

Poll reveals majority of young people considering gun ownership

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Despite experiencing a post-Columbine world, 60 percent of high school and college students are considering owning a gun in the future, according to a national poll.

One-third of young people reported growing up with a [gun](#) in the household and 36 percent reported being "very worried" about [gun violence](#). However, nearly 40 percent of participants planned to own a gun when they have their own household, and an additional 20 percent were contemplating it.

"I think the major contribution of the [poll results](#) is to demonstrate that now is certainly the time to have a serious conversation about gun

control since the next generation is no less likely to plan to own guns," said AU professor Jennifer L. Lawless.

Lawless, director of AU's Women and Politics Institute, and Loyola Marymount University professor Richard L. Fox conducted the poll of 4,000 high school and college students.

The findings come at a time of high-level discussions surrounding new gun legislation by a House Democratic task force led by Vice President [Joe Biden](#).

In the wake of the Dec. 14 elementary school shooting massacre in Newtown, Conn., President [Barack Obama](#) pledged to push Congress on legislation to prevent more [mass shootings](#).

Key findings from the poll of high school and college students:

- About 50 percent of young people who self-identify as "depressed," "stressed out," and/or have "difficulty making friends" plan to have a gun in their household.
- High school students who regularly play video games for more than 4 hours per day are 50 percent more likely than those who do not typically play video games to report plans to own a gun. The results are similar among college students.
- Girls and young women (40 percent) are more likely than their male counterparts (32 percent) to fear gun violence and less likely to report planning to own a gun in the future.
- Democrats are nearly twice as likely as Republicans to fear gun violence (45 percent compared to 25 percent) and less likely to report planning on owning a gun in the future.
- Half of black respondents fear gun violence, compared to only 31 percent of white respondents. Blacks are less likely than

whites to report planning on owning a gun in the future.

The results are based on a national sample of 2,100 college students (ages 18 through 25) and 2,166 [high school students](#) (ages 13 through 17). The poll, conducted by American University / Gfk Custom Research LLC, was in the field from September 27—October 16, 2012, and has a margin of error of +/- 2.2 percentage points.

Provided by American University

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