

THE LIES THAT PUT OUR LIVES AT RISK

The alarming spread of gun
violence disinformation in the
Chinese-speaking community



We advocate for systemic change that protects
immigrant rights, promotes language diversity,
and remedies racial and social injustice.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, gun ownership has increased among Asian Americans, a group that has had historically low levels of gun ownership and high support for gun control measures. At the same time, disinformation about gun violence circulates mostly unchecked on Chinese-language social media.

Through our Chinese Digital Engagement program including PiYaoBa, our Chinese-language fact-checking site, Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) has documented 104 major pieces of pro-gun disinformation circulating on Chinese-language social media platforms. In total, these 104 pieces of gun disinformation have amassed over 2 million views. We have also identified over 100 right-wing Chinese-language accounts actively spreading disinformation and political propaganda about gun violence and other topics on WeChat, Twitter, Telegram, and YouTube.

This report covers a 23-month period, from January 2022 to December 2023, enumerating what the main disinformation narratives are in Chinese-language social media and where they spread.

Key disinformation narratives about guns on Chinese-language social media:

- **Narrative 1:** Banning guns is a step towards authoritarianism while gun ownership represents “democracy.”
- **Narrative 2:** Police in the U.S. are not obligated to protect people, thus owning guns is necessary for self-defense, especially in these times of rising anti-Asian hate.
- **Narrative 3:** The shooters in mass shootings are Black, people of color, or transgender, and are affiliated with Democrats.
- **Narrative 4:** The gun control policies of Democrats has led to increased crime and shootings.
- **Narrative 5:** Good guys with guns will stop bad guys from committing crimes.

Recommendations

As nearly half of all misinformation and disinformation about gun violence circulates on WeChat, this presents specific challenges. WeChat is a Chinese do-it-all app that is part of the everyday life of the majority of Chinese Americans. Due to its closed nature and censorship by the Chinese government, it is difficult to share accurate information on the app.

To holistically address Chinese-language disinformation, as well as increased marketing by the gun industry to Asian Americans, we propose the following recommendations:

- The government should **establish offices that specifically address gun violence** through a whole-of-government approach. These offices should ensure implementation of gun safety policies are linguistically and culturally competent.
- The gun violence prevention movement should **invest in efforts to combat disinformation and misinformation** within the Asian American and immigrant communities.
- Asian American community organizations should **prioritize gun violence prevention in any efforts to advance community safety and justice**. This includes working with gun violence prevention organizations to develop resources about gun safety.

BACKGROUND

Gun ownership in Asian American communities in the U.S. has historically been low. About 10% of Asian Americans personally own a gun, according to a 2023 survey by Pew Research Center, compared with white (38%), Black (24%), and Hispanic (20%) Americans.¹ The majority of Asian Americans (78%) also favor stricter gun laws in the United States.²

¹Schaeffer, Katherine. "Key Facts About Americans and Guns." Pew Research Center, 13 Sept. 2023, www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2023/09/13/key-facts-about-americans-and-guns/.

²"State of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders in the United States." AAPI Data, 2022. aapidata.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/State-AAHPis-National-June2022.pdf.

However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, gun ownership increased among Asian Americans.³ More than half (55%) of Asian Americans who purchased a gun since the start of the pandemic were first-time gun owners, according to a 2022 study.⁴ Many armed themselves in response to the rise in hate against Asian Americans. Researchers of the study found that Asian Americans who experienced increased acts of racism at the start of the pandemic were more likely to acquire firearms and ammunition for self-defense.

The increase in gun ownership is worrying; researchers noted that carrying may put Asian Americans at elevated risk of firearm injury, including self-harm. Almost half of gun owners in the study stored their guns unlocked and loaded. And as recent mass shootings show, Asian Americans are no more immune than other Americans to gun violence. In the Laguna Woods, Monterey Park, and Half Moon Bay mass shootings the perpetrators were Asian immigrant men who targeted other Asian Americans.

These events prompt questions about what information is being circulated about guns, and where Asian Americans, particularly those with limited English proficiency, are getting information.

Here at CAA and PiYaoBa, we have been monitoring Chinese-language digital spaces, which are predominantly filled with right-wing disinformation. We have identified over 100 well-resourced Chinese-language accounts actively spreading disinformation and political propaganda. In contrast, the limited number of fact-checking sites are mostly volunteer-driven or maintained by nonprofit organizations.

This report enumerates the pro-gun misinformation and disinformation circulating on Chinese-language digital spaces. Like English-language pro-gun messaging, Chinese-language narratives promoting firearms have a right-wing bent. However, the messaging differs.

