her again. By the time police responded to the woman's call for help, she had fatally shot him.
- **Feb. 11, Molino, Florida:** A married couple found two men on their property whom they believed were trying to break in to their house. The two had pushed their disabled car behind the couple's home after breaking into a neighbor's truck, police said. The homeowner drew his handgun and detained the men while his wife called 911. When authorities arrived and arrested the men, they found loaded firearms, stolen items, and drugs in their car.
- **Feb. 13, Goldsboro, North Carolina:** Two masked intruders forced their way into an apartment, demanded money, and shot a 73-year-old woman in the leg, police said. The woman's 12-year-old grandson retrieved a firearm and shot at both intruders, who ran. Police soon caught a man with a gunshot wound who they suspected was one of the intruders. He died from the wound. His accomplice was not found.
- **Feb. 15, Aiken, South Carolina:** An armed man knocked on the door of an elderly couple's home and asked the woman who answered if she had seen his dog. When the woman said she hadn't and tried to close the door, police said, the man pushed her down, forced his way inside, and pulled a knife on her. The woman's husband, a Vietnam War veteran, grabbed a shotgun from a wall and used it to beat the intruder to death. The woman and her husband were injured but expected to recover.
- **Feb. 17, Scottdale, Pennsylvania:** A resident who discovered a man in his garage used a garden tool to detain the intruder while waiting for police. The intruder knocked down and injured the responding officer, however. He tried to flee in the resident's SUV, which he crashed as he backed down an embankment. A Marine Corps veteran, walking his dog, took notice of the thief as he tried to break into another home, police said. The veteran ordered his 4-month-old dog to attack the thief, then held him at gunpoint until police arrived to take him into custody.

- **Feb. 20, Metairie, Louisiana:** When a man entered a gun store with a loaded firearm, the store owner asked him to unload the weapon. With little warning, police said, the man fired into the air and then at customers and employees, killing two and wounding two. Armed employees drew their own guns and killed him in a shootout before he could harm anyone else.
- **Feb. 23, Butte, Montana:** A man was getting his kids ready for school when he heard gunshots. He grabbed his firearm and ran outside, where he saw a neighbor and his son struggling with a would-be car thief, police said. The man held the assailant at gunpoint. Police said the would-be thief had shot the neighbor in the hand before the neighbor's son rushed out and tried to disarm him.
- **Feb. 27, Loveland, Colorado:** Amid a heated child custody dispute, a woman brandished a handgun and threatened to kill her ex-husband. Fearing for his life and the lives of four other members of the household who were present, police said, the man retrieved his own firearm and fatally shot his ex-wife.
- **Feb. 28, Port Huron, Michigan:** A homeowner shot an intruder in the neck early in the morning after she heard him entering her house, where she had a small child, police said. Wounded, the intruder fled; officers quickly caught him.

Everyone wants communities that are safe from gun-related violence and to keep firearms out of the hands of those who are a danger to themselves or others.

But the gun control bills currently before Congress would impose significant and unnecessary burdens on law-abiding Americans who, like those highlighted above, simply desire an effective means of protecting their rights and liberties.

Worse, these gun control bills would not meaningfully reduce the risk that those rights and liberties indeed will need protection. That makes them both constitutionally suspect and bad policy.

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