



HORRY COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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## Gun Laws and Gun Culture in SC



The existing South Carolina Gun Laws and Gun Culture puts all South Carolinians at a greater risk to be negatively impacted, both physically and financially, by gun violence.

These laws, culture and ordinances have increased the potential for disastrous impacts on the Grand Strand economy. A recently passed county ordinance elevates the risk for Horry County residents even more so.

South Carolina has some of the weakest firearm laws in the nation. Based on gun violence and death statistics, there are 42 states that have lower (often substantially lower) rates than SC. South Carolina's gun laws and gun culture unfortunately increase an individual's likelihood for both financial and physical harm.

Financially, the overall annual cost of gun violence in South Carolina is \$1.5 billion. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> highest per-person cost in the US, working out to be approximately \$915/person. Gun violence reductions could allow these additional taxes to be spent on other issues, or refunded. Gun violence also financially impacts business in the area by reducing visitors to the area causing unnecessary economic damages.

Seven factors, including three SC laws increase an individual's risk of being impacted by gun violence. Two laws (SC 16-11-410 "Stand your Ground") and Concealed Carry permits increase the odds of gun violence. A third law allows

### *An Elevated Risk to SC Residents*

individuals from 25 "reciprocal" states to bring their guns into South Carolina where they are then protected by these existing SC laws. This increased risk is based on national gun violence statistics comparing South Carolina to states that do not have these laws.

Easy availability of firearms increases the likelihood of gun violence. South Carolinians can purchase a firearm from over 1,295 licensed firearm dealers (7.2 times the number of McDonald's in the state).

The state similarly increases gun access by allowing statewide gun shows during which firearm sales often occur without any firearm background checks being conducted, allowing felons and other individuals not permitted to own firearms to purchase them. Gun availability in Horry County is increased by allowing two gun shows a year to occur at the Myrtle Beach Convention Center.

County residents have an even greater risk given that the Horry County Council recently passed Ordinance 15-2020, which made the county a "2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary County", where gun laws would not have to be enforced. This ordinance was a direct result of the South Carolina gun culture, which enshrines gun ownership and use.

The HCDP Gun Sense Action Committee's objectives are to encourage legislation to reduce the risk of gun violence and gun deaths by:

- Enforcement and support of the existing Federal firearm laws, which reduces the risk associated with gun violence.
- Universal background checks that require background checks on all firearm transactions (sales, barter, and transfers) prior to the firearm transfer.
- Close the Charleston loophole by increasing

- the time allowed to conduct a background check.
- Red Flag Laws by allowing a judge to temporarily remove any firearms possessed by an individual deemed at risk to himself or others.
  - Banning assault-style weapons.
  - Banning large capacity magazines and suppressors.
  - Requiring safe and secure storage of firearms with laws that would provide legal consequences for the firearm owner if accidental shootings occur, or if the firearm is used in any criminal activities.

The Gun Sense Action Committee meets regularly to discuss and initiate actions needed to reduce gun violence and gun deaths in Horry County and the State. Priority actions including:

- Keep Myrtle Beach Family Friendly - a program to inform and educate Horry County residents of the existing firearm laws, the gun violence and gun culture risks associated with living in South Carolina, and actions they can take to reduce their individual risks.
- On-going programs to achieve reduced gun violence and deaths, including work to eliminate the Horry County gun shows.

The Economic Risk of gun violence - The Grand Strand Area as a travel and entertainment destination needs to undertake strong action to reduce gun violence as it threatens the economic survival of the area.

Gun violence doesn't keep the area "family friendly" and leads to a reduction of the number of visitors to the area. This loss of visitors jeopardizing the financial viability of every business and individual, and could have an impact similar to what has been experienced with the coronavirus. If we allow gun violence to continue, it will result in the area's demise and could destroy our current way of life.

Please join us in preventing this to happen, lets "Keep Myrtle Beach Family Friendly" and gun violence free.



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