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I. Theory: Shift from "dangerous youth" to public health crisis and system failure

a. Shifting the framework

- Defenders and Advocates can shift the court's framework to underscore that offenses involving guns or gun possession should be viewed in a public health emergency framework. This allows us to address from a community support and medical perspective rather than a punishment perspective.

b. Gun Violence is the #1 cause of death for Young People in the U.S.

- "Since 2013, the gun death rate among children and teens (1–17) has increased 106%. Guns were the leading cause of death [in 2022] among children and teens accounting for more deaths than car crashes,

overdoses, or cancers." *This amounts to an average of 7 young people dying every day.*

- **Data Source:** Gun Violence in the United States 2022, *Citing:* Provisional death counts for Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). (2022). National Center for Health Statistics. Available: https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nvss/vsrr/covid_weekly/index.htm#SexAndAge

c. Gun Violence is an Adult Problem.

- "Of all the gun violence incidents recorded in the United States, the vast majority does not involve youth or children at all. **Across the full 2017–2026 period, more than 85% of incidents involve only adults.** Just 15% of incidents involve a child or youth. Gun violence is overwhelmingly an adult phenomenon."
  - **Data Source:** Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence

d. Protection is Cited as the Primary Reason Adults Carry Weapons

- **72% of U.S. gun owners say protection is a major reason they own a gun.** That far surpasses the shares of gun owners who cite other reasons.
  - **Data Source:** For Most U.S. Gun Owners, Protection Is the Main Reason They Own a Gun | Pew Research Center

e. Protection is also Cited as a Primary Reason Youth Carry Weapons

- "Many youth acquire guns for self-defense or as a consequence of fear and trauma, not to threaten or victimize others. Surveys that ask young people whether and why they carry weapons show that, in most cases, youth gun possession is motivated by a desire for self-defense rather than an intent to commit violent crimes or 9 engage in delinquent conduct. For instance, a majority of the 13 studies reviewed by Oliphant and colleagues in 2019 found that young people's primary motive to carry firearms was "a perceived need for protection/self-defense."

- **Data Source:** The Sentencing Project, From Punishment to Prevention: A Better Approach to Addressing Youth Gun Possession (2025)
- **Data Source:** The Center for Justice Innovation, "Two Battlefields": Opps, Cops, and NYC Youth Gun Culture, (2023)

f. Youth and Children are more likely to be victims of gun violence than the instigators of gun violence.

- "The rate at which people under 18 experience gun violence as victims is persistently higher than the rate they are involved in gun violence as perpetrators. Since 2017, 1.7 times as many youth and children have been victimized by gun violence as involved as perpetrators. This figure excludes victimless incidents that involve only possession of a firearm. At the height of the recent spike in gun violence, children and youth were more than twice as likely to be victims of gun violence than perpetrators. The predominance of victimization over perpetration is the most persistent and striking pattern in the GVA data with respect to young people."
  - **Data Source:** Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence

g. Gun Violence has not increased since the Pandemic.

- "The pandemic-era surge in victimization and perpetration is over. Youth and child involvement in gun violence has fallen substantially from its peak — for victims and perpetrators alike, in both age groups. Children's involvement in gun violence is down approximately 40%. Youth involvement in gun violence as victims is down by nearly one-third, and youth involvement in perpetrating gun violence is down 19%."
  - **Data Source:** Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence

h. Racial Disparities Persist in Weapons Charges Involving Young People

- "Black youth's share of weapons possession arrests has grown from 36% in 2010 to 51% in 2023 (Figure 1). Similarly, racial disparities in weapons

possession cases in juvenile courts have also increased markedly: after hovering at or below 40% from 2014 to 2019, the share of weapons cases involving Black youth rose to 49% in 2021."

- **Data Source:** The Sentencing Project, From Punishment to Prevention: A Better Approach to Addressing Youth Gun Possession (2025)

II. Law: What Constitutional Provisions, Statutes, Litigation Strategies or Youth Defense System Standards Apply to Your Case?

a. State Statute: [Arguing for Gun Possession as a Status Offense]

- **Does your state statute disallow gun possession merely due to age, which renders the statute, in effect, a status offense in juvenile court?**
  - "Status offenses are acts that are illegal only because the individual committing them is a minor; these acts are not illegal when committed by an adult. Status offense cases are processed in juvenile court, which is any court that has jurisdiction over matters involving [youth] as defined by state law." Archived | Status Offenses | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
  - See e.g.: **Ohio** Sample Motion for Release from Secure Detention Using the JJDPA

b. State Constitution [Arguing for Case to Be Dismissed or Reduced to Status Offense]

- **Does your state constitution permit gun possession by any individual no matter their age?**
  - See e.g. **Missouri:** Sample Motion to Dismiss for Violation of Youth's Constitutional Right to Bear Arms

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c. Litigation Strategy [Arguing for Suppression, Dismissal, Not Guilty Finding or Developmentally Appropriate Disposition]. Infuse *Miller Factors* and age as mitigation into every phase of your case!

