

# Firearm Acquisition in the US: Spikes After Mass Shootings

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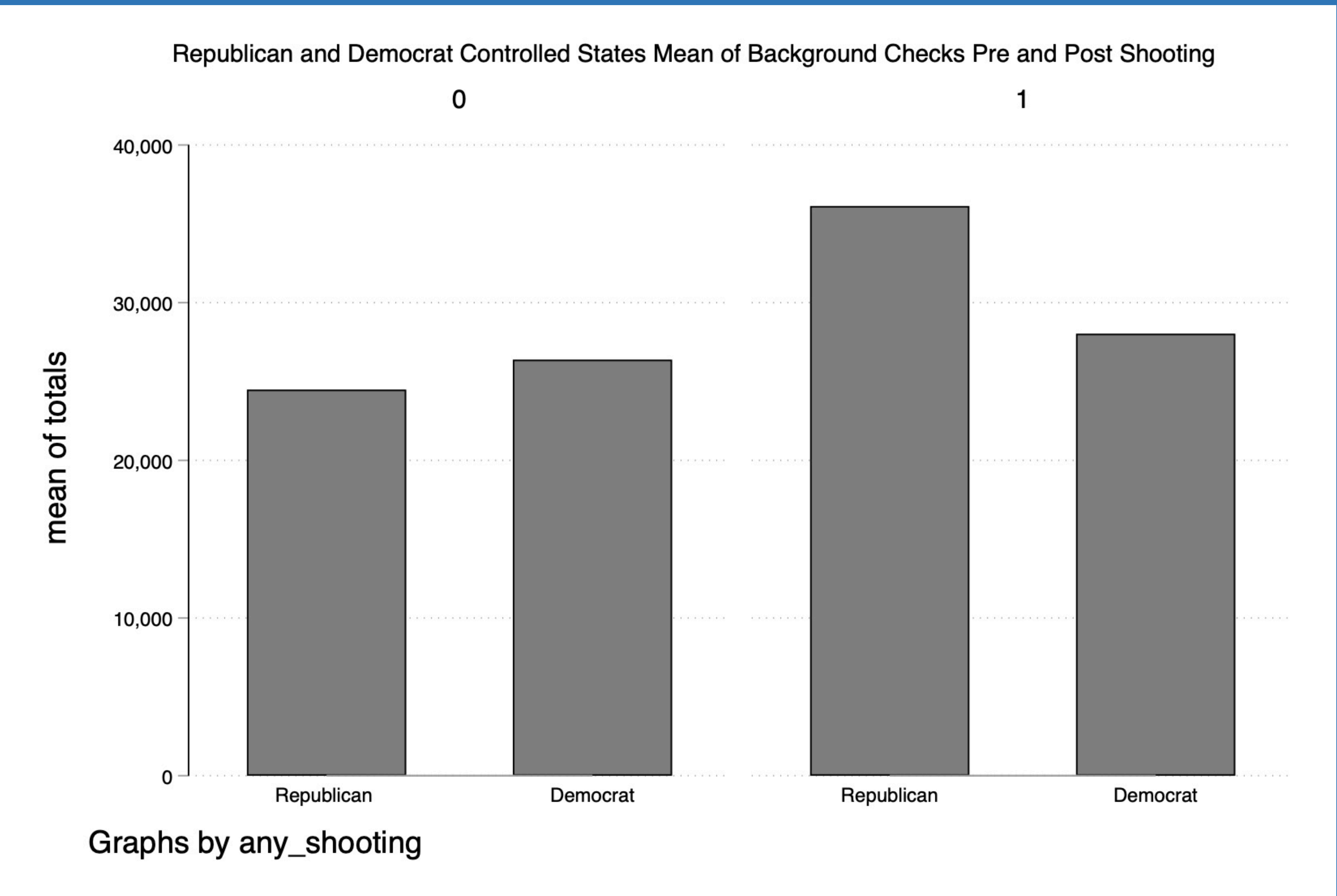
## INTRODUCTION

The right to bear arms has been apart of the American culture ever since the nation was formed. Recently, firearms have become one of the most discussed hot button issues in the US. The debate for gun control springs from those wanting to reduce gun violence through control policy, while others oppose gun control. Unfortunately, the US is familiar with mass shooting attacks. After these events it can be observed that firearm purchases spike. With such a partisan divide on this topic, it is interesting to observe the spikes in sales. This research aims to determine the causes behind firearm increases after mass shootings. I believe the states with a democratic governor will cause an increase in firearm acquisition.

## METHOD

For this research I utilized the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check system (NICS) as well as the Ranney data from Professor Garlick. The NICS is a record of firearm background checks by state from November of 1998 up until March of 2021. For this research I designated three mass shootings to analyze (Virginia Tech, Sandy Hook Elementary, Orlando Night Club) background checks the month of the shootings as well as the following three after the attack. I ran a regression with background check data with states with a democratic governor during the time periods that were considered.

Research Question: Does state governor party control have an effect on firearm acquisition spikes after mass shootings?



## RESULTS

After running regressions with my independent and dependent variables as well as other control variables, the results produced were statistically insignificant. In addition to this, my hypothesis was proven to be wrong. States with Republican governors saw a spike in firearm background checks after the three mass shootings that were designated.

Totals	Coefficient	Standard Error	T	P >  t
Democrat Governor	1900.02	791.0529	2.40	0.016
Any Shooting	11642.99	2587.796	4.50	0.000
Dem x Any Shooting	-9997.249	3733.743	-2.68	0.007
Constant	24482.44	584.61	41.88	0.000

## DISCUSSION

This research ultimately determined that small and short lived firearm acquisition spikes occur in Republican states after mass shootings. Although my hypothesis was incorrect, this research contributes to the ongoing research on firearm acquisition. From this it can be inferred that the Federal government has much more of an effect on firearm purchase amongst Americans.

