



# Safe Tennessee Project

AUGUST 2019

Working together to end gun violence in Tennessee

## Ten Years of Tennessee Gun Death

Gun deaths are on the rise in Tennessee, and continue to outpace the U.S. average in three key categories:

- **Firearm mortality**, which includes all forms of fatal gun violence: all violence-related fatal shootings, including homicides, fatal domestic violence shootings, and legal intervention, to firearm suicides, to unintentional shootings, to shootings where the intent is undetermined.
- **Firearm homicide**, which includes all murders committed with a firearm.
- **Firearm suicides**, which include any completed suicide committed with a firearm.

Following are a series of charts that visualize the data in these three categories.

The data is from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports from 2017, the most recent year fatal injury data is available.

Each category is divided between all ages and ages 0-19.

The first set of charts represent rates (deaths per 100,000, or “per capita”) in Tennessee compared to the U.S. average.

The second set of charts represent rates in Tennessee compared to both the U.S. average and rates in Massachusetts, a state known for its strong gun laws.

Massachusetts is ranked as the 49th friendliest state for gun owners by Guns and Ammo. Tennessee is ranked 12th. In 2017, Massachusetts had a gun law strength grade of A according to the The Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence. Tennessee had a D-.

Each category has seen a significant increase over the last ten years, especially the last two years.

Of particular concern is the rise in firearm mortality for young people ages 0-19 where the rates of death have gone up considerably over the last several years, far outpacing the U.S. average.

- *The rate of firearm mortality for ages 0-19 has more than doubled since 2007*
- *The rate of firearm homicides for ages 0-19 has nearly doubled since 2007*
- *The rate of firearm suicide for ages 0-19 has more than doubled since 2017*

### Overall, Tennessee is:

- 11th in the nation for firearm mortality
- 7th in the nation for firearm homicide
- 19th in the nation for firearm suicide

Massachusetts has some of the strongest gun laws in the nation and is most often the state with either the lowest or second lowest rate of firearm mortality in the country. In 2009, 2012, 2015, and 2016, it had the lowest, while in 2017 it had the second lowest. Tennessee is considered to have very lax gun laws. In the last ten years, Tennessee has never been lower than 14th.

Firearm Laws in Tennessee and Massachusetts		
Tennessee	Policy	Massachusetts
NO	Expanded background checks for all gun sales and transfers	YES
NO	Require a license to purchase a firearm	YES
NO	Allow local law enforcement discretion to allow or deny gun permits	YES
NO	Requires lost or stolen guns to be reported	YES
NO	Maintains permanent records of firearm sales	YES
YES	State preemption of local restrictions	NO
NO	Magazine capacity restrictions	YES
YES	Stand Your Ground law	NO
NO	Assault weapon restrictions	YES
NO	Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)/Red Flag Laws	YES
YES	Allow convicted domestic violence abusers to dispossess firearms to a third party	NO
NO	Require guns to be stored with locking device when not in use	YES
NO	Require dealers to obtain a state license	YES

ANNUAL COST OF GUN VIOLENCE IN TENNESSEE:

**\$6 BILLION**

\$928 PER RESIDENT

ANNUAL COST OF GUN VIOLENCE IN MASSACHUSETTS:

**\$1.5 BILLION**

\$221 PER RESIDENT

*Firearm law and annual gun violence cost data from the Giffords Law Center*

## KEY FIREARM LEGISLATION PASSED IN TENNESSEE BETWEEN 2007 AND THE PRESENT

2008: "Guns in bars" law is passed, allowing permit holders to carry loaded guns in bars and restaurants

2013: "Guns in Trunks" law is passed, allowing permit holders to store loaded guns in their vehicles, even on private property that prohibits weapons

2014: "Guns in Trunks" law is expanded, allowing any legal gun owner to store loaded guns in their vehicles, even on private property that prohibits weapons

2015: "Guns in Parks" law allows is passed, allowing permit holder to carry loaded guns in any public park or playground, including those used by schools

2016: "Guns on Campus" law is passed, allowing permit holders who are faculty or full-time employees of public colleges and universities to carry loaded guns on college campuses

2017: A law is passed that allows permit holders to carry loaded guns on public transportation and includes a provision that allows an individual or organization to sue a city for triple damages if the city refuses to comply.

2017: A bi-partisan law is passed to strengthen domestic violence laws by requiring convicted domestic abusers to submit a dispossession form to the court following conviction.

2018: A law is passed creating a new gun permit that only requires an applicant to complete a background check and watch a short online video