- Making Youth Matter, Kimberly Thomas "This Article makes recommendations for how the "Miller factors" can be applied to make youth matter in cases of gun violence. Children who have and use guns are less culpable than adults, not just because they are developmentally different from adults, but because they are dependent on adults to keep them safe from guns. Making youth matter requires acknowledging our society's culpability for failing to protect children from guns, including the children who use them."
- **Pre-Trial:**
  - Redd v. State, 2026 Md. App. LEXIS 806 (Md. Ct. App. 2026) **:** The Maryland Appellate Court reversed the denial of a suppression motion based on an unlawful stop, finding that "sole possession of a firearm, without additional circumstances that indicate illegal possession or other involvement in criminal activity, cannot justify a stop." The court further stated, "Upon considering decades of case law and federal and state supreme court precedent, we determined that '[t]he mere possibility that a person with a gun might not have a valid license or otherwise may be restricted from possessing a gun is not enough to establish reasonable suspicion for a seizure. Our holding clarified that for stops to be justified on possession of a gun, "police must have reasonable suspicion that the person is possessing the gun illegally.'"
  - D.D.B. v. State, 2026 Ala. Crim. App. LEXIS 11 (Ala. Ct. App. 2026): The Alabama Criminal Appeals Court reversed a delinquency adjudication involving possession of a firearm, finding that evidence of the firearm should have been suppressed in light of the illegal stop that took

place when the police turned on his vehicle's emergency lights without reasonable suspicion. The court stated in relevant part: *"We hold that Cpl. Seibert lacked reasonable suspicion to conduct an investigatory stop of D.D.B. Although he conceded that D.D.B.'s vehicle was parked legally on a public residential street, Cpl. Seibert used "'a show of authority'" when he turned on his patrol vehicle's emergency lights and pulled his vehicle behind D.D.B.'s vehicle. Williams, 716 So. 2d at 754 (citations omitted)."*

- **Adjudication:**
  - In re D.D., 2026-Ohio-2699 (Ohio Ct. App. 2026): The Ohio 1st District Court of Appeals reversed a juvenile adjudication for three counts of aggravated menacing based on insufficient evidence. The court stated in relevant part: *Regardless of whether State's exhibit 3, the still image, was properly admitted, it was insufficient to establish beyond a reasonable doubt that D.D. pointed a gun at W.W.'s car. The still image lacked any indication as to the time and date when it was taken. Without that identifying information, that still image arguably could have been taken on a completely different day. The still, therefore, was insufficient to prove D.D.'s identity as the perpetrator beyond a reasonable doubt. D.D.'s second assignment is sustained.*
  - In re R.R., 2026 Ariz. App. Unpub. LEXIS 15: An Arizona appellate court reversed a youth's delinquency adjudication, finding that the youth's statements that he "thinks" or "fantasizes" "about shooting up the school" did not constitute a true threat.
- **Sentencing/Disposition:**
  - State v. Houston-Sconiers, 391 P. 3d 409 – Wash: Supreme Court 2017**:** The Washington Supreme Court reversed the sentences of two young people subjected to mandatory sentencing enhancements,

finding that under the 8th Amendment, courts must have discretion to depart from mandatory sentences based on mitigating circumstances related to age and youthfulness. The court held that "sentencing courts must have absolute discretion to depart as far as they want below the otherwise applicable [state sentencing guideline] ranges and/or sentencing enhancements when sentencing juveniles in adult court, regardless of how the juvenile got there." The court based this holding on recent holdings in Graham, Miller, and J.D.B. The court held that "[t]rial courts must consider mitigating qualities of youth at sentencing." The court also declared that opportunities for sentence reduction or early release after a young person begins their sentence does not impact this holding, reasoning that the relevant time for consideration of youth as a mitigating factor is at sentencing and when considering culpability, not later.

- **Probation Conditions:**
  - In re L.G., 2026 Cal. App. Unpub. LEXIS 4733 (Cal. Ct. App. 2026): The California 2nd District Court of Appeal held that a probation condition prohibiting the association with anyone possessing weapons and controlled substances was unconstitutionally overbroad.

d. Youth Defense System Standard 4.3: Advocating for the Equitable Treatment of Youth

- **In framing the racial disparities present in charging practices, utilize Youth Defense System Standard 4.3 to demand the court utilize diversion programming as well as community-based resources instead of detention or out-of-home placement.**
- "Assess and review the decisions to process cases informally vs. formal petitions and whether the informal process is equally available to Black and [w]hite youth. . . . When [diversion] alternatives are not available for Black

youth, the reason for non-use of diversion should be documented and examined in the aggregate." (p. 41)

- **Source:** National-Youth-Defense-System-Standards and National Youth Defense System Standards User Guide

III. Research and Data: What Does the Research and Data Show about effective ways to address gun violence and how do we replicate lessons learned from other public health emergencies?

a. Addressing Gun Violence and Gun Possession from a Public Health Framework: Using lessons learned from public health emergencies (e.g. car accident deaths, opioid drug overdoses, and stop smoking campaigns) that defenders and policy advocates can build and replicate.

