

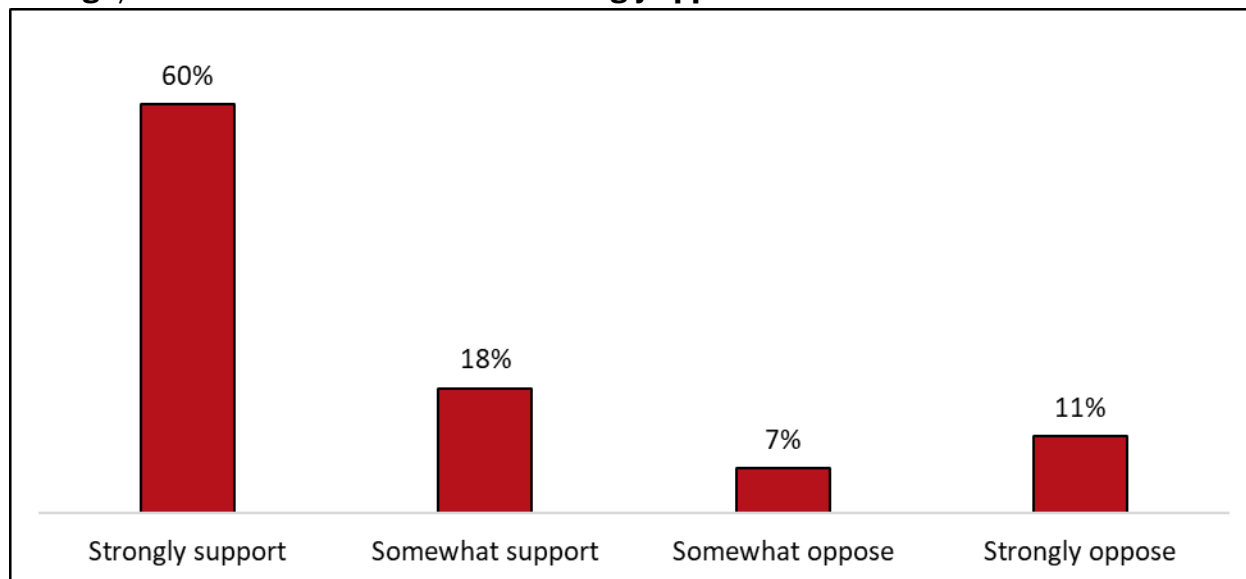


APM Survey

What do Americans think about mandating locked gun storage? And how do gun owners store their guns?

October 2, 2019

A majority of Americans strongly supports mandating that guns are locked when in storage, but more than one in ten are strongly opposed



Question: "Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose ...Mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place."

Source: APM Survey, July 16-21, 2019. N = 1,009 U.S. adults age 18 or older; overall margin of error is +/-3.4 percentage points. Don't know answers and refusals (2.4%) are not shown.

Introduction

This nonpartisan, nationally representative survey provides new information about the American public's opinions related to gun policy and knowledge about gun-related deaths. It was conducted July 16 to 21, 2019, just two weeks prior to the mass shootings in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio.

The APM Research Lab conducted this survey jointly with two partners: Guns & America, a collaboration of 10 public radio stations seeking “to bring context, nuance and a human face” to the role of guns in American life; and Call to Mind, American Public Media's initiative that aims to foster new conversations about mental health.¹ Data collection was conducted by SSRS of Glen Mills, Pennsylvania.²

This brief summarizes the results of one of the survey's key policy-related questions, as well as a behavioral question directly related to the policy in question:

Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose each of the following gun policies.

1. Mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place
2. (For those who either own a gun or live with someone who owns a gun) When you are not using your gun/the gun in your household is not in use, how often is it stored in a locked gun safe, locked cabinet, or other type of locked case?

Note that in addition to the policy question above, the survey asked respondents to evaluate two additional policies, reported on elsewhere. The sequence of these three questions was rotated to avoid possible systematic order effects.

