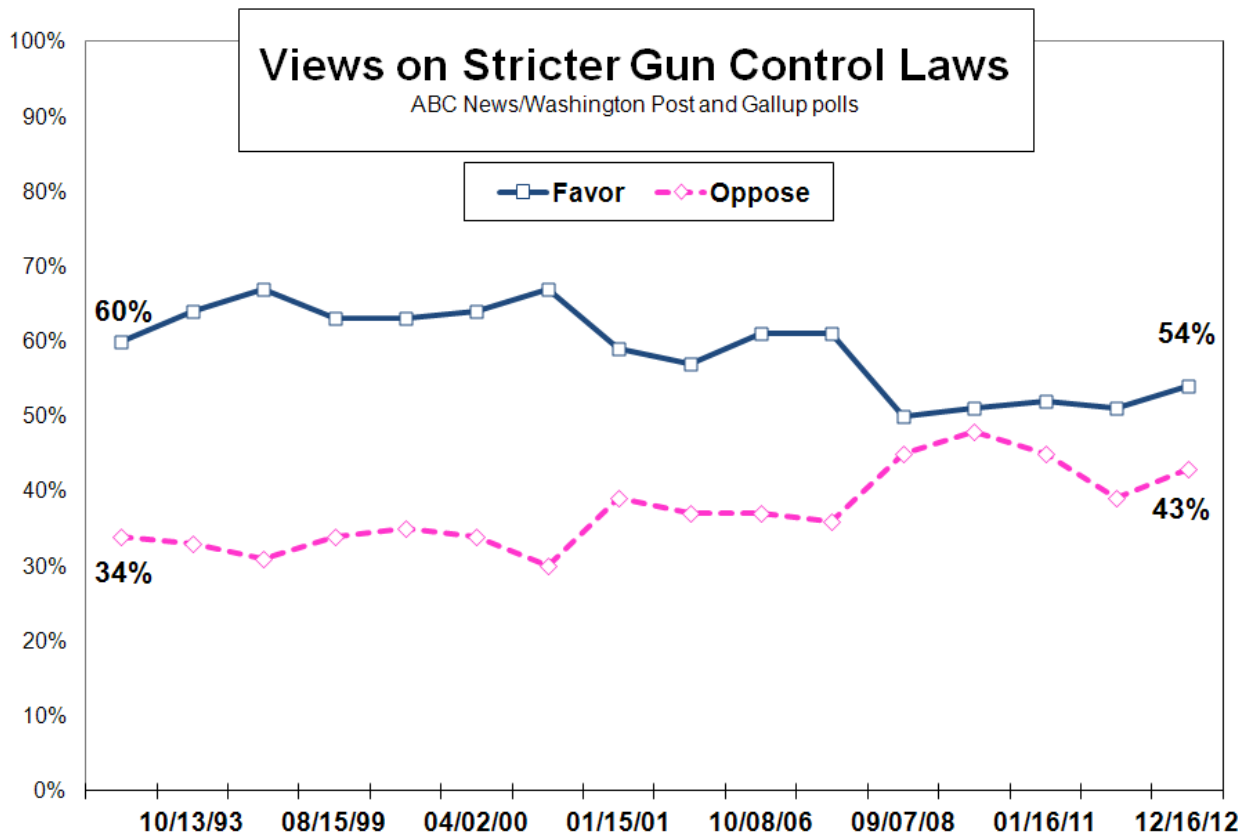


## Many See Societal Issues in CT Shootings; Most Back Ban on High-Capacity Clips

More than half of Americans say the school shootings in Newtown, Connecticut, reflect broader problems in society rather than an isolated act of a troubled person – more than after other recent shooting incidents, suggesting the possibility of a new national dialogue on violent crime.

This ABC News/Washington Post poll also finds that 54 percent of Americans favor stricter gun control laws in general, numerically a five-year high, albeit not significantly different than in recent years. Fifty-nine percent support a ban specifically on high-capacity ammunition clips, a step on which partisan and ideological gaps narrow substantially and “strong” support peaks.



At the same time, sharp divisions among population groups – regionally, between men and women, and politically – mark the difficult nature of the gun debate. And this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), finds that more Americans continue to say that enforcing existing laws is a better way to reduce gun violence than passing new laws, although by the narrowest gap in a decade.

