

Assault Weapons Bans

OVERVIEW

The federal assault weapons ban, which prohibited the sale and manufacture of certain military-style semiautomatic weapons and high capacity magazines in the US, expired in 2004. Despite AAP advocacy to restore the ban, efforts have languished in Congress. Meanwhile, states have enacted their own bans on assault weapons along with high-capacity detachable magazines—typically defined as those which hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition at a time.

Massachusetts recently became the first state to ban bump stocks, which are trigger accelerating devices that can be attached to semiautomatic weapons to increase firing speed. The assailant in the October 2017 Las Vegas concert shooting used the device to kill and injure countless concert-goers. Generally considered as novelty devices by gun owners, both sides of the gun violence debate have called for bans on bump stocks.

AAP POSITION

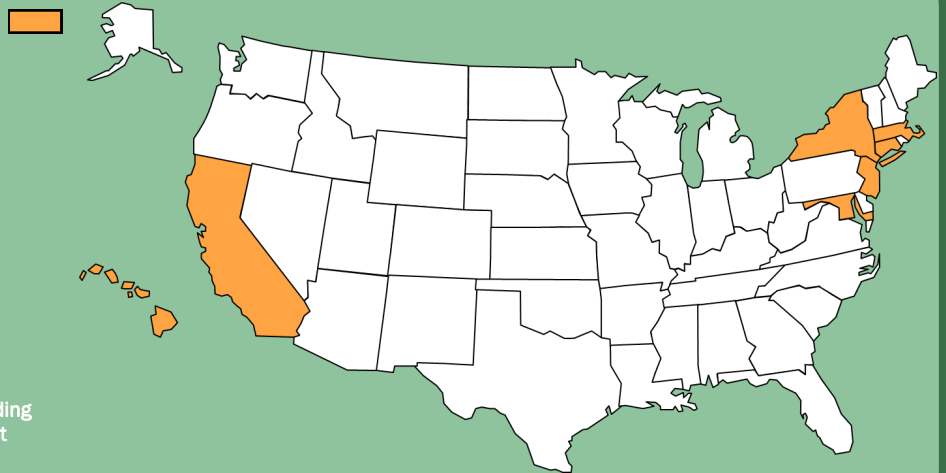
- The AAP is committed to protecting children from firearm-related injury and violence.
- The absence of guns in homes and communities is the most reliable and effective measure to prevent firearm-related injury and violence in children and adolescents.
- To prevent gun-related death and injuries, the AAP recommends that pediatricians provide firearm safety counseling to patients and their families.
- Recognizing the deadly consequences of firearms to children, adolescents, and young adults, the AAP supports firearm regulation, including a ban on assault weapons and high capacity magazine sales, as an effective strategy to reduce firearm-related injuries.

FACTS

- Assault weapons are dangerous, military-style guns that are built to do the most damage and kill or maim the maximum number of people in the shortest amount of time.
- Assault weapons are distinguishable from other semiautomatic firearms based on the combat-style features that allow a shooter to control the weapon while quickly discharging large amounts of ammunition.
- The public supports banning assault weapons. A 2013 Johns Hopkins University poll found 69% of respondents support a ban on the sale of military-style assault rifles, and 68.4% support a ban on the sale of large-capacity ammunition feeding devices capable of accepting more than 10 rounds.
- A growing number of retailers, including Walmart, have discontinued sales of assault weapons and high-capacity magazines.

PROGRESS

- 7 states and DC— laws banning assault weapons



For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact AAP State Advocacy at stgov@aap.org

MORE

- [AAP Policy—Firearm-Related Injuries in the Pediatric Population](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full>
- [AAP Division of State Government Affairs—State Gun Safety Laws](http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf)—<http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/GunSafetyLaws.pdf>
- [Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence](http://www.bradycampaign.org)—www.bradycampaign.org
- [Children’s Defense Fund \(CDF\)—Protect Children, Not Guns](http://www.childrensdefense.org/campaigns/protect-children-not-guns)—www.childrensdefense.org/campaigns/protect-children-not-guns
- [Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence](http://lawcenter.giffords.org)—<http://lawcenter.giffords.org>
- [Everytown for Gun Safety](http://www.everytown.org)—www.everytown.org