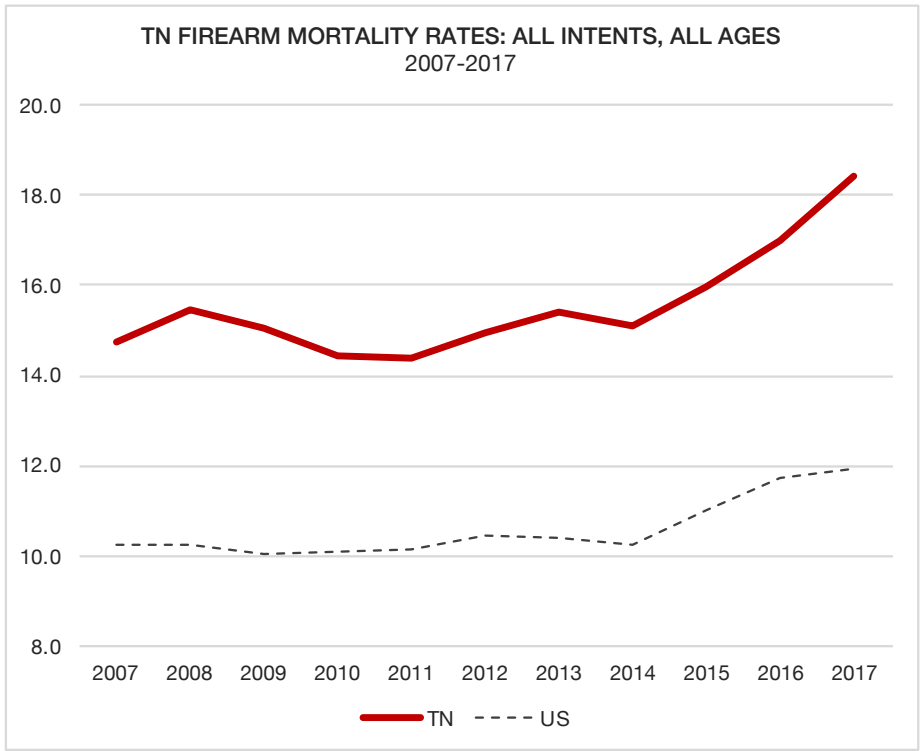
2018: The House votes to overturn the 2017 firearm dispossession form law. The Senate will vote on the bill in 2020.

**Firearm mortality** includes all forms of fatal gun violence: all violence-related fatal shootings, including homicides, fatal domestic violence shootings, and legal intervention, to firearm suicides, to unintentional shootings, to shootings where the intent or motive is undetermined.

- Based on this data, on average, 3.4 Tennesseans die *every day* from gun violence, or one person every 7.1 hours
- Between 2007 and 2017, firearm mortality in Tennessee increased 20 percent for all ages and 53 percent for ages 0-19.

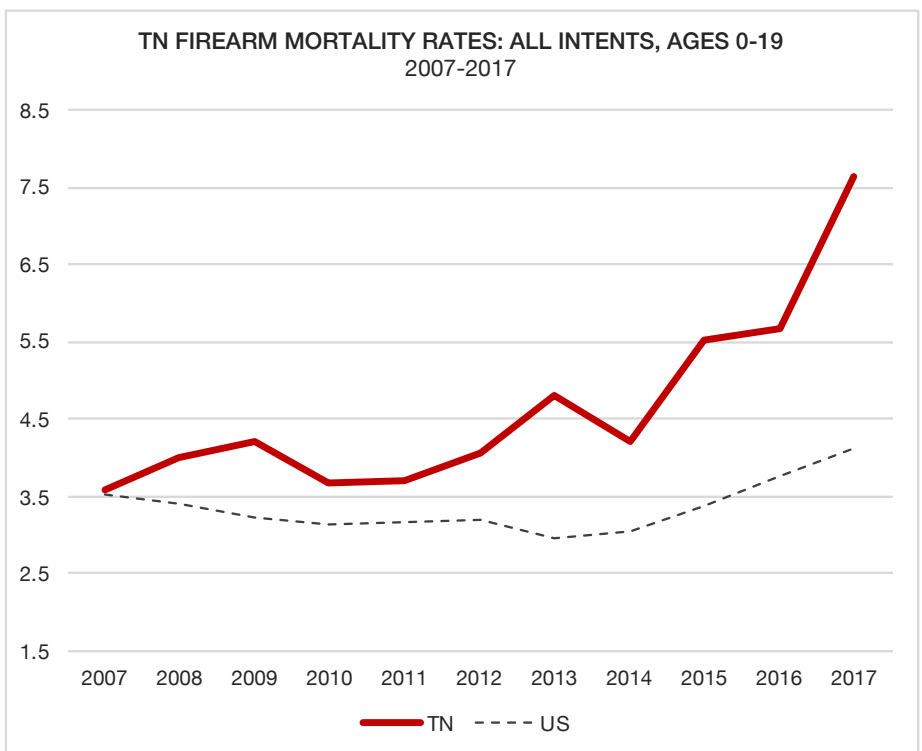
TN FIREARM MORTALITY RATES: ALL INTENTS, ALL AGES			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	924	14.74	10.24
2008	985	15.46	10.23
2009	966	15.06	10.05
2010	932	14.42	10.07
2011	948	14.40	10.16
2012	995	14.95	10.45
2013	1030	15.41	10.37
2014	1016	15.11	10.26
2015	1075	15.95	11.02
2016	1148	16.99	11.71
2017	1246	18.45	11.95

Rates are per 100,000 people



TN FIREARM MORTALITY RATES: ALL INTENTS, AGES 0-19			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	61	3.58	3.53
2008	69	4.01	3.39
2009	73	4.21	3.22
2010	63	3.67	3.13
2011	63	3.72	3.16
2012	68	4.06	3.19
2013	80	4.82	2.94
2014	70	4.22	3.06
2015	92	5.52	3.38
2016	95	5.66	3.77
2017	129	7.65	4.12