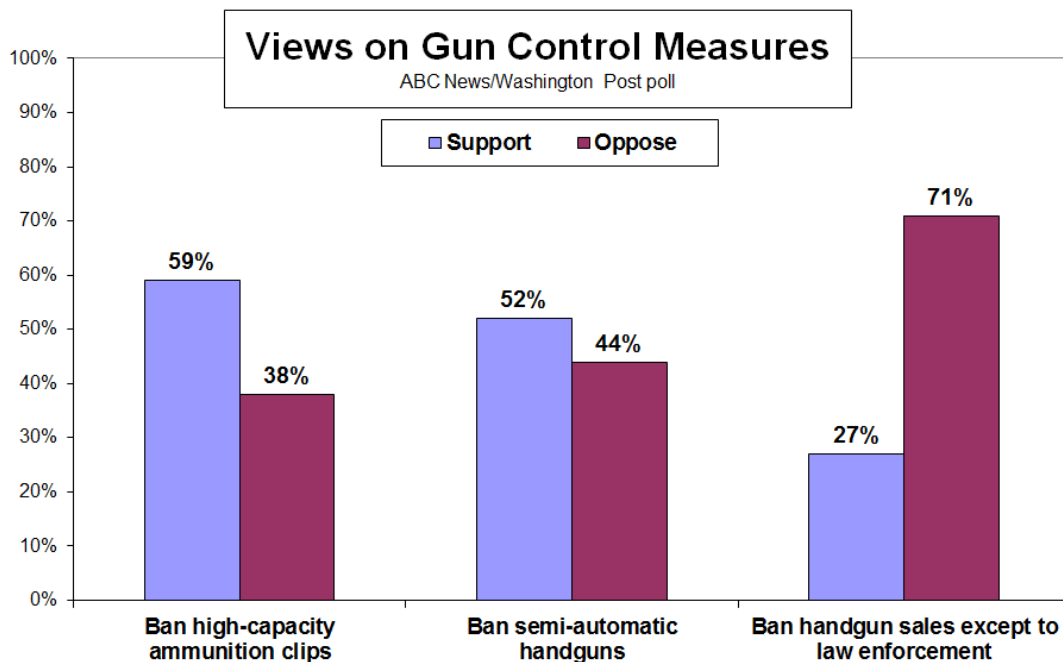
**SOCIETAL PROBLEM?** – The public by 52-43 percent sees the atrocity in Connecticut as indicating “broader problems in American society” rather than just the isolated act of a troubled individual. Many fewer saw the shootings last July in Aurora, Colorado, or last year in Tucson, Arizona, as signs of a broader societal problem, 24 and 31 percent, respectively, in polls by the Pew Research Center.

Views were more similar to today’s after the shootings at Virginia Tech in 2007, when the public divided, 46-47 percent in a Pew poll, on whether broader societal problems were at play. But the Connecticut shootings mark the first of these incidents that’s been seen by more than half the public as indicating a broader problem.

Notably, political and ideological differences are muted in this assessment: Half or more of Democrats, independents and Republicans alike see a broader societal problem (51, 52 and 57 percent, respectively). It’s also about half both among liberals and conservatives.

This sentiment can matter in views on gun control: People who see the Connecticut attack as a sign of broader societal problems are 11 points more apt to support stricter gun control than are those who see the crime as an isolated act, 59 vs. 48 percent. There are similar gaps in support for specific gun control measures; banning high-capacity clips, for instance, is favored by 65 percent of those who see a societal problem, vs. 52 percent of those who don’t.

**GUN CONTROL** – Attitudes on gun control in the past have not shifted sharply in response to heinous gun crimes, and that appears to be the case again, at least thus far. As noted, for example, 54 percent favor stricter gun control in general; it’s been 50 to 52 percent in polls since 2008, and was higher in previous years, peaking at 67 percent in 1999 and 2000.



On specific measures, 52 percent favor banning semi-automatic handguns (it's been 48 and 55 percent in previous polls) and 59 percent support banning high-capacity clips that carry more than 10 bullets (it was a similar 57 percent in early 2011, after the Tucson shootings). Banning the sale of handguns entirely (except for law enforcement) remains broadly unpopular, with 71 percent opposed, numerically a new high in results since 1999.

Intensity is on the side of supporters of stricter gun control in general – 44 percent of Americans are “strongly” in favor, vs. 32 percent strongly opposed, the widest intensity gap since spring 2007. And on banning high-capacity clips, strong supporters outnumber strong opponents by an 18-point margin, 47 percent vs. 29 percent.

At the same time, the highest intensity is in opposition to banning handguns overall – 56 percent “strongly” opposed, vs. 20 percent strong support.

**GROUPS** – Among groups, women are more apt to support stricter gun control than are men, by a 12-point margin, 59 vs. 47 percent; support for gun control is much higher in the Northeast and West than in the Midwest and South; and it's far higher among nonwhites, 72 percent, than among whites, 48 percent.

