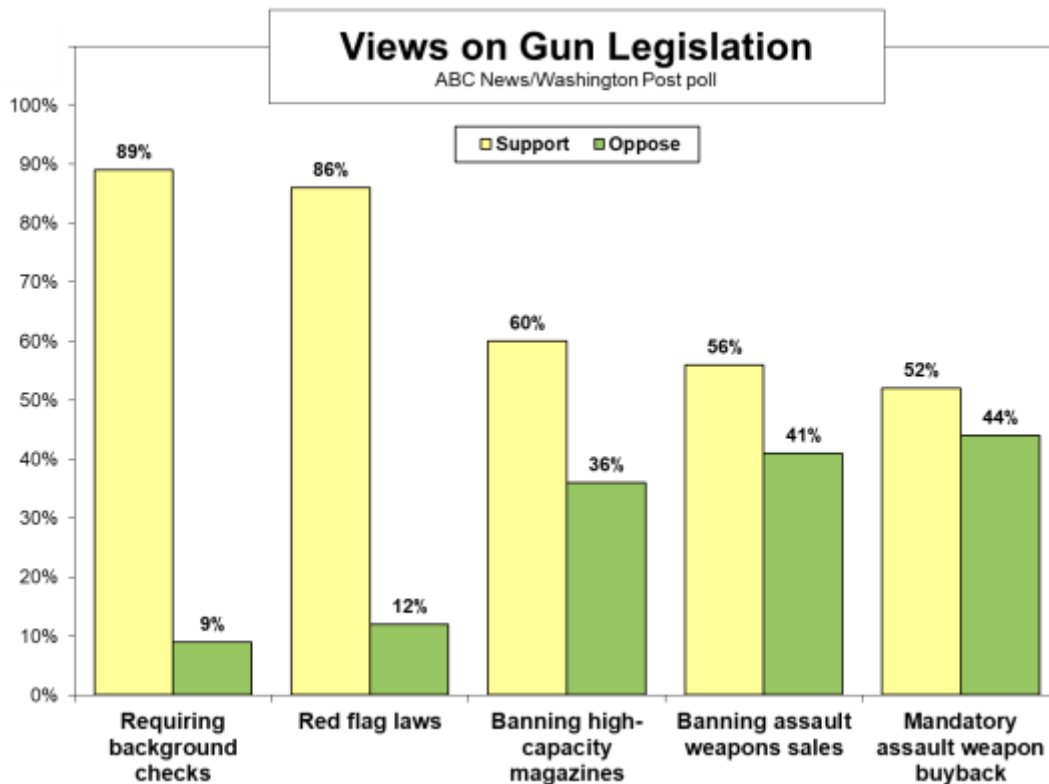


Six in 10 Fear a Mass Shooting; Most Think Gun Laws Can Help

With six in 10 worried about a mass shooting in their own community, Americans by a 17-point margin express confidence that stricter gun control laws would reduce such incidents, and even more widely endorse improved mental health monitoring and treatment to that end.

Two measures, specifically, remain overwhelmingly popular: Eighty-nine percent in this ABC News/Washington Post poll support background checks for all gun purchases, including private and gun show sales; and 86 percent back “red flag” laws allowing the police to take guns from individuals found by a judge to be a danger.

The public by a 15-point margin, 56-41 percent, supports banning the sale of assault weapons. That’s off its recent peak, 62 percent, after the shootings at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, last year, but well up from its low, 45 percent in late 2015.