- **Tobacco Prevention Campaign:** "truth is one of the most successful and one of the largest national youth tobacco prevention campaigns. The campaign exposes the tactics of the tobacco industry, the truth about addiction, and the health effects and social consequences of smoking. truth gives teens facts to make their own informed choices about tobacco use and inspires them to use their creativity in the fight against tobacco. The campaign is credited with preventing hundreds of thousands of teens from starting to smoke and is working to make this the generation that ends smoking for good. To learn more, visit thetruth.com. Truth is part of Truth Initiative, a national public health organization dedicated to achieving a culture where all youth and young adults reject tobacco. To learn more about Truth Initiative's work speaking, seeking and spreading the truth about tobacco, visit truthinitiative.org."
  - **Source:** truth-Campaign-Successful-in-Saving-Lives-and-Preventing-Youth-Smoking.pdf

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b. Building education campaigns created by youth and targeted towards youth as a gun violence prevention strategy.

- Building from the lessons learned in the stop smoking campaign in the '90's and success of the "Truth" Campaign, Project Unloaded "[Sits] at the intersection of public health, youth engagement, social marketing and culture. Through large-scale, data-backed social media campaigns, original research, teen-facing local programs, and inspiring youth leaders, we combine young people's social media know-how with a gun violence prevention message that can reduce gun use and save lives."
  - **Source:** Mission - Project Unloaded
- "Risk education is a proven and effective tool for shifting public perception and ultimately changing behavior over time, particularly among young people. From cigarette use to fentanyl use and unprotected campfires, risk education has been used to build knowledge, shift attitudes, and change behaviors on entrenched high-risk activities. Research consistently shows that risk education tools, including those driven by public policy, can help people make more informed decisions, reduce dangerous behaviors, and improve the health of communities. *For example, a sustained investment in risk education measures across the public and private sectors has helped lower cigarette smoking rates among youth by more than 85% since the late 1990s*."
  - **Source:** Project Unloaded Risk Education Publication 2025
- "After being exposed to facts on gun risks, **young people shifted 17 points against believing that guns make them safer.** Despite young people's very real concerns about gun violence, most young people – like most Americans at large – falsely believe that guns are a source of protection. However, their perceptions can shift when exposed to the facts. After reading a series of messages highlighting the risks involved with owning a gun, young people

across all demographics shift away from the idea that guns make them safer by an average of 17 points. Girls, Latino young people, and youth ages 13-17 (including middle and high school students) are most likely to change their opinions on guns: Majorities across these groups actually say that guns make you LESS safe after hearing about the risks."

- **Source:** How gun violence impacts and weighs on Gen Z

- Michigan Gun Violence Prevention Task Force:
  - Governor Whitmer established the Michigan Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, charged with:
    - Identifying the root causes of gun violence.
    - Compiling and reporting relevant data.
    - Maximizing existing resources
    - Soliciting perspectives from diverse community partners and advocates.
    - Recommending policy to save lives.
  - Additional Links:
    - Leading through Executive Action: Michigan's... | The Joyce Foundation
    - Institute for Firearm Injury Prevention | University of Michigan

c. Understanding the "why" behind weapon possession.

- For young people who are carrying weapons to young people who are accused of using weapons in an offense (e.g. Robbery, Assault, Murder), defenders may have to get to the "why" behind a young person's alleged possession/use.
- Some of that reframing may be rooted understanding how previous trauma, victimization, or neighborhood experiences have shaped a young person's lens and reasoning for why they believe they need a weapon. However, we

do not want the court to use a young person's trauma or fear as a reason to further surveil or detain them.

- How do we reframe a young person's ACES to PACES[1]? Focusing on a young person's continued development and helping the court understand a young person is not "at-risk," but "at-potential", with the recognition that incarceration and pushing young people deeper into the system disrupts positive youth development.
  - ACES [Adverse Childhood Experiences] focuses on a range of difficult experiences young people may experience including physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, neglect, and household factors like substance abuse and mental health that impact a young person's health and well-being.[2]
    - See, e.g. ACES Michigan Infographic
  - PACES [Protective and Compensatory Experiences] focus on the protective factors in a young person's life that promote well-being, resilience and health. PACES are broken up into two main categories: 1) Relationships and 2) Environmental Factors, which work to promote well-being in young people.
  - PCEs, or positive childhood experiences are a broader term for positive childhood experiences that promote healthy development and thriving.
    - See, e.g. Connection is Prevention: PCEs in Michigan and MDHHS Infographic: Help that Helps: Social Support Matters