Rates are per 100,000 people

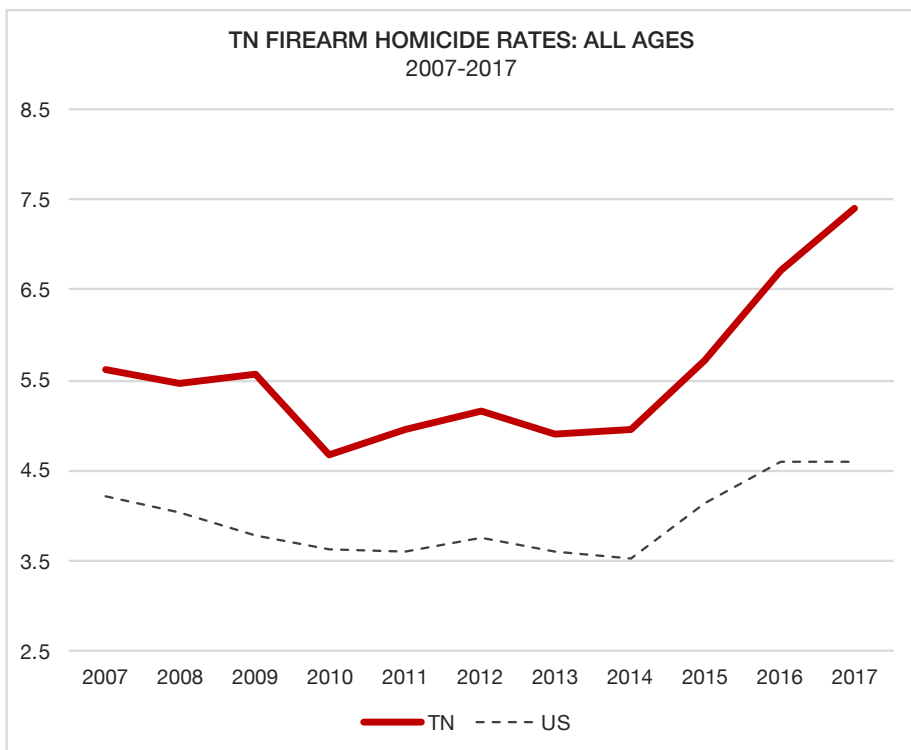


**Firearm homicide** includes any murder committed with a firearm, whether the murder is the result of an altercation, a domestic situation, a road rage shooting, or during the commission of a criminal act, such as an armed robbery or retaliatory shooting.

- In 2007, the rate of firearm homicides involving individuals 0-19 in Tennessee was lower than the U.S. average. In 2017 it was nearly double the U.S average.
- Between 2007 and 2017, firearm homicide in Tennessee increased 24 percent for all ages and 47 percent for ages 0-19.

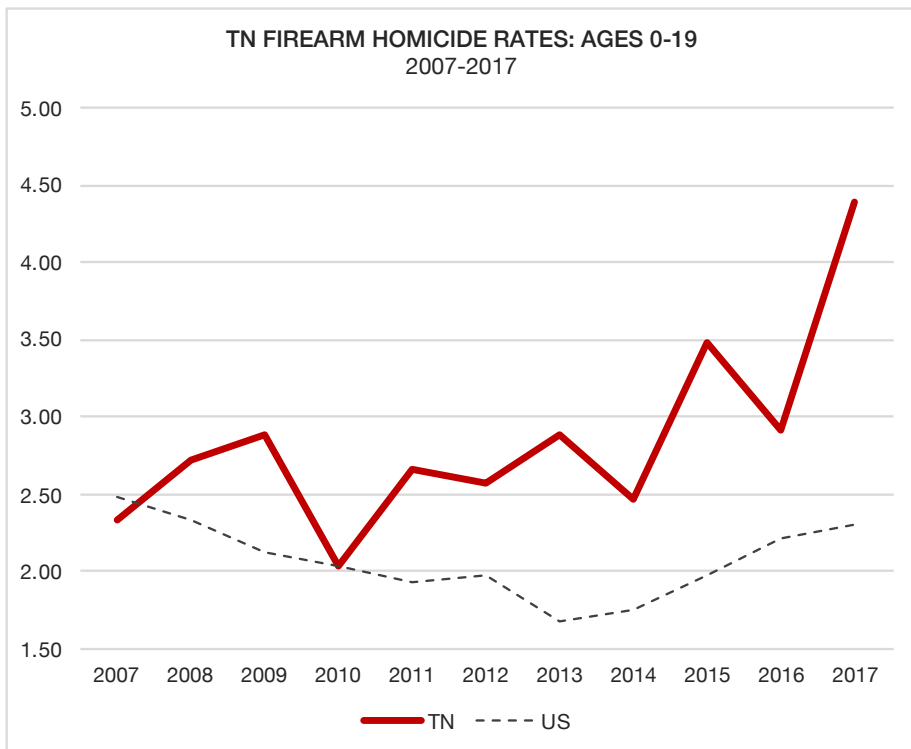
TN FIREARM HOMICIDE RATES: ALL AGES			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	343	5.61	4.20
2008	346	5.48	4.03
2009	347	5.56	3.78
2010	293	4.67	3.62
2011	309	4.96	3.59
2012	327	5.17	3.76
2013	309	4.89	3.60
2014	315	4.96	3.53
2015	363	5.72	4.14
2016	434	6.73	4.59
2017	467	7.40	4.60