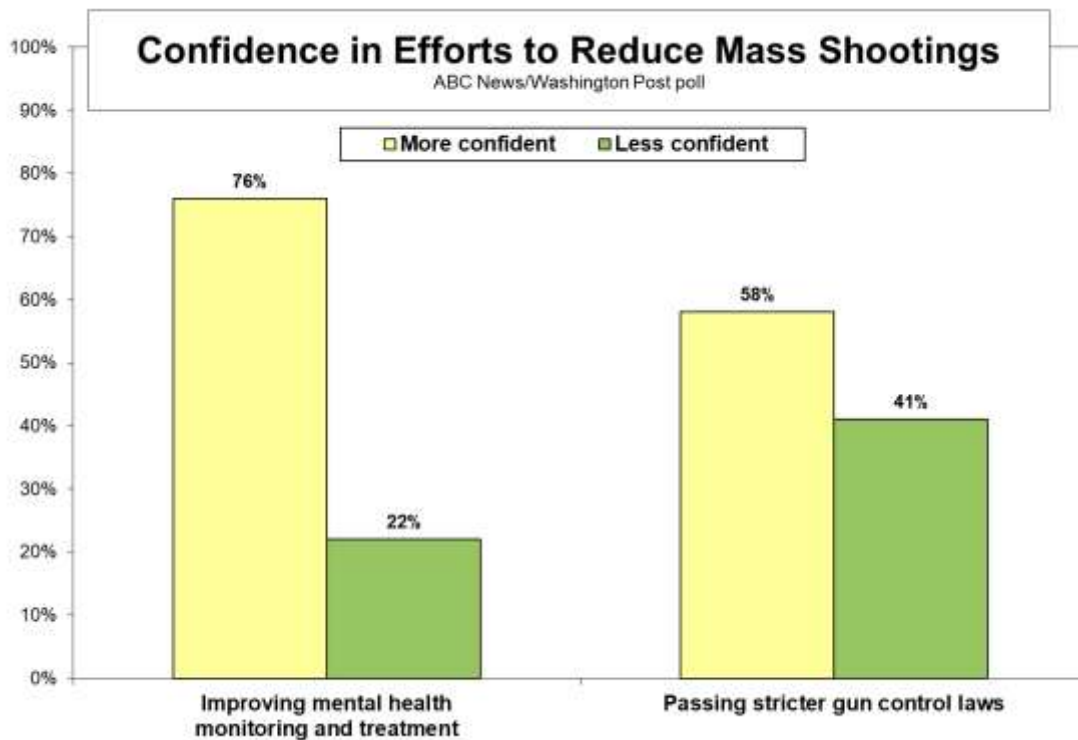


Beyond banning assault weapons sales, 52 percent support a mandatory buyback program in which the government would require owners to turn in their assault weapons in exchange for

payment. And six in 10 in this poll, produced for ABC by [Langer Research Associates](#), support banning high-capacity ammunition clips.

Gun policy may be debated again as Congress returns to session this week, following mass shootings across the country that killed at least 35 in August. Americans trust the Democrats in Congress over Donald Trump to handle gun laws by 51-36 percent.

Fifty-eight percent express confidence that stricter gun laws would in fact reduce mass shootings; 41 percent are skeptical. As noted, there also are especially broad hopes for improved mental health monitoring and treatment; 76 percent think these would reduce mass shootings.



CONSIDERATIONS – Support for some gun laws is premised, in large part, on confidence that gun control efforts would have the desired effect. Among those who think such laws would curtail mass shootings, for example, 75 percent support an assault weapons ban. That falls to 28 percent support among those who aren't confident such laws would work.

There's a similar effect when it comes to a mandatory buyback and banning high-capacity magazines. But the gaps shrink on the two most popular measures: background checks and red flag laws win broad majority support even among those who are skeptical that stricter laws would reduce mass shootings.

Results also are similar comparing people in gun-owning households (46 percent of all adults) with those where no gun is present. Support for an assault weapons ban ranges from 70 percent in non-gun households to 43 percent in gun households (still a substantial share). But more than

eight in 10 people in gun households support universal background checks and red flag laws alike, as do nine in 10 in non-gun households.

	Stricter gun control		Gun household	No gun in household
	More confident	Less confident		
Banning assault weapons				
Support	75%	28%	43%	70%
Oppose	22	67	53	27
Mandatory assault weapon buyback				
Support	72	24	37	67
Oppose	25	72	59	28
Banning high-capacity magazines				
Support	77	36	48	73
Oppose	20	58	48	23
Red flag laws				
Support	94	75	82	91
Oppose	6	20	16	6
Requiring background checks				
Support	97	80	88	91
Oppose	3	18	11	7

Perceived risk is another factor. Among those who are very or somewhat worried that a mass shooting could occur in their community, 67 percent support banning the sale of assault weapons. That drops to 39 percent support among those who are less concerned about an attack occurring in their area.

ASSAULT WEAPONS/GROUPS – There are other big differences among groups, well-illustrated by the assault weapons question. Women are 20 percentage points more likely than men to support banning the sale of these weapons, 65 vs. 45 percent. While support is higher in urban areas than elsewhere, there’s a broad gap between urban women (73 percent support a ban) and urban men (52 percent). And among political independents, 72 percent of women favor a ban, compared with 43 percent of men.

Education is a sharp divider – support for banning assault weapons rises with more education, ranging from 72 percent of those with postgraduate degrees to 46 percent of those with no more than a high school diploma. But here, too, gender influences attitudes. Among women who haven’t gone beyond high school, 55 percent back an assault weapons ban; among their male counterparts, it’s 38 percent.

Support for a ban reaches 71 percent among blacks, compared with 52 percent of whites. It differs by age, ranging from 63 percent among seniors to 49 percent among young adults. (Perhaps counterintuitively, support for banning assault weapons sales is higher among seniors even though they tend to be more conservative politically.)

And politics is a very prominent factor, as likely soon will be on display in Washington. Eighty-one percent of Democrats support an assault weapons ban, compared with 55 percent of

independents and 33 percent of Republicans. The results are very similar moving from liberals to moderates to conservatives.

That said, again, the most broadly backed items break the mold. Mandatory background checks and red flag laws win support from at least eight in 10 Republicans and conservatives, and as many or more of all others. On these, at least, politics seem to give way.