[1] What are ACEs and PACEs? | Paces Lab
[2] Relationship of Childhood Abuse and Household Dysfunction to Many of the Leading Causes of Death in Adults: The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study - ScienceDirect

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IV. Bridging to Community: highlight community organization(s) to partner with in supporting this young person as an alternative to incarceration and avenue to promote positive development

a. Community-Based Programs

- **Community-Based Programs provide the Protective and Compensatory [PACES] Factors that young people need to promote well-being, resilience, and health. The organizations below work with young people to unlock their full potential, providing healing spaces and wraparound support as they navigate the juvenile legal system and beyond.**
- The Delta Project: "How do I become something I don't see? **From this simple, yet powerful question—the Delta Project was formed.** For West Michigan youth and young adults who have been or are at risk for being engaged with the juvenile justice system, our programming helps them to find their voices and proactively envision a future of their choosing. Our vision for The Delta Project is to help our youth gain the self-confidence needed to successfully navigate life challenges and opportunities, so they can pursue their interests and dreams."
    - Healthy Connections: "Healthy Connections is an asset-based program that helps young adults (12-17) who have experienced adverse childhood experiences and other trauma build social and emotional knowledge and skills. Participants develop an understanding of the effects of adversity and toxic stress and strategies to soothe and calm their mental and physical stress responses."
- Freer Safer Neighborhoods in Detroit- FORCE Detroit: "FORCE Detroit uses community violence intervention to address the root causes of gun violence through evidence-informed practices that engage residents in safety

solutions and support trauma recovery. Our model relies on credible messengers as trusted community members with lived experience to build relationships and intervene with those at risk of violence. Our credible messengers live in the neighborhoods they serve. They've helped drive an estimated 79% reduction in violence. This is what investing in community looks like."

- Programs | FORCE Detroit: "FORCE Detroit's programs work together to support young people through every stage of their journey. From violence prevention and mentorship to therapy, athletics, creative expression, and leadership development, each program is designed to build trust, create stability, and open pathways toward long-term growth and opportunity."

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V. Sample Argument

Sample Argument for Release in a Gun Possession Case	
Theory	*Your honor, the prosecutor/probation officer/intake officer today is arguing that because X is charged with carrying a weapon, he is dangerous and therefore needs to be detained pending further court proceedings. We are urging that instead of automatically detaining X and treating this case "how we have always done it," that we look at the case through a public health framework to find community-based solutions and release X.* *Under this framework, I will outline the community support that X will have upon release and outline the reasons that this case should be considered a status offense, triggering a requirement for release under the Juvenile Justice Delinquency and Prevention Act.* *Additionally, I will outline for the court data-driven education strategies that X is going to participate in that have resulted in a 20% reduction rate of gun carrying and share with the court the community-based support that X will have upon release.*
Law & Facts	*Your honor, in the state of X, the only reason gun possession is illegal for youth is due to age. Much like the status offenses of underage drinking or smoking, gun possession should be treated as a status offense instead of a delinquency offense and therefore make X eligible for release.* *Status offenses are defined as "[A]cts that are illegal only because the individual committing them is a minor; these acts are not illegal when committed by an adult. Status offense cases are processed in juvenile court, which is any court that has jurisdiction over matters involving [youth] as defined by state law."* *Archived | Status Offenses | Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention* *The Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act prohibits the placement of youth who have committed status offenses in secure detention. 34 USC § 11102 (2018).* *Judge, the facts of this case allege that X was walking down the street and after being stopped and searched, the police discovered a weapon. Aside from any 4th amendment search and seizure challenges, which we are not waiving at this stage of the case, there are no allegations of X using the weapon in a threatening manner. As such, this offense should be treated as a status offense, and X should be released.*

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Research & Data	*Attached to my memo for release are some critical data points for the court to consider in determining release. First, gun violence is largely an adult problem. "Of all the gun violence incidents recorded in the United States, the vast majority does not involve youth or children at all.* ***Across the full 2017–2026 period, more than 85% of incidents involve only adults.*** *Just 15% of incidents involve a child or youth." https://empact-solutions.github.io/gunviolence/takeaways.html.* *The reason this is important is because the prosecutor is citing statistics that youth gun crime is up, and we know that the data shows that is not the case, and that gun crime has decreased by 40% since the pandemic. https://empact-solutions.github.io/gunviolence/takeaways.html. In fact, I am sharing the data from the gun violence archive dashboard State-Level Dashboard — Youth Gun Violence that demonstrates the rate of gun possession for youth in X state is only ___ compared to national rates of gun possession and has decreased since the pandemic.*
Research & Data	*We also know that the reason most people (adults and youth) carry guns is not because they intend to use them,* ***but because they are carrying them for protection.*** *The Urban Institute, "We Carry Guns to Stay Safe": Perspectives on Guns and Gun Violence from Young Adults Living in Chicago's West and South Sides (2018).* *Now your honor, I know you will say, well if they don't feel safe and have to carry a gun, I have to detain them. And that is not actually the only solution.* *Through lessons learned in the opioid campaign, stop smoking campaign, and seatbelt campaign, we know that "****risk education*** *is a critical tool to build knowledge, shift attitudes, and change behaviors on entrenched high-risk activities. Risk education has decreased youth gun carrying by 17 points! How gun violence impacts and weighs on Gen Z* *Research consistently shows that risk education tools, including those driven by public policy, can help people make more informed decisions, reduce dangerous behaviors, and improve the health of communities. For example, a sustained investment in risk education measures across the public and private sectors has helped lower cigarette smoking rates among youth by more than 85% since the late 1990s." https://projectunloaded.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/PU_2025-Risk-Education-Final.pdf.* *Outline plan for risk education here.*