Rates are per 100,000 people



TN FIREARM HOMICIDE RATES: AGES 0-19			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	40	2.34	2.49
2008	47	2.71	2.33
2009	50	2.88	2.12
2010	35	2.03	2.04
2011	45	2.66	1.93
2012	43	2.57	1.97
2013	48	2.89	1.68
2014	41	2.47	1.76
2015	58	3.48	1.97
2016	49	2.92	2.21
2017	74	4.39	2.30

Rates are per 100,000 people

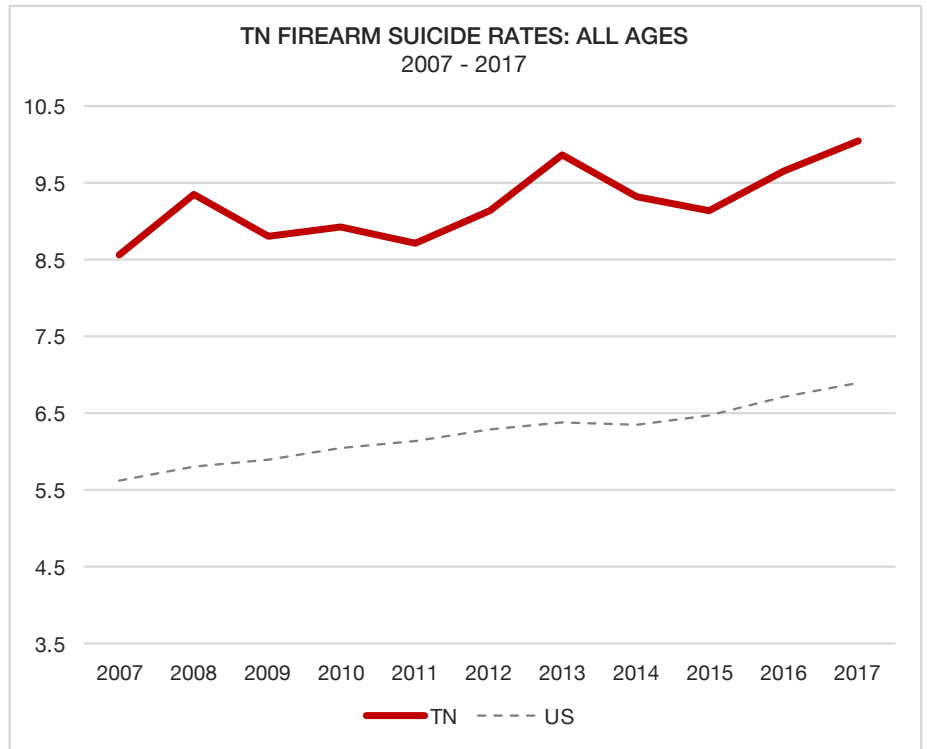


**Firearm suicide** includes any completed suicide where a gun was used. Firearm suicides are unique in both their impulsivity and their lethality. Unlike other methods of suicide, firearm suicides take little planning and are almost always successful.

- The number of young people in Tennessee who take their own life with a gun has more than doubled since 2007 and is significantly higher than the U.S. average.
- Between 2007 and 2017, firearm suicide in Tennessee increased 15 percent for all ages and 55 percent for ages 0-19.

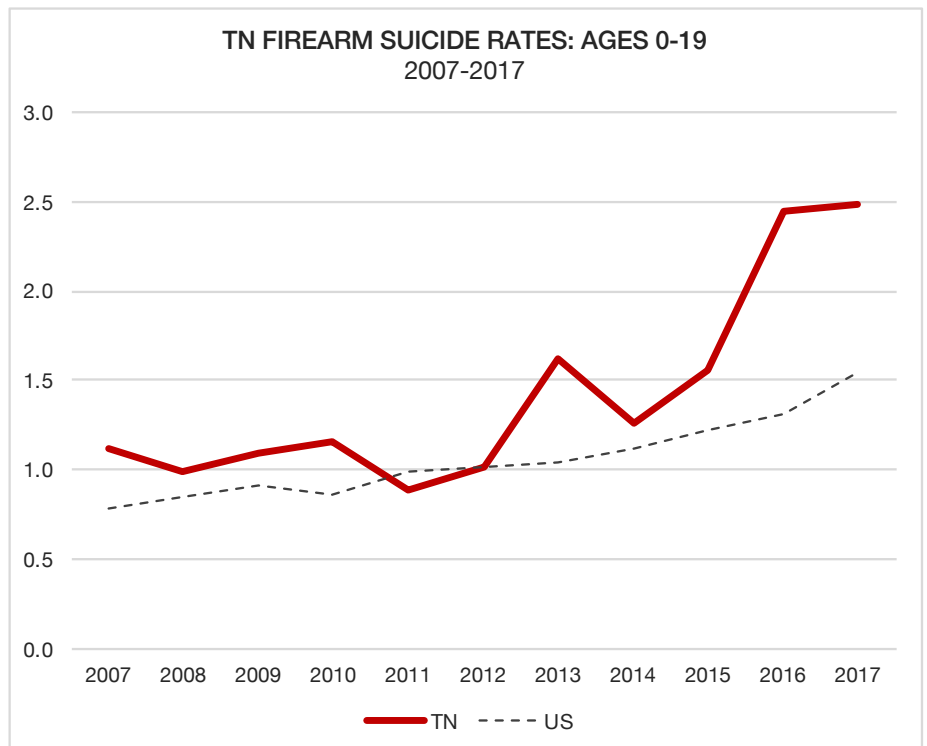
TN FIREARM SUICIDE RATES: ALL AGES			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	545	8.55	5.63
2008	609	9.36	5.82
2009	574	8.81	5.91
2010	585	8.93	6.06
2011	591	8.73	6.16
2012	626	9.14	6.29
2013	676	9.86	6.38
2014	644	9.32	6.36
2015	638	9.14	6.49
2016	675	9.67	6.71
2017	711	10.04	6.92

