

CONSIDER ASKING A PARENT BEFORE READING. THIS TOPIC IS UPSETTING.

# 'YOU HAVE TO WORRY: ARE YOU GOING TO MAKE IT HOME SAFELY?'

KIDS ARE WORRIED ABOUT GUN VIOLENCE, AND IT'S HURTING THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

BY CHRISTINA CARON

**JURNEE GARNER**

NEVER HAD a chance to meet her cousin John, who lived right around the corner. He was shot and killed when he was 18, shortly before Jurnee was born.

"It made a huge impact on our lives," says Jurnee, 14, who lives in north Philadelphia. Her family brings flowers and balloons to John's grave every year.

Gun violence has plagued Philadelphia, reaching historically high levels in recent years. It's scary to hear about all the shootings, Jurnee says, remembering a recent one at the convenience store where her family shops. "You have to worry: Are you going to make it home safely?" she says. "Are you going to make it back home to your family?"

Because gun violence is so common in the United States, millions upon millions of American kids grow up being very aware of the possibility of a shooting. And they can have a tough time no matter where the threat shows up in their lives, says Dr. Aradhana Bela Sood, a professor of psychiatry and pediatrics at Virginia Commonwealth University. Sometimes it's hearing about tragic events in the news, or seeing violence closer to home. Sometimes it is because of having to practice active-shooter drills in school.

Anika Navarro, 10, of Concord, Calif., says she often imagines someone coming to her school with a gun. The active shooter drills freak her out. "One time I remember I was sitting in the corner, and I

heard sniffing — the sniffing when someone feels like they need to cry," she says. When she was younger she wanted to cry during the drills, too.

Dr. Dorothy Johnson-Speight, who leads an organization for families affected by gun violence, says the stress is even bigger on kids who live in areas where shootings are common. "It's constantly living in fear," she says, which causes stress, depression and anxiety.

As for Jurnee, when it comes to her neighborhood shootings, she says, "there's not much we can do about it." So she tries to focus on her family and her future more than the violence that surrounds her. Lately she has been thinking seriously about becoming a pediatrician. That way she can help kids — and hopefully, she says, someday move to a safer area. ♦

DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS FINALLY AGREE ON A NEW LAW

BY STEPHANIE LAI AND EMILY COCHRANE

IN THE DAYS and weeks following a mass shooting, people often argue about how to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous people. After two such shootings in May — when 10 people were killed in a Buffalo supermarket and 10 days later, 19 kids were killed at school in Uvalde, Texas — Congress passed the first big gun-safety law in decades.

The law is called the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, and it was written by a small group of Republicans and Democrats. The two parties disagree about how to control gun violence, so it was a big deal that they came together to pass the bill, even though they made many compromises in the process.

Here are three things the bill does, and some things it doesn't.

**IT REQUIRES THE GOVERNMENT TO RESEARCH ANYONE UNDER 21 BEFORE THEY CAN BUY A GUN.** If the person has a juvenile criminal record or a history of mental health issues that shows they might want to hurt people, they can't buy a gun. Democrats wanted to ban anyone under 21 from buying a semiautomatic weapon (a superpowerful gun that has been used in many mass shootings), but that was left out of the final bill.

**IT ENCOURAGES STATES TO TAKE GUNS AWAY FROM PEOPLE WHO MIGHT BE DANGEROUS.** The bill gives money to states with intervention programs, including laws that allow them to temporarily take guns from people whose behavior is concerning. But it doesn't create a federal law that applies to the whole country.

**IT SETS ASIDE BILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR MENTAL-HEALTH AND SCHOOL-SAFETY PROGRAMS.** Both parties feel strongly that addressing mental health will help curb gun violence. The money will help train teachers and counselors on how to respond to students who are having issues. Republicans insisted that some of it also go to beefing up school security.

President Biden signed the bill into law on June 25. Although some politicians and advocates are disappointed with the cuts that were made, the bill's authors believe it will save lives. ♦

## ONLY IN AMERICA WHY DON'T OTHER COUNTRIES HAVE THIS PROBLEM?

BY AMANDA SCHUPAK · ILLUSTRATION BY STORYTK

People often say that gun violence is an American problem. What makes shootings so common in the United States? There are lots of reasons, but one thing is clear: "More guns in people's hands leads to more deaths," says David Hemenway, who researches gun violence at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. "Overall, fewer guns and stronger gun laws are a recipe for saving lots of lives," he adds. Compared with similar countries around the world, the United States has a lot more guns — and a lot more gun violence. Here's a look at the numbers.



**POPULATION AND NUMBER OF GUNS IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

In most countries, there are very few guns compared with how many people live there.

IN THE GRAPHIC ABOVE, you can see the names of 36 developed countries on the left. A developed country is one where people generally have more money, freedom and a better quality of life. For each country there are two bars. The white one shows how many people live there. The red one shows the total number of guns those people own (it doesn't count police or military weapons). As you can see, there are many, many more guns in the United States than anywhere else. In fact, it is the only country where there are more guns than people.

**KEY** — Number of people  
— Number of guns