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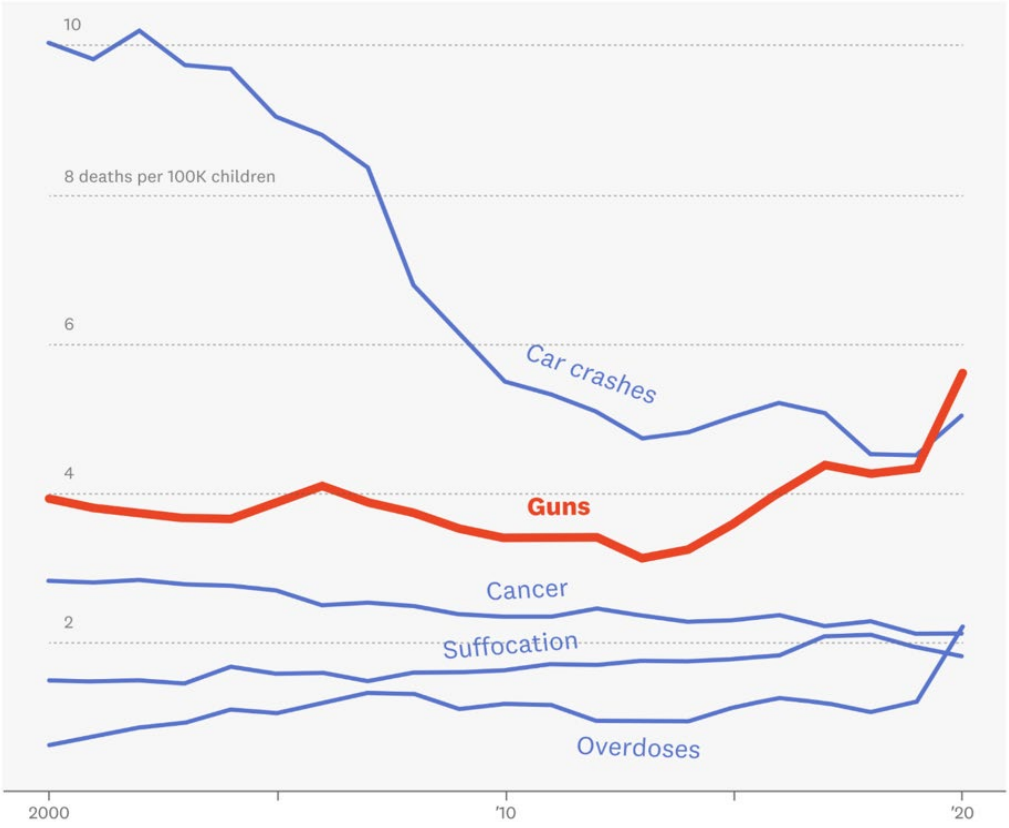
Bridging to Community	*Judge, we must also rely on National Youth Defense System Standard to ensure that this court utilizes diversion and community-based resources instead of detention or out-of-home placement. System Standard 4.3 underscores that **every** young person has a constitutional right to equal treatment, no matter their race, ethnicity, ability, sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, including community-based programming and diversion resources.* *Additionally, judge, we know that the racial disparities are stark for Black youth charged with gun possession [cite data here], but they should have equitable access to diversion and community based supports for weapon possession charges.* *Outline local community supports.*
Tie Everything together	*Judge, we have to shift our framework if we are going to change the landscape of gun violence in our country. And, it starts here, with X. By releasing X to his community, providing risk education, and connecting X with lasting community-based supports, we are creating ripples of support for X and change that can reach far and wide. For these reasons we are asking you to release X today.*

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VI. Appendix of Images

a. **Gun Violence is the #1 cause of death for Young People in the U.S.** [**Sources:** Get the Facts - Project Unloaded and Gun Violence in the United States 2022]