Rates are per 100,000 people



TN FIREARM SUICIDE RATES: AGES 0-19			
Year	Deaths	TN Rate	US Rate
2007	19	1.12	0.78
2008	17	1.00	0.85
2009	19	1.10	0.91
2010	20	1.16	0.86
2011	15	0.88	0.99
2012	17	1.02	1.02
2013	27	1.63	1.05
2014	21	1.27	1.12
2015	26	1.56	1.22
2016	41	2.44	1.32
2017	42	2.49	1.55

Rates are per 100,000 people

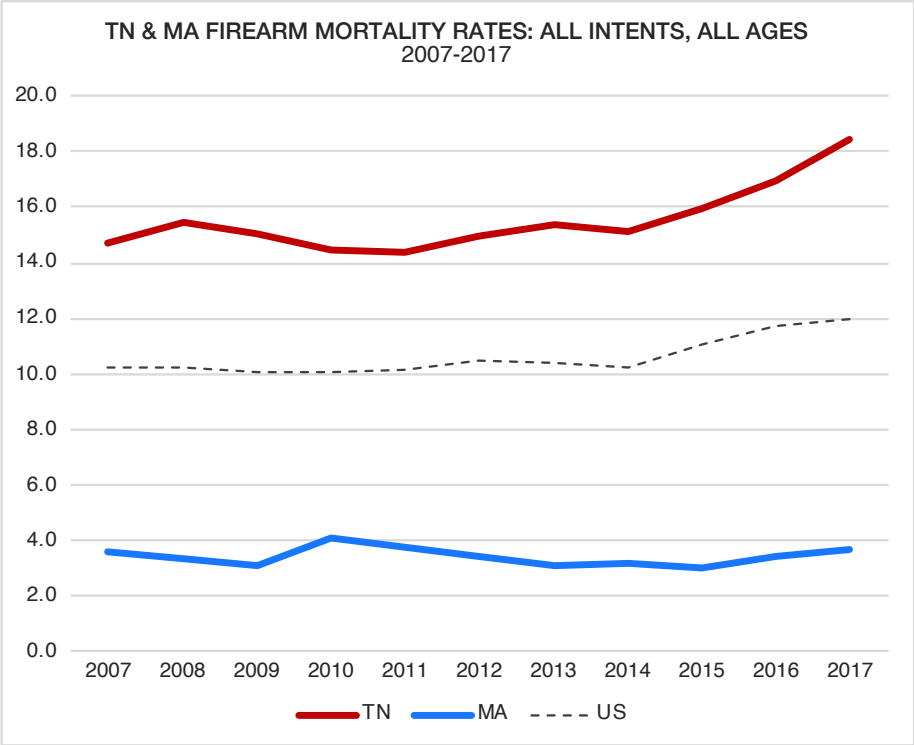


**Massachusetts** had the second lowest firearm mortality rate in the country in 2017, ranked only behind Hawaii.

- The firearm mortality rate in Tennessee for all ages is almost *five times* higher than that of Massachusetts. For ages 0-19, Tennessee's firearm mortality rate is *more than four times* that of Massachusetts.
- **Between 2007 and 2017, firearm mortality in Tennessee increased 20 percent for all ages and 53 percent for ages 0-19. Over the same time, firearm mortality in Massachusetts increased only 3 percent for all ages and decreased 5 percent for ages 0-19.**