Additional background materials and results from this survey, including results from questions about Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs or “Red Flag” laws), characteristics of gun owners, and whether people are aware that suicide is the leading cause of gun-related deaths, as well as a detailed description of this survey's methodology and sample characteristics as well as the standard transparency disclosures required by the American Association of Public Opinion Research, the Roper Center, and CNN are available at www.apmresearchlab.org/locked-gun-storage/.

¹ For more about Guns & America, please see: <https://gunsandamerica.org/>.

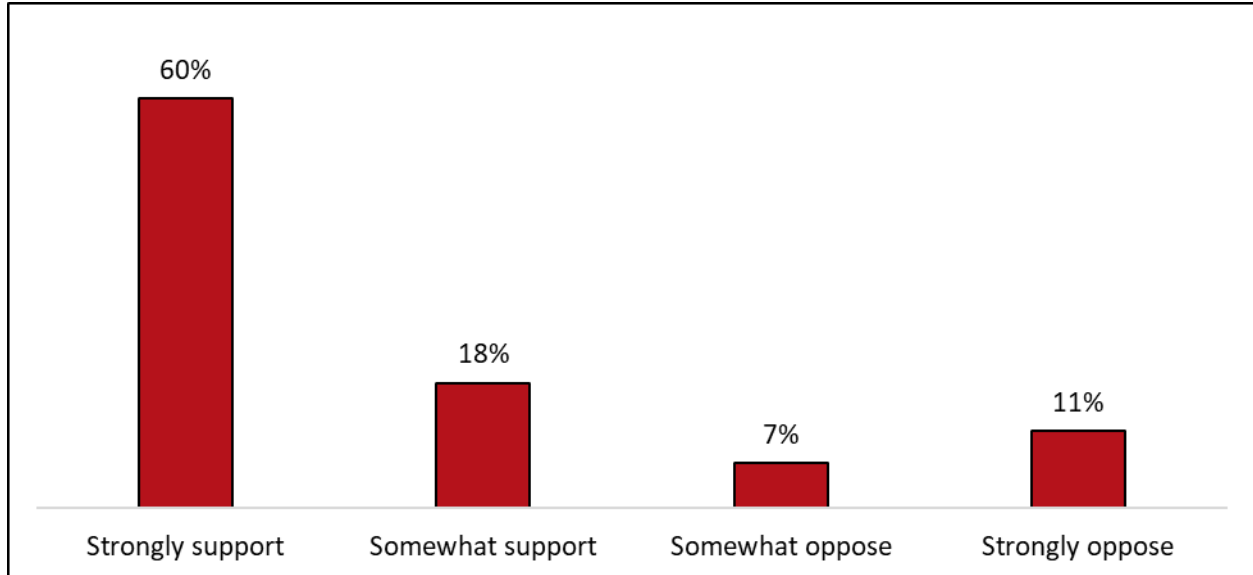
For more about Call to Mind, please see: <https://www.calltomindnow.org/>.

² See the appendix for additional details about the methodology used in this survey.

Support for mandating locked gun storage

A large majority of the American public supports mandating locked gun storage. Over three-quarters expresses support for the idea, including the 60% who “strongly” support mandating locked gun storage.

Nearly 8 in 10 support mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place; nearly 2 in 10 are opposed



Question: “Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose ...Mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place.”

Source: APM Survey, July 16-21, 2019. N = 1,009 U.S. adults age 18 or older; overall margin of error is +/-3.4 percentage points. Don’t know answers and refusals (2.4%) are not shown.

Who supports and opposes locked gun storage?

This representative survey of over 1,000 American adults allows us to compare the level support of mandating locked gun storage among a variety of groups. The main takeaway from that analysis is that a majority of Americans, regardless of background, support mandating locked gun storage.

