This virtual event was held on April 1, 2021. The panel discussion centered on the interplay between federal, state, and local gun laws, which types of laws have a causal effect on gun violence, and the extent to which laws can promote successful intervention in our communities.

We were joined by panelists Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, Dr. Cassandra Crifasi, Ms. Jacquelyn Santiago, and UConn President Thomas Katsouleas, UConn Provost Carl Lejuez, moderator Mr. Alan Bennett, and participants Representative Jillian Gilchrest, Professor Kiel Brennan–Marquez (UConn Law), Dr. Caitlin Elseser (UConn School of Social Work), Ms. Cassandra Devaney, and Mr. John Monet

You can view the full panel discussion [here](#). We have also highlighted various topics that can be found at the times below:

1. Hear Senator Chris Murphy discuss current state gun laws that had an immediate impact on gun violence (16:55).
2. Hear Dr. Cassandra Crifasi discuss public opinion polling on evidence-based policy solutions, including background checks, purchaser licensing, and extreme risk protection orders (21:25).
3. Hear Jacquelyn Santiago respond to Representative Gilchrest’s question about what the legislature can do to prevent or reduce state gun violence in local communities (32:52).
4. Hear Dr. Crifasi respond to a question about gun lobbying groups’ effect on firearm legislation (46:17).
5. Hear Senator Blumenthal respond to a question about how the legislature can address gun control measures without running afoul of the Second Amendment (50:20).
6. Hear the Senators give their views on the future of PLCAA (59:45).

**Summary of Panelist Remarks:**

**Senator Blumenthal**

Senator Blumenthal discussed how the current political landscape has changed its attitude toward gun violence and shifted towards a greater desire for gun control measures. The current President, House of Representatives, and public are more committed than ever before to decreasing gun violence. He believes that this shift, coupled with gun lobbies losing significant power and control, will allow the government to see more success in passing gun control legislation, on both the state and federal level.
Senator Murphy
Senator Murphy discussed the need to not only address gun violence and prevention measures, but also the factors that contribute to violence in the United States, such as poverty and racism. He acknowledged the unique opportunity that is afforded to gun control advocates with the changed political landscape but emphasized the need to tackle the issues that drive violence in America if the country wants to see tangible and lasting change. He believes solving underlying issues that are inextricably linked to gun violence will ultimately help decrease the level of gun violence overall.

Dr. Cassandra Crifasi
Dr. Cassandra Crifasi discussed her research on gun violence and prevention through public opinion polling on evidence based gun policies. Polling a large sample of citizens, including an over sampling of gun owners, allowed her to better understand which gun policies work and which policies have the greatest support. Dr. Crifasi focused her discussion on three main gun policies and their corresponding polling numbers: (1) background checks for all gun sales; (2) purchaser licensing; and (3) extreme risk protection orders.

Ms. Jacquelyn Santiago
Ms. Jacquelyn Santiago discussed how gun violence impacts high risk youth in the greater Hartford area and how the COMPASS organization helps these individuals navigate their experiences with gun violence. She highlighted the work being done in the Hartford community that focuses on creating a safer environment for young people and the important role the peace builders play in the lives of the youths, guiding them through the chaos and violence and giving them tools to help them make better decisions throughout their lives. COMPASS has an active role in reducing gun violence by offering consistent and reliable support to the youth and involving itself in the community directly to support those with the greatest need.

Further Reading:

Books:


**Scholarly Articles:**


**Podcasts:**

NPR. Guns In America: A Loaded Relationship. [Link](#)
- All Things Considered looks at Americans’ varied relationship with guns in this special series.

NPR: No Compromise. [Link](#)
- The podcast series tells the story of three brothers who are determined to change gun politics. Ben, Chris, and Aaron Dorr are carving out a space to the right of the NRA and the GOP.

Red, Blue, and Brady. [Link](#)
- “Red, Blue, and Brady discusses current events and shares personal narratives in its exploration of America's epidemic of firearm woundings and deaths.”

**Relevant Statistics & Further Information**

- Giffords: Courage to Fight Gun Violence. [Link](#)
- 7 Facts About Guns in the US. [Link](#)
- Rockefeller Institute of Government: Gun Violence in the United States. [Link](#)
- Brady Center: United Against Gun Violence. [Link](#)
- Gun Violence Archive: Number of Gun Deaths in 2021. [Link](#)