From:
Sent: Thu, 16 Sep 2021 23:38:20 -0400
To: Reimels, Elizabeth (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Simon, Thomas (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/DVP); Houry, Debra E. (CDC/DDNID/NCIPC/OD)
Cc: ; 'Devin Hughes'
Subject: Response to CDC meeting with GVP representatives regarding Defensive Gun Use.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to provide input in this important conversation of the data behind Defensive Gun Use and taking the time to hear from those who are boots on the ground in Gun Violence Prevention. After the call I reviewed both the original documents that got everyone to the numbers being used to the origin of the collection of white papers.

One thing that popped out was that, even though it was not such, the numbers, specifically the 2.5 Million DGUs per year is considered CDC Gospel… it is in no uncertain terms a "CDC Study". And while that very small study by Gary Kleck has been debunked repeatedly by everyone from all sides of this issue [even Kleck] it still remains canon by gun rights folks and their supporting politicians and is used as a blunt instrument against gun safety regulations every time there is a state or federal level hearing. Put simply, in the time that study has been published as "a CDC Study" gun violence prevention policy has ground to a halt, in no small part because of the misinformation that small study provided.

As I pointed out yesterday, we know GVA data is "light" regarding DGUs because there is a propensity to just not report incidents that don't have someone shot or killed. So we end up with an unknown denominator in trying to calculate exactly how many there may be.

To that end, I would strongly recommend that one of two things occur with the CDC statement on Defensive Gun Use. Either remove the size estimates based on small surveys and clarify that there are an unknown number of DGU incidents based on personal reporting decisions of those who participated OR, remove the section altogether until valid numbers can be gleaned by peer reviews studies. In either case, that 2.5 Million number needs to be killed, buried, dug up, killed again and buried again. It is highly misleading, is used out of context and I honestly believe it has zero value – even as an outlier point in honest DGU discussions.

I would like to qualify my view with a bit of background. I have been a gun owner since Boy Scouts in the 1960s [acting as range safety officer at scout camps for five years] and began shooting at a garbage dump when I was 5 [not much else to do in the mountains of Eastern Kentucky back then]. I personally feel that nobody has the right to tell anyone else how to protect themselves or their families. While I personally think there are many better methods, American history puts the firearm as the "tool of the independent man" since it was invented. To that end, I have no issue with DGUs being part of the overall discussion of gun ownership, gun training, gun rights. But I also am an annoyingly picky data analyst and hate misleading extrapolations and champion proof.

Until proof if available we in the GVP community respectfully request that this outlier that has been used so often to stop legislation be removed until a panel can build a fair survey which will better reflect the true status of the number of DGUs. We all benefit from an honest, respected number.

Thank you again for the opportunity to contribute to this important issue. Take care.

Mark Bryant
Executive Director
Gun Violence Archive

www.gunviolencearchive.org