

Issue: Gun Safety

Talking points for gun safety regulations:

1. We must fight to keep our streets, our schools, our children and our communities safe from gun violence.
2. Two-thirds of Virginians support a law to limit the purchase of guns to one/month according to a Quinnapac poll released in April 2017.
3. A Pew Research Center poll released on June 22, 2017 showed that about 9 out of 10 Americans favor preventing the mentally ill from buying guns. Another 84% favor requiring background checks for private gun sales and at gun shows; broken down by 90% of Democrats, 77% of Republicans.⁽¹³⁾
4. We must revoke the concealed weapon reciprocity rights of hundreds of thousands of gun permit holders in 25 states whose standards are weaker than Virginia's.
5. We must not let Republican candidates endorsed by the NRA repeal the law prohibiting guns to be carried in K-12 schools and grounds.
6. Republican control of the House and Senate in Virginia have prevented the passage of sensible gun legislation favored by a majority of Americans and Virginian citizens.

Why this topic should be discussed by Democratic candidates:

When Terry McAuliffe ran for Governor of Virginia, he made gun safety regulations one of the issues of his platform, as well as a woman's right-to-choose and climate change, even though these were not topics Democratic candidates traditionally brought up. He bragged about getting an F rating from the NRA. He won the governorship nevertheless. According to the Washington Post, the moderate urban voters, especially in the Washington suburbs, supported him. In 2014, a poll of voters in the Washington suburbs and Hampton Road district showed that those voters favored more gun restrictions by a margin of 2-to-1.

Gun control has long been a political hot-button issue in Virginia. The Commonwealth has been the site of horrific high-profile shootings — the 2007 massacre at Virginia Tech and the on-air murder of reporter Alison Parker and cameraman Adam Ward in 2015 are just two examples. Every 10 hours, a person is killed with a gun in Virginia in cases that involve suicide, domestic violence, accidental shootings, or interpersonal disputes.

But gun violence is much more than a political issue; it is a public-health crisis. In addition to these devastating deaths due to gun violence, a substantial number of Virginians survive gunshot wounds every year and face years of physical, mental, and emotional recovery from their injuries. According to the Virginia Department of Health, from 2005 to 2014, 5,532 people were non-fatally shot and treated in Virginia hospitals, at a total cost of more than \$336 million.⁽¹⁴⁾