METHODOLOGY – This ABC News/Washington Post poll was conducted by landline and cellular telephone Sept. 2-5, 2019, in English and Spanish, among a random national sample of 1,003 adults. Results have a margin of [sampling error](#) of 3.5 points, including the design effect. Partisan divisions are 28-24-37 percent, Democrats-Republicans-independents.

The survey was produced for ABC News by [Langer Research Associates](#) of New York, N.Y., with sampling and data collection by Abt Associates of Rockville, Md. See details on the survey’s methodology [here](#).

Analysis by Gary Langer.

ABC News polls can be found at ABCNEWS.com. Join our [mailing list](#) to get updates on new poll releases.

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Full results follow.

8-13, 15 previously released. 1-7, 14 held for release.

16. Would you support or oppose a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons?

	----- Support -----			----- Oppose -----			No
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	opinion
9/5/19	56	46	10	41	8	33	4
4/11/18	62	51	12	35	8	26	3
2/18/18	50	38	12	46	11	36	4
6/23/16*	51	41	10	48	10	37	2
12/13/15	45	34	10	53	12	41	3
4/14/13	56	45	11	42	12	30	2
3/10/13	57	46	11	41	11	30	2
1/13/13	58	50	9	39	12	26	3
1/19/11**	63	NA	NA	34	NA	NA	3
4/26/09**	54	"	"	41	"	"	5
4/22/07***	67	54	13	30	10	21	3
5/10/00	71	60	11	27	11	16	2
9/2/99	77	68	9	22	8	14	1
5/16/99	79	67	12	19	7	12	2
6/14/94	80	NA	NA	18	NA	NA	2

*June 2016 and prior "Would you support or oppose a law requiring a nationwide ban on the sale of assault weapons?"

**CBS/NYT "Do you favor or oppose a nationwide ban on assault weapons"

***ABC News

17. Would you support or oppose [ITEM]?

9/5/19 - Summary Table

	Support	Oppose	No opinion
a. requiring background checks on all potential gun buyers, including private sales and gun shows	89	9	1
b. a nationwide ban on high capacity ammunition clips, meaning those containing more than 10 bullets	60	36	4
c. a law allowing the police to take guns away from people who have been found by a judge to be a danger to themselves or others	86	12	2
d. a mandatory buy back program in which the federal government would require assault weapon owners to turn in those weapons in exchange for payment	52	44	4

a. Compare to:

Would you support or oppose a law requiring background checks on people buying guns at gun shows or online? Do you feel that way strongly or somewhat?

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
4/14/13*	86	76	10	13	3	9	1
3/10/13	91	82	9	8	2	6	1
1/13/13	88	76	12	11	3	8	1
5/10/00	92	82	10	6	3	3	2
9/2/99	90	80	10	9	7	3	1
5/16/99	89	77	12	11	7	4	*

*"or online" added

b. a nationwide ban on high-capacity ammunition clips, meaning those containing more than 10 bullets

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/5/19	60	NA	NA	36	NA	NA	4
4/14/13	56	44	12	41	10	31	3
1/13/13	65	53	12	32	11	21	3
12/16/12	59	47	12	38	9	29	2
1/16/11	57	46	11	39	10	29	3

c. a law allowing the police to take guns away from people who have been found by a judge to be a danger to themselves or others

	Support			Oppose			No opinion
	NET	Strongly	Somewhat	NET	Somewhat	Strongly	
9/5/19	86	NA	NA	12	NA	NA	2
4/11/18	85	72	13	12	5	7	3

d. No trend.

18. Who do you trust more to handle gun laws in this country - (Trump) or (the Democrats in Congress)?

	Trump	Democrats in Congress	Both (vol.)	Neither (vol.)	No opinion
9/5/19	36	51	1	9	4

19. How confident are you that [ITEM] would reduce mass shootings in this country - very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

9/5/19 - Summary Table

	-- More confident ---			----- Less confident ----			No op.
	NET	Very	Somewhat	NET	Not so	Not at all	
a. improving mental health monitoring and treatment	76	41	35	22	11	11	2
b. passing stricter gun control laws	58	31	27	41	12	29	2

20. How worried are you, if at all, that a mass shooting could happen in your community - is that something that worries you a great deal, somewhat, not so much or not at all?

	----- Worried -----			----- Not worried -----			No opinion
	NET	Great deal	Somewhat	NET	Not so much	Not at all	
9/5/19	60	27	34	39	19	19	1
1/13/13	55	24	31	45	24	21	*

21. Do you or does anyone in your house own a gun, or not?

	Yes	No	No opinion
9/5/19	46	53	*
4/11/18	47	52	1
5/19/13	44	55	1
4/14/13	43	55	2
3/10/13	42	57	1
1/13/13	44	56	1
1/16/11	44	55	*
4/24/09	41	58	*
6/15/08	42	58	*
4/22/07	45	55	0
10/8/06	42	58	*
10/20/02	41	59	*
5/10/00	45	55	*
4/2/00	43	56	*
9/2/99	44	56	*
5/16/99	46	53	*

*** END ***