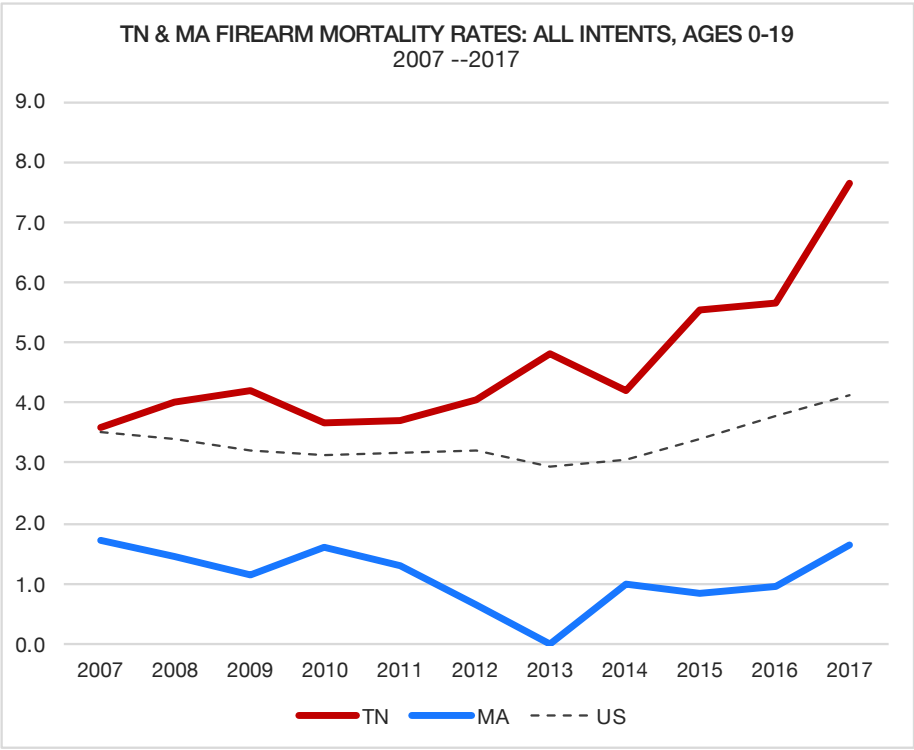
TN & MA FIREARM MORTALITY RATES: ALL INTENTS, ALL AGES			
Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	14.74	3.55	10.24
2008	15.46	3.34	10.23
2009	15.06	3.10	10.05
2010	14.42	4.03	10.07
2011	14.40	3.70	10.16
2012	14.95	3.37	10.45
2013	15.41	3.05	10.37
2014	15.11	3.12	10.26
2015	15.95	2.99	11.02
2016	16.99	3.41	11.71
2017	18.45	3.68	11.95

Rates are per 100,000 people



TN & MA FIREARM MORTALITY RATES: ALL INTENTS, AGES 0-19			
Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	3.58	1.71	3.53
2008	4.01	1.45	3.39
2009	4.21	1.13	3.22
2010	3.67	1.61	3.13
2011	3.72	1.30	3.16
2012	4.06	0.66	3.19
2013	4.82	. - - -	2.94
2014	4.22	1.00	3.06
2015	5.52	0.83	3.38
2016	5.66	0.94	3.77
2017	7.65	1.63	4.12

Rates are per 100,000 people



*In 2013, MA logged so few firearm deaths for ages 0-19 that they were not included in the CDC data.*

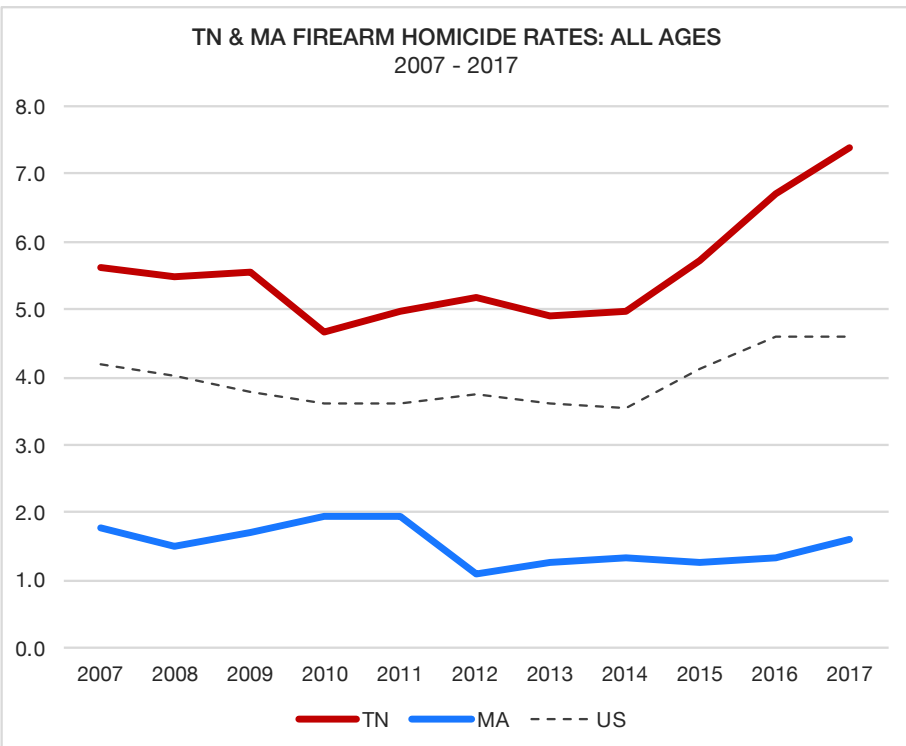
**Massachusetts** is ranked 41st in the nation for firearm homicides. Tennessee is 7th. While the Tennessee firearm homicide rate is much higher than the U.S. average, Massachusetts is far below.

