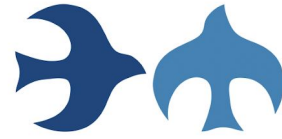


Denver Accord

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

Presented by GVPedia



The Denver Accord is a comprehensive gun violence prevention platform, led by GVPedia and supported by more than 40 organizations nationally, designed to guide policymakers' efforts to reduce gun violence in the United States. It combines best practices from across the country with evidence-based research to create a comprehensive and effective set of policies and programs intended to stop the scourge of gun violence.

The Denver Accord includes four guiding principles and nine policy positions that, working in conjunction with each other, will stem the epidemic. There is no single solution to gun violence in America but it is clear that more guns do not make people safer. It is a multifaceted problem that requires a comprehensive solution.

The Denver Accord Part 9: *Police Reform*

Community Based Policing:

- Fund incentives for community-based policing and programs.
- Shift away from "Broken Window Theory" policing.

Safety:

- Develop additional non-lethal tools police can deploy instead of a firearm.
- Require the reporting of lost or stolen service weapons to ensure accountability.

Education:

- De-escalation training for law enforcement and School Resource Officers in schools.
- Train police officers in active shooter drills that are not held in the presence of students where child trauma can occur.
- Allow for diversion of School Resource Officer funding to student mental health resources where deemed appropriate by local leaders.
- Mandate and increase already existing levels of implicit bias training.

Accountability:

- Fund and use body cameras.
- Develop standards to ensure accurate data collection on police-involved shootings.
- Mandate and fund law enforcement collection and analysis of firearm-related ballistic and trace evidence.
- Raise legal standards for justifiable use of lethal force.

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act ([HR 7120](#))

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act addresses police reform and gun violence reduction. The bill was introduced on June 8, 2020 by Congresswoman Karen Bass [D-CA-27] and passed in the House on June 25, 2020.

Led by GVPedia, the Denver Accord is supported by more than 40 gun violence prevention organizations nationwide. Learn more about the Denver Accord at www.GVPedia.org.

Community Based Policing

Fund incentives for community-based policing and programs.

- Community policing encourages officers to [build working partnerships](#)¹ with local citizens to address the root causes of crime and promote security.
- Many different types of problem-solving and community-based policing initiatives exist, but they all share a few common key components: [organizational transformation](#)², community partnership, and problem solving to reduce and prevent crime.
- Long-term success of community policing programs requires evaluating law enforcement employees on their problem-solving abilities and [rewarding officers who successfully collaborate](#)³ with the community.
- A [2019 study](#)⁴ found that community-oriented policing and its emphasis on positive contact between police and community members improves residents' attitudes toward police and their willingness to cooperate. Police legitimacy and willingness to cooperate are vital to prevent and solve shootings because the criminal justice system relies on individuals coming forward and witnesses testifying in court.
- In 2013, Camden, New Jersey dissolved the local police department and signed an agreement for the county to provide shared services. According to Scott Thomson, Camden chief of police until 2019, "A majority of the police were rehired, but each had to complete a 50-page application, retake psychological testing and go through an interview process." Homicides decreased from 67 in 2012 to 25 in 2019. Excessive-force complaints decreased from 65 in 2012 to three last year. ([NPR](#))⁵

Shift away from "Broken Window Theory" policing.

- An influential [1982 Atlantic article](#)⁶ by George Kelling and James Q. Wilson argued that public incivilities such as graffiti and broken windows can lead to a "criminal invasion" because potential offenders will assume that the residents don't care about the neighborhood and don't want to get involved.
 - The article became the basis of the "Broken Windows Theory" of policing which is [still being used by the NYPD](#)⁷ and police departments across the country. In practice, broken windows policing has taken the form of aggressive zero-tolerance enforcement of low-level misdemeanors in communities of color.
 - "Broken Windows Theory" argues that targeting minor disorder will reduce more serious crime, but research shows that [social disorder and crime](#)⁸ stem from the same sources, especially concentrated poverty and low collective efficacy.
 - Other [researchers](#)⁹ have debunked the "Broken Windows Theory" which argues that a direct relationship exists between [minor disorder](#)¹⁰ and [serious crime](#)¹¹ or [health outcomes](#)¹².
 - A [2020 Washington Post article](#)¹³ argues that Kelling and Wilson misrepresented the 1969 study by Philip G. Zimbardo that served as a foundation for their theory. There is also a disconnect between [proactive policing practices](#)¹⁴ that are supported by research and how proactive policing is deployed in communities.
 - A 2019 study found that aggressive "Broken Windows" policing [harmed educational performance](#)¹⁵ of young African-American men and added to inequality of economic outcomes.
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Safety