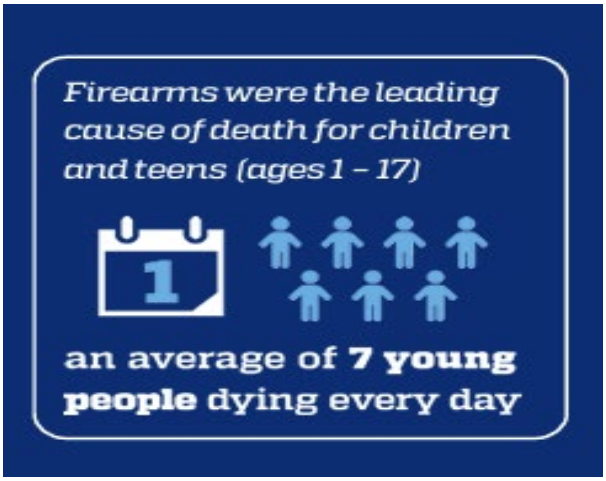
Guns are now the No. 1 cause of death for U.S. kids and teens



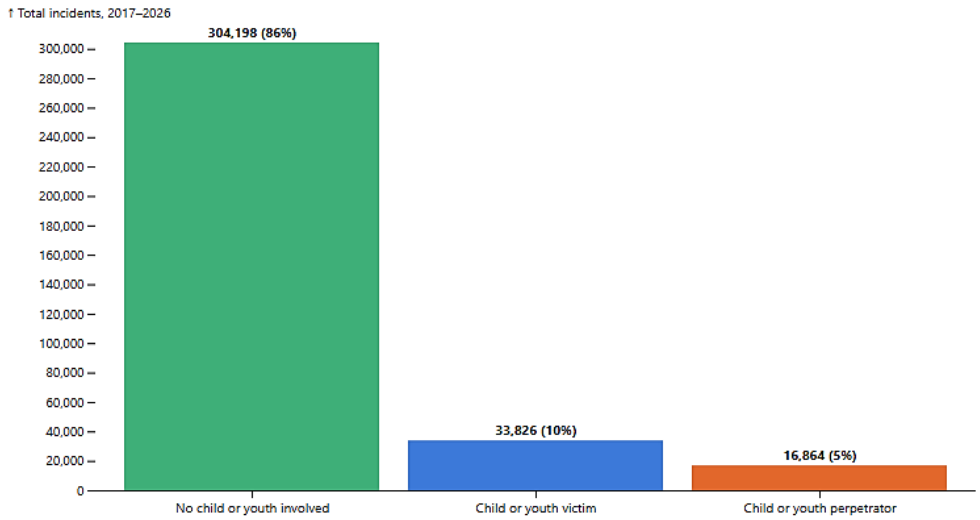
Source: "Current Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents in the United States"

project unloaded

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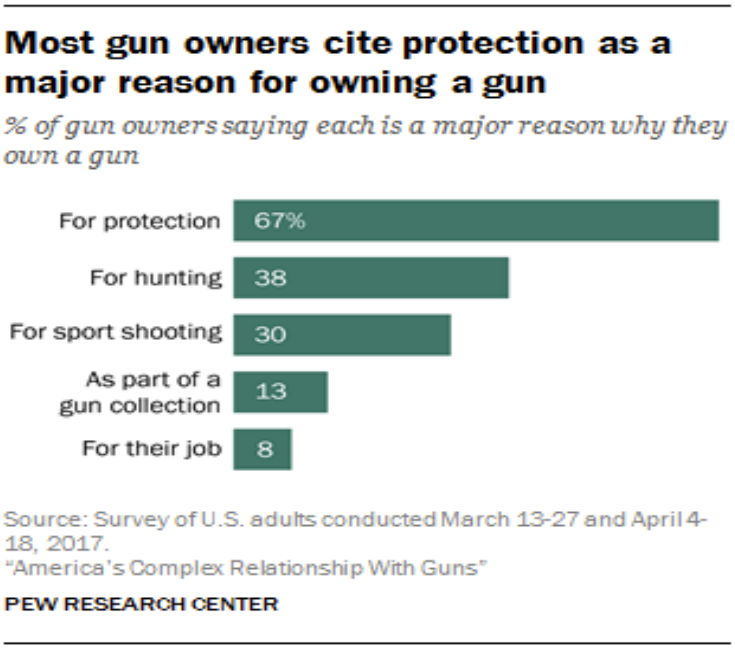
b. Gun Violence Is an Adult Problem [Source: Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence]



Total incidents nationally, 2017–2026, split by whether a child or youth (ages 0–17) was involved as a victim, as a perpetrator (excluding possession-only offenses), or not at all. Sources: Gun Violence Archive national incident totals; age-coded incident records.