	----- Support-oppose -----		-See Connecticut shooting as-
	Gun control	Banning high-capacity clips	Sign of societal problems
			Isolated act
All	54-43%	59-38%	52% 43
Men	47-50	54-45	52 43
Women	59-37	64-33	52 43
Whites	48-50	58-39	52 43
Nonwhites	72-26	64-35	52 44
Northeast	67-31	70-26	53 43
Midwest	49-48	63-37	60 33
South	46-50	49-48	50 45
West	60-39	65-34	46 50
Democrats	74-22	73-26	51 44
Republicans	29-67	45-52	57 39
Independents	52-46	63-35	52 43
Liberals	72-25	70-27	50 46
Moderates	58-40	65-33	56 38
Conservatives	38-59	48-50	48 49

Political and ideological differences, in particular, are stark: Stricter gun control overall is favored by 74 percent of Democrats but just 29 percent of Republicans; it's 52 percent among independents, more than half for the first time since 2007. Support, similarly, is 72 percent among liberals and 58 percent among moderates, vs. 38 percent among conservatives.

As noted, however, these gaps narrow on the issue of banning high-capacity ammunition clips. Compared with their views on stricter gun control more generally, support for banning such clips jumps by 11 points among independents, by 16 points among Republicans and by 10 points among conservatives.

**METHODOLOGY** – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by telephone Dec. 14-16, 2012, among a random national sample of 602 adults, including landline and cell-phone-only respondents. Results have a margin of sampling error of 4.5 points, including design effect. The survey was produced for ABC News by Langer Research Associates of New York, N.Y., with sampling, data collection and tabulation by Abt-SRBI of New York, N.Y.

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com at <http://abcnews.com/pollingunit>.

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Full results follow.

\*= less than 0.5 percent

28. On another subject: Do you favor or oppose stricter gun control laws in this country?

	Favor			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
12/16/12	54	44	10	43	11	32	3
8/5/12**	51	39	11	47	10	37	2
1/16/11	52	39	13	45	12	33	3
4/24/09	51	36	14	48	12	36	1
9/7/08 RV	50	31	19	45	14	30	5
4/22/07	61	41	20	36	12	23	3
10/8/06	61	45	16	37	15	22	2
5/12/02	57	39	19	37	15	22	6
1/15/01	59	46	13	39	13	26	2
5/10/00	67	50	17	30	9	22	3
4/2/00	64	49	14	34	13	21	2
9/2/99	63	52	11	35	11	25	2
8/15/99	63	46	16	34	12	22	3
5/16/99	67	55	12	31	10	21	1
10/13/93*	64	40	24	33	13	20	3
6/8/89*	60	28	32	34	11	23	6

\*\*Washington Post-Kaiser Family Foundation

\*Gallup trend: "Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose enacting tougher gun control laws?"

29. Would you support or oppose a law requiring a nationwide ban on [ITEM]?

12/16/12 - Summary Table

	Support			Oppose			No opin.
	NET	Strg.	Smwt.	NET	Smwt.	Strg.	
a. Semi-automatic handguns, which automatically re-load every time the trigger is pulled	52	42	11	44	11	34	3

b. The sale of handguns, except to law enforcement officers	27	20	7	71	15	56	2
c. High-capacity ammunition clips, meaning those containing more than 10 bullets	59	47	12	38	9	29	2

Trend where available:

a. Semi-automatic handguns, which automatically re-load every time the trigger is pulled

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
12/16/12	52	42	11	44	11	34	3
1/16/11	48	39	9	50	12	37	2
4/22/07	55	46	9	41	9	32	3

b. The sale of handguns, except to law enforcement officers

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
12/16/12	27	20	7	71	15	56	2
1/16/11	31	23	8	67	14	54	2
4/22/07	38	28	9	60	17	42	3
5/10/00	38	26	12	59	16	43	3
9/2/99	32	23	9	65	18	47	3

c. High-capacity ammunition clips, meaning those containing more than 10 bullets

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
12/16/12	59	47	12	38	9	29	2
1/16/11	57	46	11	39	10	29	3

30. What do you think is the best way to reduce gun violence in this country - (by passing stricter gun control laws), or (by stricter enforcement of existing laws)?

	Passing new laws	Enforcing existing laws	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
12/16/12	32	49	8	7	3
1/16/11	29	57	5	7	2
4/24/09	27	61	5	4	2
4/22/07	29	52	9	8	1
4/2/00	33	53	7	5	2

31. Thinking about the shooting at a Connecticut elementary school: Do you think this shooting reflects broader problems in American Society, or are things like this just the isolated acts of troubled individuals?

	Broader problems	Isolated acts	No opinion
12/16/12	52	43	5
7/29/12*	24	67	8
1/16/11	31	58	12
4/22/07	46	47	7

\*July 2012 and previous: Pew Research Center. July, 2012 about "Shooting in Colorado"; January, 2011 asked about "Shooting in Tucson, Arizona"; April, 2007 question asked about shooting at Virginia Tech University.

\*\*\* END \*\*\*