Develop additional non-lethal tools police can deploy instead of a firearm.

While non-lethal means are important, they can still be heavily abused, causing grievous injury and even death. It is essential that such tools are combined with proper training and police doctrine that minimizes their aggressive use.

- Common alternatives to firearms include tasers, nightsticks, and pepper spray. These items are available to law enforcement intended to help the officer gain control of a subject. [Less-lethal bullets](#)¹⁶ are also available to law enforcement, including guns that fire plastic bullets, pepper rounds, bean bags, rubber balls, and a long-range, wireless version of a taser.
- Both a [2009 study](#)¹⁷ and a 2010 [report](#)¹⁸ to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) found that the use of less-lethal technologies when establishing control over a situation led to a significant reduction in police officer and suspect injuries.
- A 2017 Reuters investigation identified [1,005 people who died](#)¹⁹ in the US after being tased by police from 1983 to July 2017. In most of these cases, tasers were only one of several types of force used, but Reuters documented 153 cases where the coroner or medical examiner cited a Taser as a cause of death or a contributing factor in the death.
- Another [NIJ report](#)²⁰ found that repeated or continuous exposure to a CED, such as a taser, increases the likelihood of death and may not improve compliance.
- A 2018 article identified a [generational gap](#)²¹ in how police officers view tasers, with younger officers more likely to resort to the device before using verbal skills to de-escalate situations.
- As less-lethal alternatives have grown in use, organizations such as [Amnesty International](#)²² and the [American Civil Liberties Union](#)²³ have raised concerns about [adequate training](#)²⁴ policies and the [human rights impacts](#)²⁵ of the weapons.

Require the reporting of lost or stolen service weapons to ensure accountability.

A 2018 investigation by *The Trace* found that over 100 law enforcement agencies reported the theft or loss of at least [1,781 guns over ten years](#)²⁶. This is not comprehensive because not all officers and agencies report lost and stolen guns.

- Requiring law enforcement professionals to report lost and stolen firearms will increase accountability and decrease the likelihood that the stolen gun will be used during a murder or other violent crime.
- Between 2014 and 2017, twenty-six [ATF weapons](#)²⁷ were lost, stolen, or missing according to a 2018 Justice Department's Office of Inspector General report.
- In 2019, Congressman Mark DeSaulnier (CA-11) reintroduced [HR 3420](#)²⁸, the [Federal Law Enforcement and Public Protection Act](#)²⁹, which would establish minimum requirements for federal law enforcement to safely store their weapons when not in use.

Education

De-escalation training for law enforcement and School Resource Officers in schools.

The [National Consensus Policy](#)³⁰ defines police de-escalation as "taking action or communicating verbally or non-verbally during a potential force encounter in an attempt to stabilize the situation and reduce the immediacy of the threat so that more time, options, and resources can be called upon to resolve the situation without the use of force or with a reduction in the force necessary."

- According to the [Washington Post](#)³¹ police shooting database, nearly 1,000 people are fatally shot by law enforcement each year.
- A [2018 study](#)³² found that one in four individuals fatally shot by police were experiencing a mental health crisis.