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c. **Protection is Cited as the #1 Reason Adults Carry Weapons [Source:** For Most U.S. Gun Owners, Protection Is the Main Reason They Own a Gun | Pew Research Center]



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REPORT | AUGUST 16, 2023

For Most U.S. Gun Owners, Protection Is the Main Reason They Own a Gun

Nearly half of U.S. adults who do not currently own a gun say they could see themselves owning one in the future

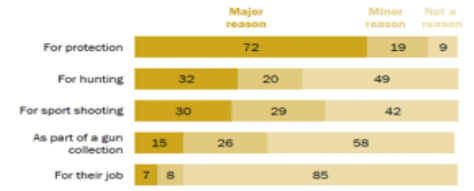
How we did this

Gun owners in the United States continue to cite protection far more than other factors, including hunting and sport shooting, as a major reason they own a gun.

And while a sizable majority of gun owners (71%) say they *enjoy* having a gun, an even larger share (81%) say they *feel safer* owning a gun.

Nearly three-quarters of U.S. gun owners cite protection as a major reason they own a gun

% of gun owners saying each is a ___ why they own a gun



Note: No answer responses are not shown.
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted June 5-11, 2023.
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

A Pew Research Center survey, conducted June 5-11 among 5,115 members of the Center's nationally representative American Trends Panel, finds:

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d. **Protection is Also Cited as a Reason Youth Carry Weapons [Source:** The Center for Justice Innovation, "Two Battlefields": Opps, Cops, and NYC Youth Gun Culture, (2023) and The Urban Institute, "We Carry Guns to Stay Safe": Perspectives on Guns and Gun Violence from Young Adults Living in Chicago's West and South Sides (2018). (*caveat the Urban Institute data is for 18-26 year olds)

Interpersonal Violence and Guns Participants—primarily Black men—described experiencing and witnessing many different kinds of interpersonal violence and threats of harm at alarming rates. The vast majority had friends or family members who had been shot, and most had come under fire themselves at some point.

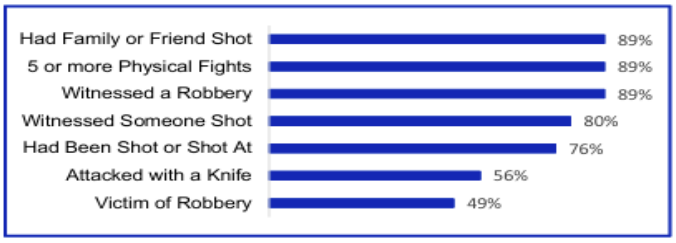
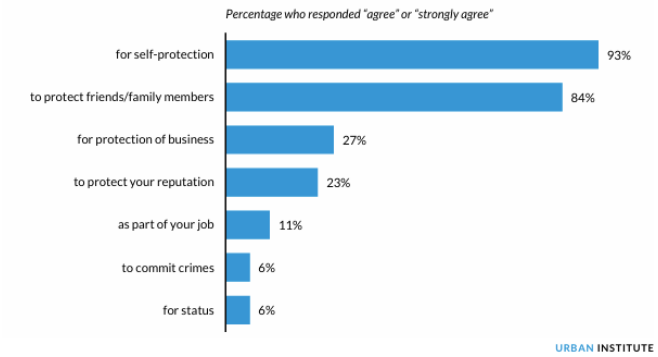


FIGURE 3
Reasons for Carrying a Gun among Male Respondents
You carry a gun…

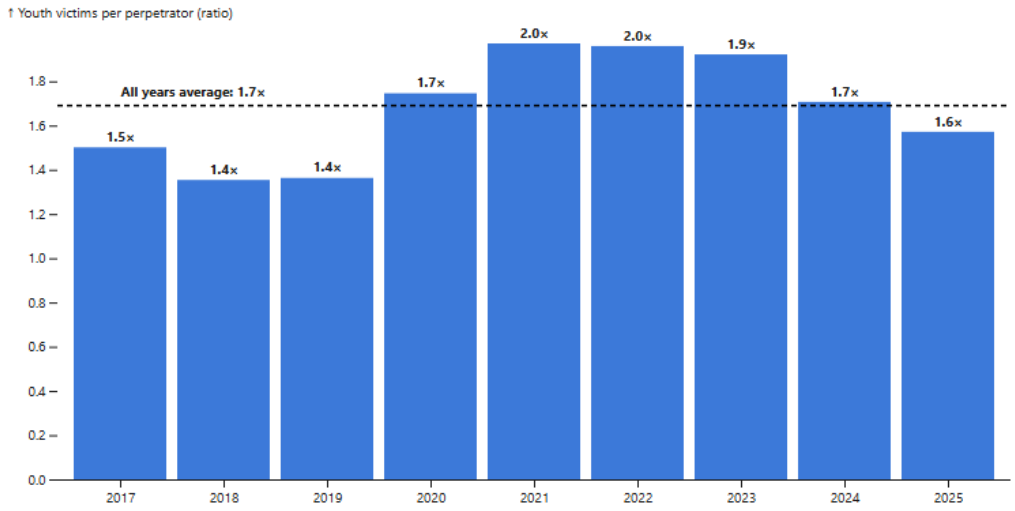


Source: Urban analysis of survey of residents in Chicago, Illinois.
Notes: Valid *n* = 97. Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

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e. **Youth and Children are more likely to be victims of gun violence than the instigators of gun violence. [Source:** Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence]

Ratio of youth gun violence victims to perpetrators, by year, 2017 - 2025



Youth (ages 12–17) gun violence victims per perpetrator, by calendar year — raw counts, not rates. Perpetrator counts exclude possession-only offenses. The dashed line marks the average ratio across all nine full years shown; 2026 is excluded as a partial year (data through February only). Source: Gun Violence Archive.