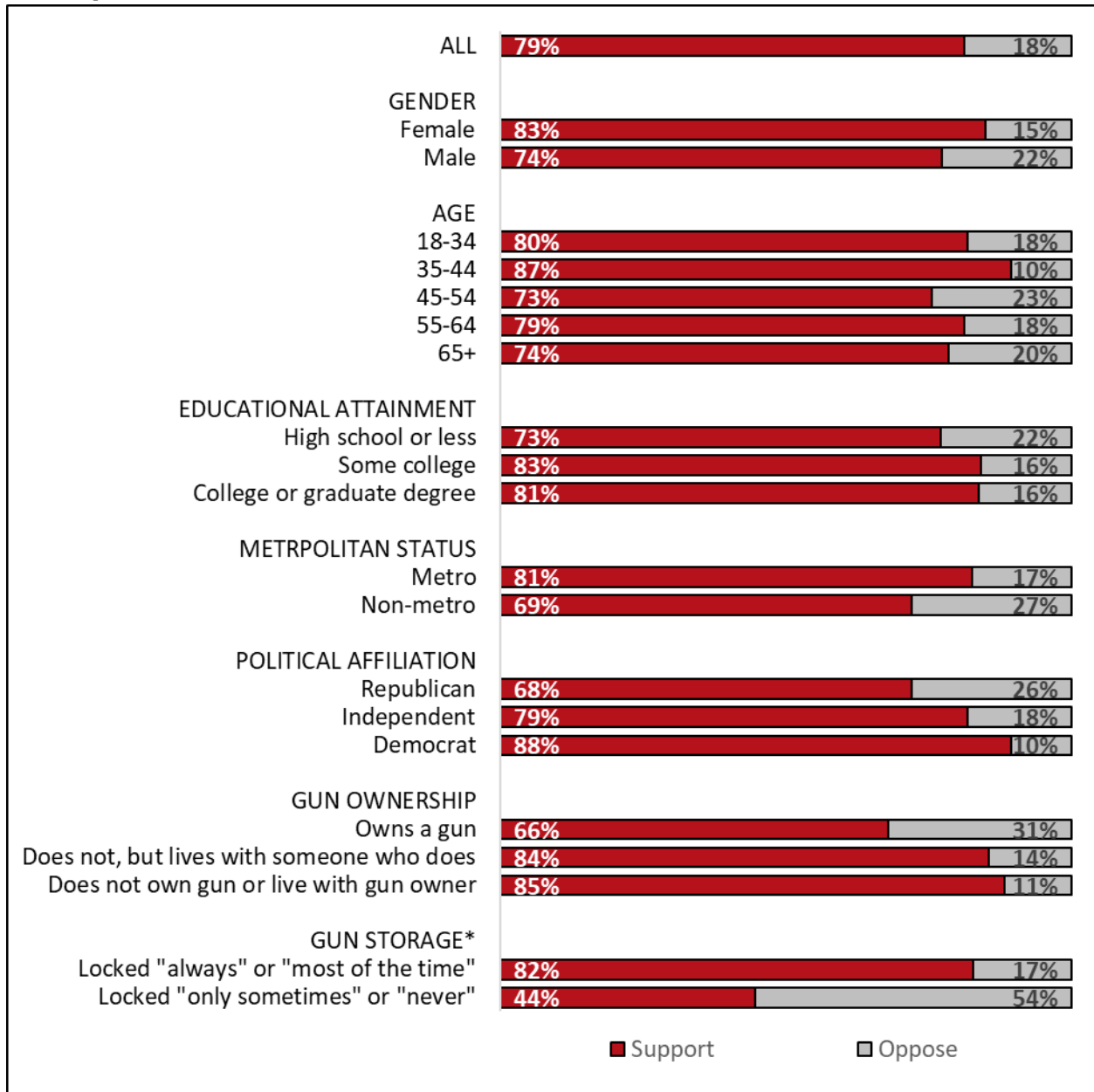
In some cases, however, the level of support differs in interesting ways. Groups whose response patterns differ significantly from one another are shown in the graph below. Some of the key findings are:

- 83% of women support a locked gun storage mandate, compared with 74% of men.
 - 69% of women strongly support such a mandate, compared with 51% of men.

