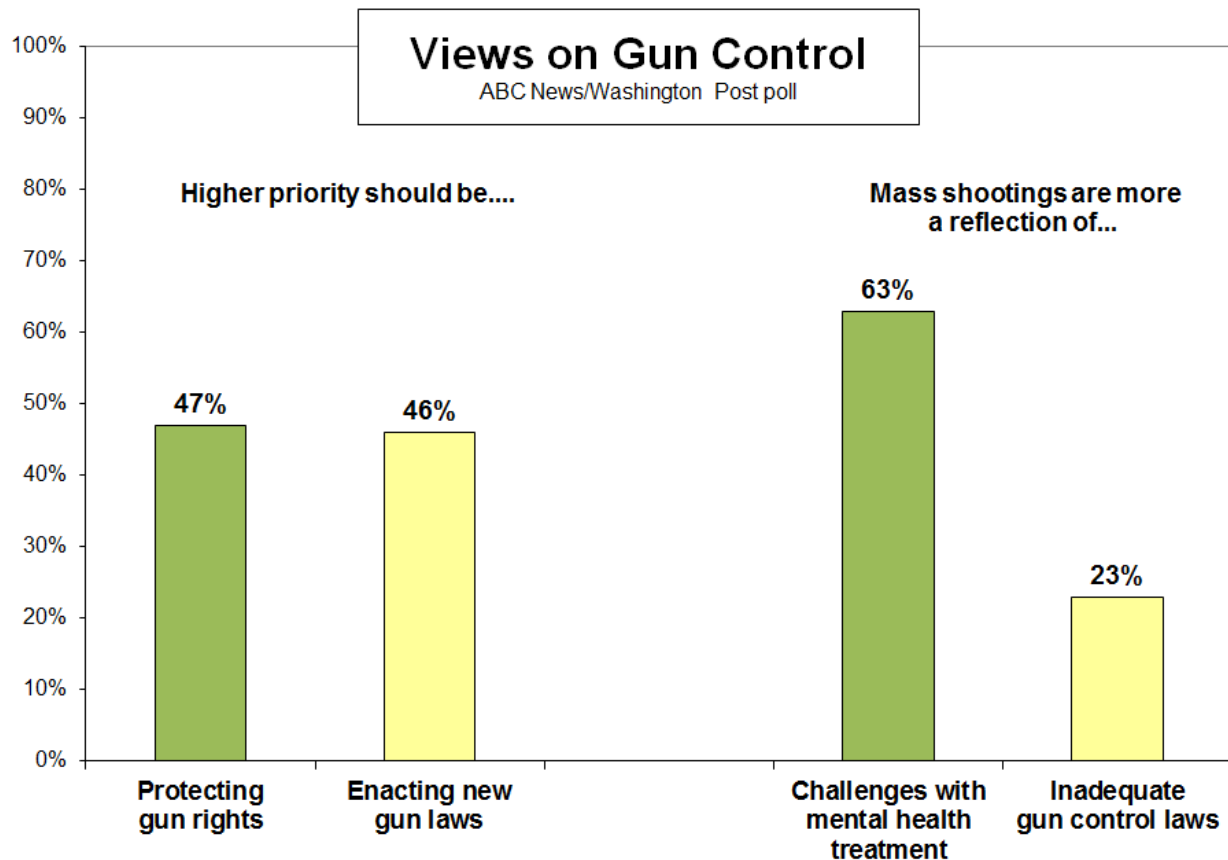


More See Mass Shootings as a Mental Health Issue

Americans overwhelmingly see gun violence as a serious problem but divide on government action to address it – and largely see mass shootings as more of an issue of challenges in mental health care than inadequate gun control.

The public splits 46-47 percent on what should receive the higher priority: enacting new laws to try to reduce gun violence, or protecting the right to own guns. That’s narrowed from a 52-40 percent preference for new laws in April 2013, four months after the Sandy Hook shootings.

One reason is that 63 percent see mass shootings as more a reflection of problems in identifying and treating people with mental health problems than as the outcome of inadequate gun control – a view expressed by many gun rights advocates.