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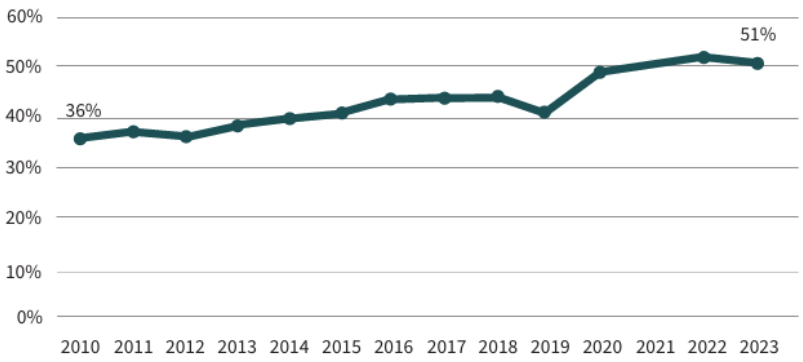
f. **Gun Violence has not increased since the Pandemic. [Source:** Key Takeaways from the Data — Youth Gun Violence]



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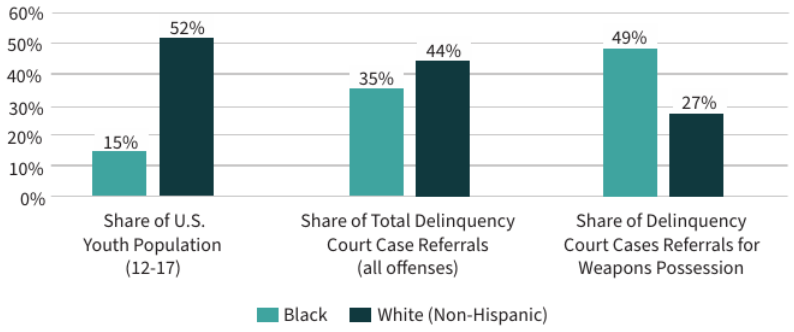
g. Racial Disparities Persist in Weapons Charges Involving Young People
[Source: The Sentencing Project, From Punishment to Prevention: A Better Approach to Addressing Youth Gun Possession (2025)]

Figure 1: Black Youth Share of U.S. Juvenile Weapons Arrests



Source: FBI Uniform Crime Reports (2010-2023)

Figure 4. Race Disparities in Youth Gun Possession Cases (2021)



Sources: Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A., and Kang, W. (2024). "Easy Access to Juvenile Populations: 1990-2022." National Center for Juvenile Justice; Puzzanchera, C., Sladky, A., and Kang, W. (2023). "Easy Access to Juvenile Court Statistics: 1985-2021." National Center for Juvenile Justice.

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h. Addressing Gun Violence and Gun Possession from a Public Health Framework Source: Project Unloaded Risk Education Publication 2025



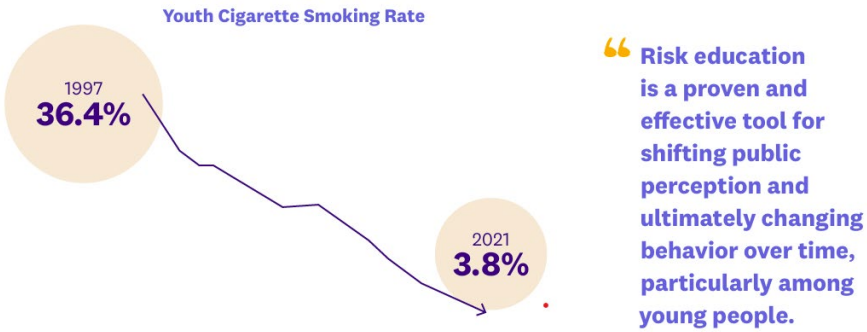
IN PRACTICE

Engaging Youth

In 2016, the Truth Initiative partnered with Petco on a public education campaign that emphasized the health risks for pets exposed to second-hand smoke. The campaign struck a chord because young people care immensely about the well-being of their pets; as such, it effectively impacted audience members' intention to smoke in the future.

FACT:
CATS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY TO GET CANCER IF THEIR OWNER SMOKES

An advertisement from the Truth Initiative. (Public Relations Society of America)



"Risk education is a proven and effective tool for shifting public perception and ultimately changing behavior over time, particularly among young people.