- Nearly 9 in 10 of those in the age range 35 to 44 support mandating locked gun storage, including the 65% who strongly support the mandate.
- Over 80% of those with at least some college support mandating that guns are locked while stored, compared with 73% of those with a high school degree or less education.
- 81% of those living in metropolitan areas support a locked gun mandate, compared with 68% of those living outside of metropolitan areas.
- Nearly 7 in 10 Republicans support a locked gun mandate, compared with nearly 8 in 10 independents, and nearly 9 in 10 Democrats.
- A two-thirds majority of gun-owners supports mandated locked gun storage, including the 45% who strongly support such a mandate.
- Roughly half of those from gun-owning households who only sometimes or never store their guns locked oppose a mandate to lock guns while in storage, including roughly 40% who strongly oppose such a mandate.

In addition, we analyzed the results by several other characteristics, including race and ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic or Latino), whether the respondent is a parent with a child under age 18 living with them, household income, and region of the country (North East, North Central, South, and West). These additional comparisons did not find differences in response patterns from the national findings; a similar majority of each of these groups supports mandating that guns are locked when not in use.

A majority of Americans support mandating locked gun storage, including gun owners and Republicans



Question: "Please tell me whether you strongly support, somewhat support, somewhat oppose, or strongly oppose ...Mandating that guns are stored with a lock in place."

* For gun owners and those living with gun owners (n=374).

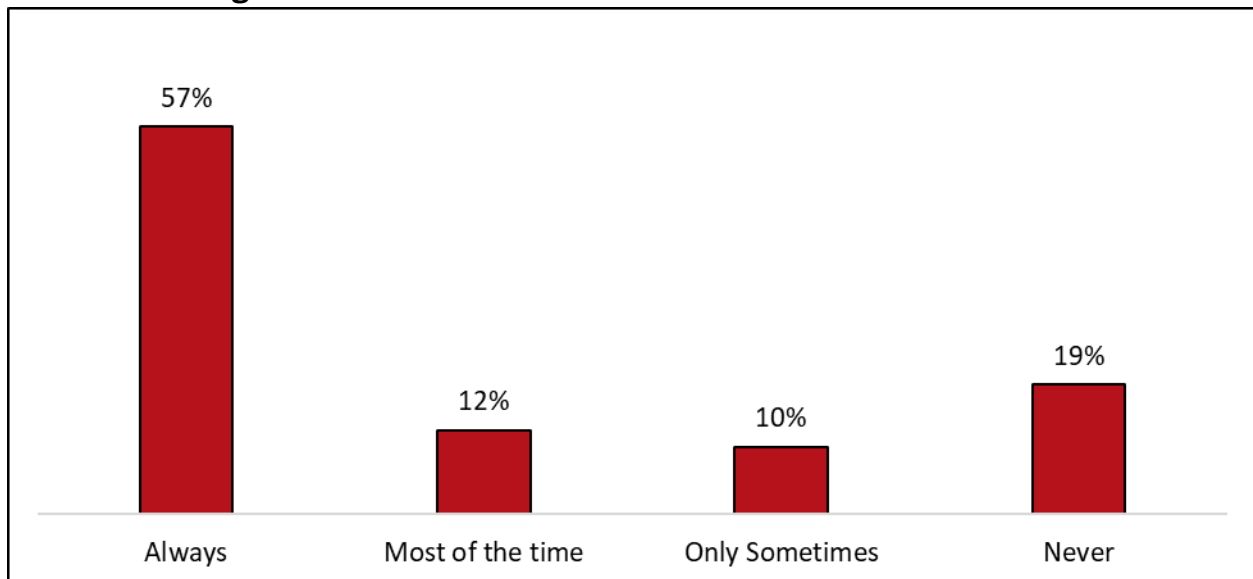
Source: APM Survey, July 16-21, 2019. N = 1,009 U.S. adults age 18 or older; overall margin of error is +/-3.4 percentage points. Don't know answers and refusals are not shown.

When gun-owners are storing their guns, how often are they locked?

According to this survey, 37% of American adults live in gun-owning households, including the 29% who themselves own one or more guns, and the 8% who do not own a gun themselves but live with someone who does.³ What do people from these “gun-owning households” have to say about how they store their guns?

A strong majority, nearly 3 in 5, of those living in gun-owning households indicate that they “always” store their gun locked. However, about 1 in 5 indicate that they “never” store their gun locked. The remainder are somewhere in between, with 12% indicating that guns in their households are locked “most of the time” and 10% indicating “only sometimes.”

