ENDING GENDER VIOLENCE

GUN VIOLENCE AND HATE CRIMES

CAPSULE FOUR | **SECTION FOUR** | **NOVEMBER 9H - NOVEMBER 22ND 2026**

OVERVIEW

The two-prong focus for our fourth capsule, Ending Gender Violence, is hate crimes and gun violence. Hate crimes are defined by the FBI as "a criminal offense against a person or property motivated in whole or part by an offender's bias". Gun violence is the destruction and death by the use of firearms.

NOW vehemently condemns both hate crimes and gun violence and continually highlights their intersection with violence against women. According to the Harvard Law Review, guns were involved in 57% of women's domestic violence deaths.

FOUNDATIONS

Hate crimes are speech and action that aim to vilify, humiliate, or incite hatred against a specific group. The issue of hate crimes has been brought to the Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) numerous times. Ultimately, the Court has set precedent that hate speech can only be criminalized if it directly incites criminal activity or specific threats of violence. Since the 1990s, NOW has pushed to include gender in the classification of hate crimes, stating that "sexual violence is a tool to sustain the systemic subordination of women within society".

People often overlook gender in discussing hate crimes when, in reality, gender bias often leads to hate crimes. Reorienting the classification of hate crimes to include gender will help end the rhetoric that victims are somehow responsible for violence and that they are at fault.

Gun violence is linked directly to hate crimes, as hatred fuels the person behind the gun. Mass shooters often have a history of gender-based violence and cite hatred for women as motivation for targeted attacks. 46% of mass shooters also shot a former partner or family member in connection to their rampage.

In addition, gun violence has been statistically linked to domestic violence. Women whose partners own guns are five times more likely to be killed by a gun. Every month, an average of 70 women are shot and killed by an intimate partner. The intersection of domestic violence and gun violence reveals a devastating reality: 6 million women have reported that an intimate partner has used a gun against them. Clearly, women are at the center of a Venn diagram of two public health crises: gun violence and domestic violence.

NOW stands with women everywhere and calls for immediate and sweeping state and federal responses to both hate crimes and gun violence.

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ACHIEVEMENTS

- NOW has been a leader since the 1990s in calling out and condemning hate crimes and hate speech.
- NOW supports state and federal legislation to condemn hate crimes and promote gun safety.
- NOW continues to encourage candid conversations about violence against women and its intersection with other crises.

LEGISLATION

Advocates face an uphill battle to pass comprehensive legislation regarding hate crimes and gun violence. Both topics have remained contentious in Congress for decades, but NOW will continue to support legislation such as:

- S.937: "COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act" → Expands multi-language reporting tools, expediting justice department reviews and providing grants for data collection.
- S.1086: "Jabara-Heyer NO HATE Act" → Authorizes additional penalties for hate crime offenses.
- H.R.4339: "End Racial Profiling Act of 2019" → Sets up a framework to eliminate racial profiling on federal, state, and local levels.
- S. 3508: "ARMAS Act of 2025" → Shifts regulatory control over certain U.S. arms exports to strengthen monitoring and reduce illegal trafficking of firearms.
- S. 1531: "Assault Weapons Ban of 2025" → <Makes it a crime to knowingly import, sell, manufacture, transfer, and/or process a semiautomatic weapon.
- S. 726: "Ethan's Law" → Creates a framework for regulatory practices in safely storing firearms on residential premises.
- S. 1955: "Equal Access to Justice for Victims of Gun Violence Act" → Removes the federal protections for gun manufacturers from civil lawsuits when crimes are committed with their products. Gun violence victims would then be able to sue gun manufacturers.

TODAY

Hate crimes and gun violence continue to be public health crises across the nation. NOW stands with women in their fight for a safer future. As control of Congress shifts following the 2026 midterm elections, NOW will continue to pressure public officials to fight for equality and justice for all.

Research shows that federal and state policies can disrupt abusers' access to guns and save countless lives. It is time to enact stricter laws to protect women everywhere.