

Comparison with Western Europe - A Proven Model of Regulation and Responsibility

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When comparing the United States to Western Europe, the difference in firearm-related murder rates is staggering. The U.S. has an average firearm homicide rate of approximately 4.1 per 100,000 people, while the European Union average is just 0.19 per 100,000—over twenty times lower. This dramatic gap is not the result of cultural differences alone but of decades of consistent, nationwide regulation.

European nations, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, and Finland, require national licensing, universal background checks, psychological evaluations, and periodic renewals for all gun owners. They also enforce mandatory safe-storage inspections and strict limits on public carry—but still recognize the right of citizens to carry firearms when they can demonstrate a legitimate need for protection outside the home.

This model proves that freedom and regulation can coexist. The European approach values both public safety and individual responsibility, showing that strict controls do not eliminate lawful ownership but instead ensure it is safe, justified, and traceable. The result is a long-term, measurable decline in murders and gun accidents.

The lesson for the United States is clear:

The nations that combine liberty with accountability have achieved what America has not—a society where the right to own a gun coexists with the right to live without fear.

States Leading the Way with Stronger Gun Laws — and Saving Lives

While the path to safer communities is not quick or easy, a number of U.S. states have moved forward courageously with stricter gun regulations — and the results suggest those policies are beginning to work. Below are five states that have implemented robust gun control measures, and in many cases have seen declines in firearm-related homicide or overall murder rates over time. These states deserve strong praise; their example shows that the solution to lowering murder is not more force or policing alone, but the adoption of serious, enforceable rules on ownership and carrying of firearms. Other states should emulate their leadership.

State

Key Reforms / Measures

Evidence of Decline or Impact

Why Their Example Is Important

California

Among the strongest gun safety laws in the country (waiting periods, background checks, licensing, safe storage, monitoring of prohibited owners).

California has achieved a more than 50% drop in firearm mortality over the past few decades, a decline much greater than the national average.

This shows that strong, consistent regulation over time can drive down gun homicides—and that sustained effort pays off.

New York

The NY SAFE Act (2013) introduced stricter controls on assault weapons, ammunition limits, safe storage, and other measures.

Implementation of the NY SAFE Act was associated with a significant decline in firearm homicides relative to what would have been expected.

New York's example illustrates how a state with serious political and legal challenges still moved forward—and achieved measurable impact.

Connecticut

Connecticut has passed sweeping gun control reforms (e.g., banning open carry, limiting handgun purchases, and expanding safe-storage requirements).

Connecticut continues to be rated among the highest in gun law strength and is often held as a model in gun policy discussions.

Connecticut's willingness to tighten laws even decades after earlier reforms underscores that incremental strengthening matters.

Massachusetts

High standards for licensing, background checks, safe storage, and strong firearm regulation.

Massachusetts consistently ranks in the lowest quintile for gun death rates nationally.

Even in a state without dramatic headlines, strong laws help maintain low violence baselines—proof that regulation can preserve safety over time.

New Jersey

Strong gun-safety legal framework: strict licensing, safe storage rules, limits on large capacity magazines, and other controls.

New Jersey ranks among the states with the lowest overall gun death rates in recent data.

New Jersey's performance shows that strong gun laws can be sustained even in densely populated, politically complex states.

Taken together, these five states illustrate the principle that gun regulation, when well designed and implemented, can contribute significantly to reducing murders over time. The declines are not instantaneous because enforcement, culture, resources, and complementary public safety strategies all

matter. But the trajectory is clear: stronger laws reduce access by dangerous actors, impose accountability on lawful owners, and gradually shift the balance of risk away from lethal violence.

Across states with strong gun safety laws, research consistently finds that they tend to have lower firearm death rates than states with permissive regimes. State-level studies and meta-analyses also suggest that combinations of reforms (e.g., safe storage, licensing, limits on public carry) produce more substantial declines in firearm homicide than any one policy by itself.

The process indeed takes time — laws must be passed, enforced, courts must adapt, culture must shift — but the evidence is increasingly clear: this approach is working. States that resist stricter limits are choosing slower progress, not neutrality. The policy path forward is not more force, which hasn't shown lasting impact on murder rates, but stronger, enforceable, evidence-based rules governing how guns are owned, stored, and carried.

Other states should follow these leaders, adopt robust gun regulations, commit to enforcement and oversight, and pair laws with public safety and violence-prevention programs. The lives saved in the years ahead will prove that firm rules — not just tougher policing — are the true path to lowering murder.

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