- The 2015 Final Report of the President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing recommends law enforcement [emphasize de-escalation](#)³³ and alternatives to arrest during use of force training.
- Police departments in cities such as Philadelphia and Los Angeles [reward officers for defusing conflicts](#)³⁴ without using a gun or other weapon.
- De-escalation training is taught in police academies across the country, but the research is still limited. A [systematic review](#)³⁵ identified 64 de-escalation training evaluations, but could not reach a conclusion because studies measured different outcomes and many research designs were of questionable quality.
- The combination of the opioid crisis and lack of behavioral health services means police are frequently encountering people experiencing a mental health crisis, but might lack the knowledge and training to de-escalate these situations.
- [Crisis Intervention Team \(CIT\)](#)³⁶ programs involve a partnership between law enforcement and mental health professionals to connect individuals in crisis with mental health treatment rather than involve them with the criminal justice system. It aims to promote the safety of individuals in crisis as well as law enforcement.
- Research shows that [CIT trainings](#)³⁷ produce significant changes in [police officers' knowledge](#)³⁸ and perception of individuals suffering from a mental health crisis, but more research is needed to conclude if the de-escalation trainings lead to fewer police-involved shootings.
- A [2018 review of 25 studies](#)³⁷ on Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training was unable to declare the de-escalation program effective because of inadequate data and focus on varying outcomes. Some research supports that CIT deployment is associated with [fewer arrests](#)³⁷ and more referrals to mental health units.
- A promising approach used in [Eugene, Oregon](#)³⁹ involves alternatives to calling 911 when an incident involves an individual experiencing a mental health crisis. Rather than law enforcement responding, these calls can be answered by mental-health experts and crisis workers.
- As part of an initiative to build community trust between police and the community, [Stockton changed its de-escalation protocols](#)⁴⁰, required mental health training for police, and included procedural justice principles in its rules for conduct. An evaluation by the [Urban Institute](#)⁴¹ found that officer-involved shootings in Stockton dropped 80%, the homicide clearance rate climbed from 40% in 2017 to 66% in 2018, and citizen perceptions of police improved.
- Many schools have responded to high-profile school shootings by having armed School Resource Officers (SROs) or other school-based law enforcement. An estimated [43% of public schools](#)⁴² have an armed security staff member.
- A [2019 ACLU report](#)⁴⁴ estimates that 14 million students attend US schools with police but no counselor, nurse, psychologist, or social worker.
- There is [no rigorous evidence](#)⁴⁵ to suggest that armed guards [deter school shootings](#)⁴⁶. Just as there is [anecdotal](#)⁴⁷ evidence that SROs can stop a school shooting, there are [four examples from 2018](#)⁴⁸ where armed guards failed to stop school shootings, including Parkland.
- More police and guns in schools pose additional risks, including more guns [accessible to children](#)⁴⁹, exacerbating the [school-to-prison pipeline](#)⁵⁰ by involving the criminal justice system in more [nonviolent infractions](#)⁵¹ such as [disorderly conduct](#)⁵² and racial disparities.
- If schools do have an armed SRO, they should go through extensive [student-specific training](#)⁵³ to de-escalation situations, recognize when students are struggling with their mental health, and strengthen social-emotional competencies.

Train police officers in active shooter drills that are not held in the presence of students where child trauma can occur.

Schools began holding active-shooter drills following the Columbine High School massacre in 1999. The drills increased in frequency since the 2012 Sandy Hook Elementary shooting. Even though mass shootings at schools are [rare events](#)⁵⁴, nearly all [US schools hold active shooter drills](#)⁵⁵ with local law enforcement.

- The National Association of School Psychologists warns that “some lockdowns may [produce anxiety, stress, and traumatic symptoms](#)⁵⁶ in some students or staff, as well as loss of instructional time.”
- While many recommendations are available to [help students cope with stress and anxiety](#)⁵⁷ during an active shooter drill, no evidence exists showing that drills with students present produce positive outcomes. Faculty and staff might benefit from participating with law enforcement during active shooter training; however, training in the presence of students can result in child trauma.

Allow for diversion of School Resource Officer funding to student mental health resources where deemed appropriate by local leaders.