These attitudes relates closely to priorities. Among people who see mass shootings as a mental health issue, just 30 percent prioritize enacting new anti-gun violence laws, while 62 percent

prefer protecting gun rights. Among those who see shootings as a reflection of inadequate gun control, by contrast, 79 percent want more laws against gun violence, while only 18 percent say it's more important to protect the right to own guns.

Regardless, previous polling has found overwhelming support for some additional gun control laws. An ABC/Post poll in April 2013 found 86 percent support for background checks on people buying guns at gun shows or online. And a January 2011 survey found 83 percent support for federal funding of a system intended to prevent people who've been treated for mental illness from buying guns.

Further, 82 percent in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), call gun violence a serious problem, with six in 10 saying it's very serious. Ten people were killed in one of the latest mass shooting incidents, Oct. 1 at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon.

Views on gun control are highly politicized. Seven in 10 Democrats prefer enacting new gun laws while the same share of Republicans prioritize protecting gun rights. Independents divide more narrowly, 50-43 percent for gun rights vs. gun laws.

Eighty-two percent of Republicans, moreover, blame mass shootings on mental health care failures rather than inadequate gun control; it's 65 percent among independents and much lower among Democrats, 46 percent. Partisans also differ on the urgency of gun violence; three-quarters of Democrats call it a "very" serious problem, vs. 42 percent of Republicans.

These differences are similar across ideological groups. Preference for new anti-gun violence laws over protecting gun ownership is highest among liberals, at 68 percent, and bottoms out among strong conservatives, at 21 percent.

Among other groups, concerns about gun violence peak among blacks; 94 percent call gun violence a serious problem, 65 percent favor anti-gun violence laws and 43 percent say mass shootings are more about inadequate gun control than mental health. The corresponding numbers among whites are 78, 39 and 15 percent, respectively. Gun violence concerns also are higher in urban areas, among women and among more-educated Americans.

	- Gun violence -		- Higher priority -		Mass shootings-	
	Serious problem NET	"Very"	Enact new gun laws	Right to own guns	Mental health	Gun laws
All	82%	58	46%	47	63%	23
Democrats	91	76	70	23	46	38
Republicans	74	42	24	71	82	10
Independents	80	54	43	50	65	21
Liberals	90	73	68	27	43	38
Moderates	84	57	48	44	66	20
Conservatives NET	75	49	31	64	73	17
Somewhat cons.	81	54	36	58	72	18
Very cons.	66	41	21	74	75	15
Whites	78	51	39	54	70	15

Blacks	94	81	65	31	42	43
Hispanics	85	65	53	41	58	30
Urban	86	67	52	39	56	28
Suburban	81	55	45	49	63	20
Rural	76	48	33	61	76	15
Men	75	50	39	53	65	21
Women	88	66	52	41	61	25
Non-grads	79	55	43	51	65	24
College grads	89	64	52	40	59	21

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Oct. 15-18, 2015, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,001 adults. Results have a margin of sampling error of 3.5 points, including the survey’s design effect. Partisan divisions are 30-24-39 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

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. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Margaret Tyson.

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

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Full results follow:

1-17 previously released.

18. Do you think gun violence is a very serious problem in this country, somewhat serious, not so serious or less of a problem than that?

	---- More serious ---			--- Less serious --			No
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Less	opinion
10/18/15	82	58	24	17	9	8	1

19. Which do you think should be a higher priority right now - (enacting new laws to try to reduce gun violence), or (protecting the right to own guns)? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	Enacting new laws			Right to own guns			Both	Neither	No
	NET	Strg	Smwt	NET	Smwt	Strg	(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion
10/18/15	46	38	8	47	7	40	4	1	2
4/14/13	52	NA	NA	40	NA	NA	3	2	3

20. Do you think that mass shootings in this country are more a reflection of (problems identifying and treating people with mental health problems) or (inadequate gun control laws)?

	Mental health	Gun control	Both	Neither	No
	problems	laws	(vol.)	(vol.)	opinion

10/18/15

63

23

10

3

1

END