- The firearm homicide rate in Tennessee for all ages is almost five times higher than Massachusetts. For ages 0-19, Tennessee’s firearm homicide rate is more than three times that of Massachusetts.
- **Between 2007 and 2017, firearm homicide in Tennessee increased 24 percent for all ages and 47 percent for ages 0-19. Over the same time, firearm mortality in Massachusetts decreased by 13 percent for all ages and decreased 8 percent for ages 0-19.**

**TN & MA FIREARM HOMICIDES RATES: ALL AGES**

Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	5.61	1.78	4.20
2008	5.48	1.50	4.03
2009	5.56	1.70	3.78
2010	4.67	1.93	3.62
2011	4.96	1.94	3.59
2012	5.17	1.09	3.76
2013	4.89	1.24	3.60
2014	4.96	1.33	3.53
2015	5.72	1.26	4.14
2016	6.73	1.33	4.59
2017	7.40	1.58	4.60

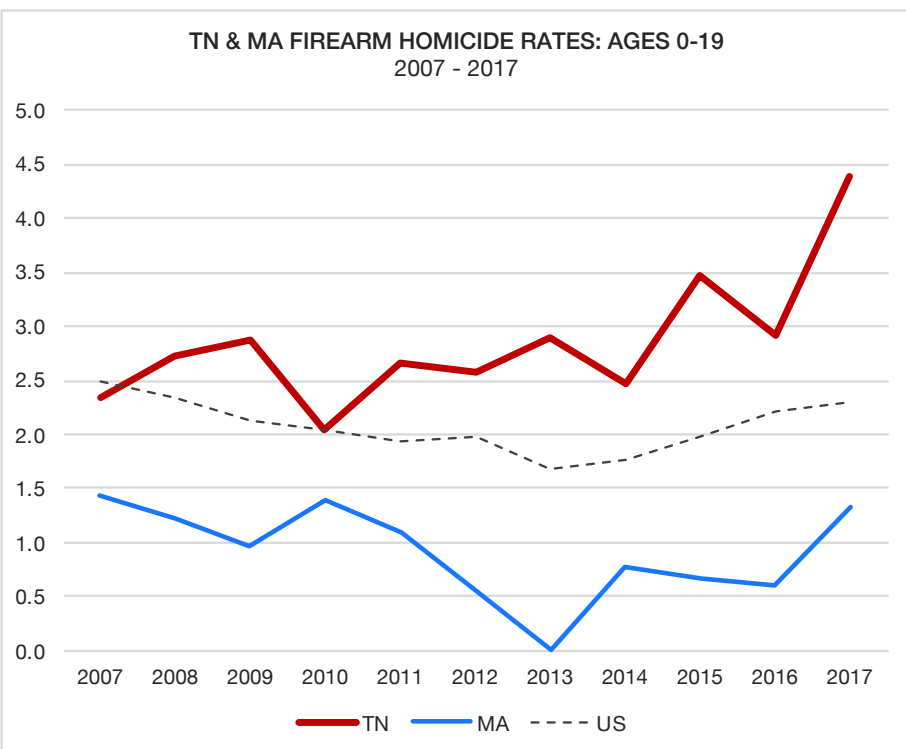
Rates are per 100,000 people



**TN & MA FIREARM HOMICIDES RATES: AGES 0-19**

Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	2.34	1.45	2.49
2008	2.71	1.23	2.33
2009	2.88	0.97	2.12
2010	2.03	1.40	2.04
2011	2.66	1.09	1.93
2012	2.57	0.55	1.97
2013	2.89	- - -	1.68
2014	2.47	0.78	1.76
2015	3.48	0.66	1.97
2016	2.92	0.61	2.21
2017	4.39	1.34	2.30

Rates are per 100,000 people



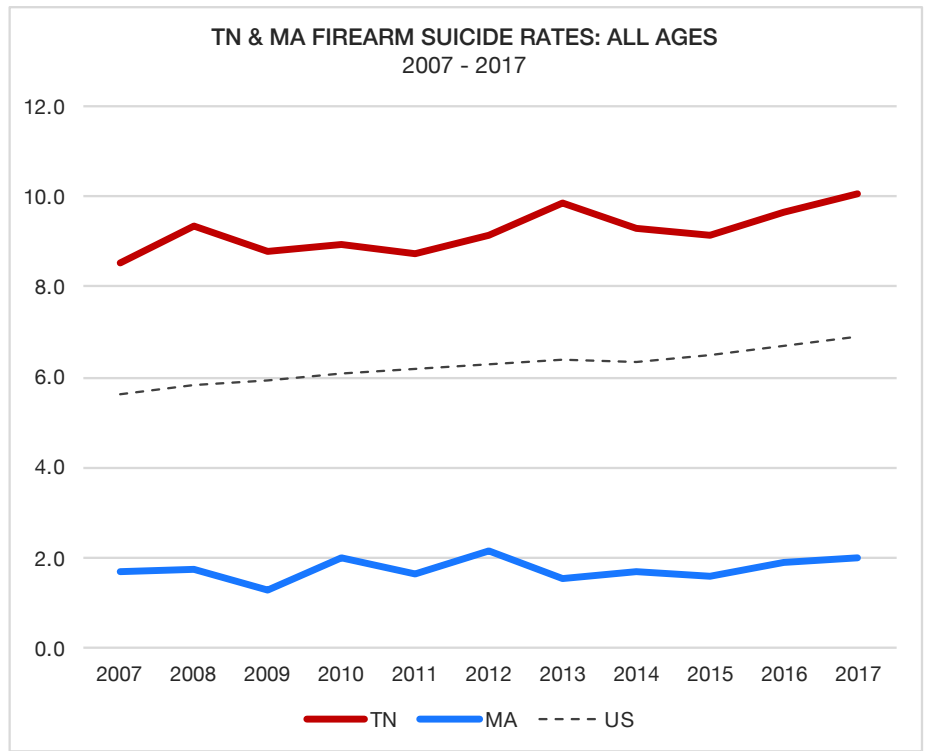
*In 2013, MA logged so few firearm homicides for ages 0-19 that they were not included in the CDC data.*

