

## **Toys Get Banned | Guns Still Stand**

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A toy with a sharp edge that cuts a child? Immediate recall. Guns that kill children? Still being sold. This severe contrast highlights a troubling inconsistency in how we regulate safety hazards in society today. The *MinnPost* article, “We recall toys that injure kids, but not guns that kill them”, by Rachel Weigert (2025), argues that while toys are being recalled for abnormally minor causes, guns, which are the leading cause of death for children ages 1-17 in the United States, face little to no regulation. Nine children’s story players from the United States of America and the United Kingdom, overheated and melted, causing the company to recall over 250,000 units. Yet, guns, responsible for thousands of children’s deaths annually remain widely available without strict safety requirements from the public. With firearms as the leading cause of death for children and no legal requirements for their safe storage, urgent action is necessary to prevent more tragedies. I agree with Weigert that policymakers claim they prioritize public safety but fail to implement necessary firearm regulations. If we can enforce strict recalls on children’s toys, there is no excuse for failing to apply stronger protections to firearms and prevent unnecessary, disastrous deaths.

The media is quick to report on toys that caused minor injuries, yet society has not shown the same urgency when it comes to addressing the leading cause of child death: firearms. According to Weigert, recently, a “finger-trapping” toy went viral, outraging people around the world. Meanwhile, firearms being the number one cause of death for children ages 1-17 in the U.S. for over 5 years already, barely makes the same headlines. I believe that there should be more emphasis on scenarios where children are dying, over situations where children are merely getting their fingers “stuck”. Knowing these statistics, I am sure many people would agree with that statement. According to the report used from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (2024), we see that gun death rates among children ages 1 to 17, have increased by 106

percent since 2013, and remain the leading cause of death among this age range since 2020. The report also states that there is an exponential difference between Black and White children/teenagers. The gun death rate among Black children and teenagers was 18 times higher than that of White children and teenagers. Gun homicide rates rose 5.6 percent from the years 2021 to 2022, and suicide rates among older teens and emerging adults increased by 24 percent over the years, surpassing the gun suicide rates of White teens for the first time.

Adding on to Rachel's argument, the statistics in this report makes it clear: society prioritizes minor issues over more urgent ones. The statistics highlighted in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health report, paints a disturbing picture of the gun rates among children and teens, especially Black children and teens. This clearly shows how the media has failed to cover topics such as these, and how society is more focused on media that is completely irrelevant to more serious issues that are claiming the lives of our children. The 106% increase in gun deaths is a clear indicator that our attention is misplaced. The gun suicide rates should lead us more towards the direction of mental health foundation care and focus. According to Swanson, W. J., et al. (2015), mental health has a strong impact on increased gun rates, which is also over half of firearm related deaths in the United States. The increased homicide rates should serve as a wake-up call to enforce stronger safety measures and education on firearms. Yet, this critical issue is overshadowed by less important/urgent topics. Rachel Weigert's argument highlights this issue, where society focuses on these less consequential topics, rather than the real dangers that target our children. With the alarming statistics, Rachel pushes for advocacy on the safety and well-being of our children.

In addition, Rachel Weigert states that if we treat firearms like any other objects in our

house, we are failing to ensure safety among our children. Firearms are not legally required to be sold with locks/safes, stored away safely, and no mechanism in which the owner only has access to the firearms. The famous firearm company, Glock, also states that they do not carry the responsibility to prevent people from misusing their products and will not be taking action to make their pistols more difficult to modify. Even though people commonly print 3D “switches” to make those pistol turn automatic, Glock still insists that it is not possible to make it more difficult to modify. According to Everytown Research & Policy (2025), the ATF (Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives) recovered 5454 devices that modified guns, including Glock switches between the years of 2017 and 2021. This is a 570% increase from the previous 5 years. These gun conversion devices are completely illegal to own, manufacture, or sell. They have also been found in many tragic crime scenes all across the country. With all the firearm producers knowing this, why could they not put more research into finding ways to make it more difficult to modify, saving the lives of many more children? According to another study done by Wilson et al. (2023), approximately one half of all unintentional firearms injury deaths of children take place at their homes. They are often found showing the firearms to someone else or playing with them. The firearms were mostly found unlocked, fully loaded, and near sleeping areas like nightstands. This is such a tragic calamity, yet we still have no law demanding firearms to be sold with locks/safes, stored securely, or mechanisms to which the owner only has access.

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children and teenagers ages 1-17, yet firearms are not legally required to be sold with locks, safes, or anything to keep it so the owner is the only one who can use it. How can society shift their attention towards toys that merely injure children, while overlooking the much greater danger of firearms on children. Reflecting on the

gifts you gave the past years, know that because society cares more about toy safety rather than gun safety, 5151 children and teenagers who were shot in 2024 could not come home to their families, Brownlee, C. (2024, December 31). The families who waited for their children to open presents, joy filling the air. So, the next time you see someone complaining about a toy, remember that society cares more about that toy than the greater safety of our children. It is our responsibility to advocate for new laws on firearm regulation. A very strong contender would be firearm regulation in households. Enforcing this law in every state would reduce unintentional firearm injuries by 85% according to Everytown Research & Policy (2025). No child should ever be at risk or fear of losing their lives to firearms. It is time to prioritize the safety of our children, our successors and the people who will rule the next generation.

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