Most of those who own guns or live with a gun owner store their guns locked, but 1 in 5 never lock their guns



Question: (Asked of the 374 who either own a gun or live with someone who owns a gun) “When you are not using your gun/the gun in your household is not in use, how often is it stored in a locked gun safe, locked cabinet, or other type of locked case?”

Source: APM Survey, July 16-21, 2019. N = 1,009 U.S. adults age 18 or older; overall margin of error is +/-3.4 percentage points. Don’t know answers and refusals (Less than 1% total) are not shown.

³ For more thorough look at the characteristics of gun owners and those who live in gun-owning households, see <https://www.apmresearchlab.org/gunsurvey>.

This survey includes 374 people from gun-owning households. This subsample does not allow us to see subtle differences among different groups in terms of how they store their guns. However, some differences do emerge, including:

- One-third of men indicate that the guns in their households are either never locked (23%) or locked only sometimes (12%), compared with one-quarter of women.
- Among those age 65 or older and living in gun-owning households, nearly one-third indicate never locking their guns, and another 13 percent indicate doing so only sometimes.
- Over three-quarters of those living in metropolitan areas indicate that they typically lock their guns when in storage, whereas rural residents are evenly split in terms of the proportion who usually lock their guns and the proportion who usually do not.
 - Over one-third of rural residents from gun-owning households say they never lock their guns while not in use.

A relatively small minority of all of those who living in gun-owning households live alone (44 of the 374 total). This is too few to represent the broader population of gun owners who live alone, but this group of survey respondents does not appear any more or less likely to lock their guns than do those who live with others. Similarly, within our overall group of those living in gun-owning households there is not apparent difference in the likelihood of locking guns between those who are themselves gun owners and those who live with someone else who owns guns.

We analyzed the results to the question about gun storage by several other characteristics, including race and ethnicity (non-Hispanic White, non-Hispanic Black, and Hispanic or Latino), whether the respondent is a parent with a child under age 18 living with them, educational attainment, region of the country (North East, North Central, South, and West), as well as political affiliation as a Republican, Democrat, or independent. Perhaps in part to the smaller number of gun-owning households represented in this survey, these additional comparisons did not find differences in response patterns from the national findings concerning locked gun storage.

About the Survey

The survey was conducted by SSRS on its Omnibus survey platform. Interviews were conducted from July 16 to 21, 2019 among a sample of 1,009 respondents in English (974) and Spanish (35). Interviewing took place over the telephone, including both landline (303) and cell phone (706). The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.42% at the 95% confidence level. All data are weighted to represent national parameters of the adult population.

For additional details about the sample and survey methodology, as well as transparency disclosures relevant to the American Association of Public Opinion, the Roper Center, and CNN please see: www.apmresearchlab.org/locked-gun-storage/.

Acknowledgments

This report was authored by the APM Research Lab's Managing Partner, Craig Helmstetter, and Senior Research Associate, Andi Egbert. The survey questions were designed with input from Guns & America's Director, Jeremy Bernfeld, and Research Editor, Lisa Dunn, as well as Call to Mind's Managing Director, Babette Apland, and Kyle Berta and Robyn Rappaport of SSRS.

About the APM Research Lab: Bringing Facts into Focus

The APM Research Lab is a division of American Public Media that informs the public about challenges and opportunities facing families, communities, and organizations throughout the nation. Our mission is to foster an engaged democracy by inspiring curiosity, inquiry and discussion through fact-driven, credible research and analysis. Our Values: Independent, Useful, Informative, Non-partisan.

The APM Research Lab conducts research projects of all types — surveys, demographic analyses, literature reviews, and more — and informs the work of partner organizations and the broader public through traditional reports, as well as infographics, blog posts, interactives, presentations, and other platforms.

We are a member of the American Association for Public Opinion Research's Transparency Initiative and abide by its standards. See <https://www.aapor.org/Standards-Ethics/Transparency-Initiative/>.

In addition to philanthropic support and partnership, we are happy to entertain requests for proposals and other contractual inquiries related to research and analysis.

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