

The Dickey Amendment

Background:

- The Dickey Amendment, passed by Congress in 1996, stipulates that “none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention may be used to advocate or promote gun control.”
- The amendment was introduced after NRA lobbying in response to a 1993 CDC-funded study that showed that guns in the home was associated with an increased risk of homicide in the home.
- That year, Congress re-allocated the \$2.6 million budget that had been set aside for firearms research to traumatic brain injury research.
- This piece of legislation has effectively halted almost all firearms research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for the last two decades.

Points to consider:

- Gun violence fatalities are almost equivalent to motor vehicle fatalities – 33,636 and 33,804 per year, respectively – yet the federal government dedicates \$240 million per year to traffic safety research and virtually nothing to gun violence research. The limited gun violence research that does exist is largely funded by private sources and amounts to well under \$5 million per year.
- A research letter published in *JAMA* in January 2017 estimates that gun violence kills about the same number of people as sepsis each year, however funding for gun violence research is about 0.7% that of sepsis. In relation to mortality rates, gun violence was the least-researched cause of death in the United States, according to this study.
- In the 2016 budget, the CDC allotted \$6 million for research into prion disease, which affects about 300 people in the US each year.

Attempts to remove the amendment:

- In October 2015, Rep. David Price (D-NC) wrote a letter calling on Congress to reject the amendment. 110 out of 188 Democrat House members and not a single Republican signed on. Congress passed the spending bill with the amendment still in it.