A [2019 ACLU report](#) (Whitacker 2019) estimates that 14 million students attend US schools where police are present but the schools lack counselors, nurses, psychologists, or social workers.

- Many schools have responded to high-profile school shootings by placing armed School Resource Officers (SROs) or other school-based law enforcement in the school. An estimated [43% of public schools](#)⁴² have an armed security staff member in their buildings.
- [No rigorous evidence](#) (James, 2013) exists that suggest armed guards [deter school shootings](#) (Livingston 2019). [Anecdotal](#) (Victor 2018) evidence shows that SROs can stop a school shooting, but in [four cases from 2018](#) (Yablon 2019), armed guards failed to stop school shootings, including the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida.
- More police and guns in schools create additional risks, including increasing the number of guns [accessible to children](#) (Drane 2020), exacerbating the [school-to-prison pipeline](#) (Nelson 2015) by involving the criminal justice system in more [nonviolent infractions](#) (Chongmin 2011) such as [disorderly conduct](#) (Theriot 2009), and worsening racial disparities.
- Because school shootings are rare and hard to predict, schools might see a greater benefit by hiring a counselor or social worker whose goal is to prevent a shooting, rather than armed police who hope to stop a shooting after it has begun. Investing in mental health resources for schools may also be cost-effective in light of the expense and current difficulty in hiring police across the country.
- If schools choose to have an armed SRO, the SROs should go through extensive [student-specific training](#) (Campisi 2019) to learn de-escalation skills, to recognize when students are struggling with mental health issues, and to strengthen social-emotional competencies.

Mandate and increase already existing levels of implicit bias training.

Research shows that [implicit knowledge](#)⁵⁸ of racial associations and [stereotypes of Black Americans](#)⁵⁹ as violent criminals leads police to decide to [shoot armed Black targets](#)⁶⁰ more quickly than [armed white targets](#)⁶¹.

- Annually, police use force on approximately one million people in the U.S. with Black individuals [two to four times](#)⁶² more likely than whites to be targeted.
 - The Center for Policing Equity’s data-driven approach to combating racial and implicit bias has seen [26% fewer use-of-force incidents](#)⁶³, 25% fewer arrests, and 13% fewer injuries to officers across dozens of law enforcement partners across the country.
 - [Implicit bias programs](#)⁶⁴ should aim to [reduce the influence of bias on behavior](#)⁶⁵ rather than alter an individual officer’s racial beliefs and feelings.
 - Implicit bias training programs vary in quality and require systematic changes in decision-making, increasing accountability, and evaluating officers.
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Accountability

Fund and use body cameras.

A 2019 comprehensive review of the research on body cameras could not draw strong conclusions, except to emphasize that new technologies like [body cameras cannot reform organizations on their own](#)⁶⁶. Body cameras are simply a tool and how they are used (or not used) is more likely to be shaped by organizational culture rather than body cameras shaping the organizational culture.

- Forty-seven percent of the 15,328 US law enforcement agencies acquired [body-worn cameras](#)⁶⁷ by 2016.
- Body cameras are intended to [increase transparency](#)⁶⁸, hold officers accountable for police misconduct, and deter police shootings, especially of unarmed Black and Brown men.
- Body cameras have been a successful tool for [exonerating officers](#)⁶⁹ falsely accused of misconduct and [public relations](#)⁷⁰ campaigns that release footage to show positive things police do in the community.
- A [2019 randomized control trial](#)⁷¹ on the effects of body cameras worn by Washington, DC police officers found very small and statistically insignificant effects on civilian complaints and police use of force. A randomized control trial evaluating the effects of police body-worn cameras
- Body cameras may not reduce excessive use of force if department policies give officers too much discretion in [turning body cameras on and off](#)⁷² and when video evidence must be made available.

Develop standards to ensure accurate data collection on police-involved shootings.

Creating a [National Review Board](#)⁷³ to collect data and analyze police shootings will help advance the conversation from individual blame to spotlighting risk factors and errors that can lead to fatal interactions with police.