**Massachusetts** had so few firearm suicides involving ages 0-19 between 2007 and 2017 that they were not included in the CDC data, while Tennessee's rate of firearm suicides in the same age group more than doubled, with the largest increases in the last few years

- The firearm suicide rate in Tennessee for all ages is *over five times higher* than Massachusetts.
- Between 2007 and 2017, firearm suicide in Tennessee increased 15 percent for all ages and 55 percent for ages 0-19. Over the same time, firearm suicides in Massachusetts increased by 16 percent for all ages. There were too few firearm suicides in the 0-19 age group to be logged by the CDC.

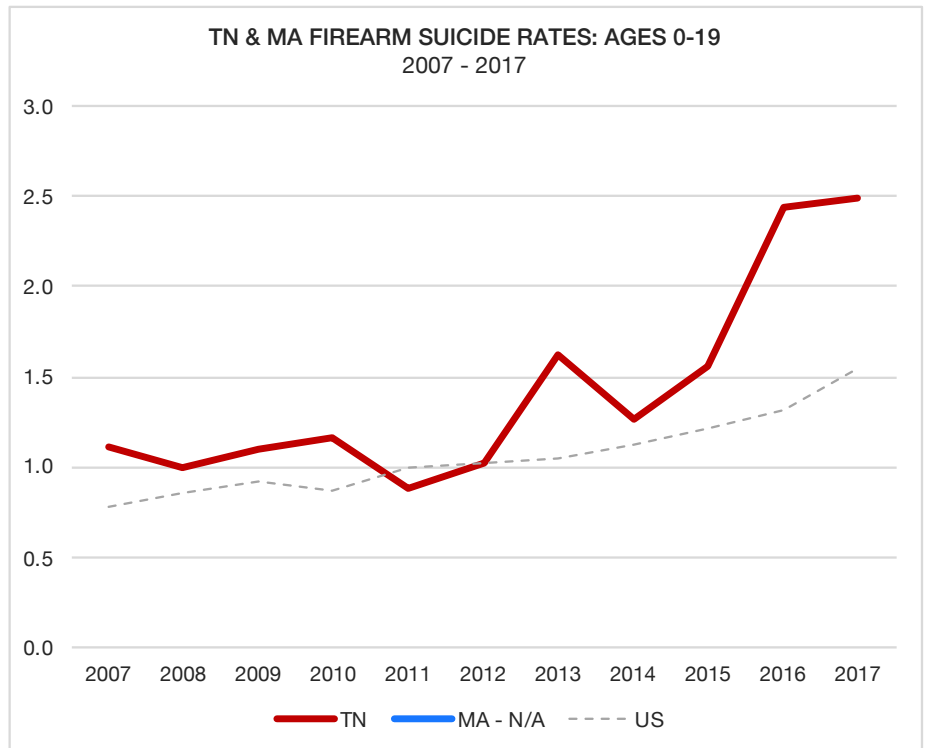
TN & MA FIREARM SUICIDE RATES: ALL AGES			
Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	8.55	1.68	5.63
2008	9.36	1.72	5.82
2009	8.81	1.28	5.91
2010	8.93	2.01	6.06
2011	8.73	1.61	6.16
2012	9.14	2.14	6.29
2013	9.86	1.55	6.38
2014	9.32	1.71	6.36
2015	9.14	1.59	6.49
2016	9.67	1.88	6.71
2017	10.04	2.00	6.92

Rates are per 100,000 people



TN & MA FIREARM SUICIDE RATES: AGES 0-19			
Year	TN Rate	MA Rate	US Rate
2007	1.12	N/A	0.78
2008	1.00	N/A	0.85
2009	1.10	N/A	0.91
2010	1.16	N/A	0.86
2011	0.88	N/A	0.99
2012	1.02	N/A	1.02
2013	1.63	N/A	1.05
2014	1.27	N/A	1.12
2015	1.56	N/A	1.22
2016	2.44	N/A	1.32
2017	2.49	N/A	1.55

Rates are per 100,000 people



Between 2007 -2017, there were so few firearm suicides for ages 0-19 that they were not included in the CDC data.



Based on this data, Safe Tennessee urges lawmakers to consider the following policies:

- Expanded background checks to private sales
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs), commonly known as "red flag laws"
- MaKayla's Law, child access prevention legislation
- Stronger firearm dispossession laws for convicted domestic abusers
- Safe storage laws requiring guns to be secured in locked vehicles to prevent gun theft
- Funding community groups and violence interrupters working in communities most impacted by gun violence
- Funding for "safe storage" PSAs to address not only unintentional shootings involving minors, but also tween and teen firearm suicides
- Funding for research to study key drivers of gun violence in Tennessee

For more information, please visit [safetennesseeproject.org](https://safetennesseeproject.org)



*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world;  
indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.  
- Margaret Meade*