- In order to have effective data-driven accountability, standards must be developed to ensure [accurate data collection for police-involved shootings](#)⁷⁴.
- A theoretical framework should be used to analyze the [systemic causes of police shootings](#)⁷⁵ and misconduct.
- A 2019 analysis of how [social networks transmit police misconduct](#)⁷⁶ recommends isolating officers who use excessive force so other officers will not learn and copy that behavior.

Mandate and fund law enforcement collection and analysis of firearm-related ballistic and trace evidence.

Requiring and funding law enforcement to collect and analyze all firearm-related ballistic and trace evidence will help identify suspects of deadly shootings that often go unsolved. ATF's [National Integrated Ballistic Information Network](#)⁷⁷ (NIBIN) is an interstate network that "automates ballistics evaluations and provides actionable investigative leads in a timely manner." NIBIN has been compared to a fingerprint database but for guns.

- When law enforcement recovers bullet casings at the scene of a shooting, digital images can be made of the unique markings on the cartridge cases in order to link multiple casings to a particular gun.
- Only [one in four](#)⁷⁸ pieces of ballistic evidence collected nationwide is entered into NIBIN. If evidence is entered, reports are completed on average [181 days](#)⁷⁹ after the shooting. This delay means detectives conduct their investigations without this information.
- Some [California crime labs](#)⁸⁰ are getting promising results using NIBINs, though not all labs use it.
- One proposal to improve performance and encourage innovation is to establish [regional NIBIN Centers for Excellence](#)⁸¹.
- New advances in forensics technology developed by the Dutch allows law enforcement to [collect DNA from a casing](#)⁸² about a quarter of the time.

Raise legal standards for justifiable use of lethal force.

A 2016 analysis of over [3,000 use of force incidents](#)⁸³ by three US agencies found that more restrictive lethal use-of-force policies were associated with fewer use-of-force incidents. Agency policy influences the behavior of police on the streets.

- According to a [2018 US Commission on Civil Rights](#)⁸⁴ report, comprehensive data is lacking in regard to police use-of-force, but the “best available evidence reflects high rates of uses of force nationally, with increased likelihood of police use of force against people of color, people with disabilities, LGBT people, people with mental health concerns, people with low incomes, and those at the intersection of these communities.”
- A [2016 review](#)⁸⁵ of 91 use-of-force policies found that the average police department had adopted three of the eight identified policies that place restrictions on the use of force. None of the departments adopted all eight policies. The report by Campaign Zero’s [Use of Force Project](#)⁸⁶ found that department policies that require officers to exhaust all other means before shooting and that require comprehensive reporting of use of force incidents are each associated with 25% fewer police killings. Banning chokeholds was associated with a 22% reduction and de-escalation requirements had a 15% reduction. Police departments with better policies regarding use of force suffered fewer officer assaults.

Conclusions:

- Problem-solving and collaborative community policing are effective approaches to preventing and solving shootings.
- Zero-tolerance “Broken Windows” policing can encourage the over incarceration of the poor and communities of color.
- One in four of the nearly 1,000 people fatally shot by law enforcement each year were experiencing a mental health crisis.
- Mandating that police use less-lethal alternatives to firing a gun when establishing control over a situation is associated with reductions in police officer and suspect injuries.
- De-escalation training and Crisis Intervention Team partnerships between law enforcement and mental health professionals have positive outcomes including fewer arrests, connecting individuals in crisis with mental health treatment, and increased safety for officers.
- Body cameras are intended to increase transparency, hold officers accountable for police misconduct, and deter police shootings, especially of unarmed Black and Brown men.
- Requiring and funding law enforcement to use best practices when collecting and analyzing ballistic evidence will help identify suspects of deadly shootings that far too often go unsolved.

Recommended Reading

[Police Use of Force: The Impact of Less-Lethal Weapons and Tactics](#)

[How Police Training Contributes to Avoidable Deaths](#)

[What Are Active-Shooter Drills Doing to Kids?](#)

[Do Armed Guards Prevent School Shootings?](#)



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