Whereas English-language messages may draw upon gun ownership as a right or part of one's American identity, Chinese-language messages exploit people's fears – whether it be of crime or the Chinese Communist Party – to promote firearms. Narratives promoting self-defense hold strong appeal, especially in light of the surge in anti-Asian hate acts during the COVID-19 pandemic.

³ Wang, Claire. "Asian Americans are Buying Guns in Record Numbers. What's Caused This Surge?" The Guardian, 16 Aug. 2022, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/aug/16/asian-americans-gun-ownership.

⁴ Wu, Tsu-Yin, et al. "Examining Racism and Firearm-Related Risks Among Asian Americans in the United States During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Preventive Medicine Reports, vol. 27, June 2022, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335522001073.

Chinese-language disinformation also presents unique challenges due to various factors. These include cultural barriers; disinformation campaigns from mainland China's state-run media or CCP media, which is often influenced by China-U.S. relations; and well-funded disinformation campaigns orchestrated by members of the Chinese diaspora with personal political and religious agendas. Examples of the latter include the two largest media giants focused on Chinese Americans – Falun Gong-backed Epoch Times Media Group and Guo Media Group, formed by Guo Wengui and former Trump strategist Steve Bannon.

About CAA

Chinese for Affirmative Action (CAA) was founded in 1969 to protect the civil and political rights of Chinese Americans and to advance multiracial democracy in the United States. Today, CAA is a progressive voice in and on behalf of the broader Asian American and Pacific Islander community. We advocate for systemic change that protects immigrant rights, promotes language diversity, and remedies racial and social injustice.

About PiYaoBa

PiYaoBa is the first centralized fact-checking website dedicated to combating right-wing disinformation in the Chinese American community. The name “PiYaoBa” translates to “let's fact-check it” in Mandarin Chinese. It was launched in early 2022, providing Chinese Americans with in-language resources and tools to counter disinformation, including real-time alerts, reports, and comprehensive fact-checking articles. PiYaoBa conducts systematic research and documentation of misinformation and disinformation, while also welcoming topic suggestions from readers.

As part of CAA's pioneering Chinese Digital Engagement program, PiYaoBa contributes to the provision of accurate information to the Chinese American community on social justice. This program, initiated in 2019, encompasses three WeChat channels and the websites JusticePatch.org and PiYaoBa.org. Since its establishment, PiYaoBa has published a total of 192 in-depth fact-checking articles and 205 disinformation alerts.

KEY NARRATIVES OF CHINESE- LANGUAGE GUN VIOLENCE DISINFORMATION

In examining more than 100 articles and videos about guns circulating in Chinese-language digital spaces, we observed that while some of the disinformation mirrors those found in English-language media, others are specific to Chinese-language disinformation. Some of these messages exploit historical and cultural trauma of Chinese immigrants, emphasizing opposition to the Chinese Communist Party dictatorship as a reason for gun ownership. Below, we have gathered the top five pro-gun disinformation narratives, based on their frequency and reach on digital platforms.

Narratives that are specific to Chinese- language disinformation

Disinformation Narrative 1: Banning guns is a step towards authoritarianism while gun ownership represents “democracy.”

Asian Americans are a majority immigrant population in the U.S.,⁵ and high support for gun measures⁶ is attributed to strict gun laws all across Asia. For the Chinese-speaking population, approaches to gun ownership stem from historical and cultural attitudes towards guns in China.

In China, private gun ownership is generally prohibited for civilians with an exception carved out for law enforcement and military personnel.⁷ Under Chinese law, the government enforces tight control over firearms in order to maintain public safety and social stability. In the United States, guns are symbolic of American culture, deeply rooted in the nation’s history, values, and constitutional rights.

⁵ Venkatraman, Sakshi. “People of Color Have the Highest Support for Gun Laws, New Study Finds.” NBC News, 29 June 2023, www.nbcnews.com/news/asian-america/people-color-highest-support-gun-laws-new-study-finds-rcna91887.

⁶ “Gun Violence Widely Viewed as a Major - and Growing - National Problem.” Pew Research Center, 28 June 2023, www.pewresearch.org/politics/2023/06/28/views-of-u-s-gun-laws-impact-of-gun-ownership-on-safety/.

⁷ “Gun Control in China.” Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, Wikimedia Foundation. 8 Sept. 2023, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_control_in_China.

The Second Amendment of the United States Constitution states that “a well regulated Militia” is “necessary to the security of a free State”⁸ and has been used to advance the right to keep and bear arms. This constitutional provision has played a significant part in shaping the American perspective on gun ownership and has contributed to the cultural significance of firearms.

Whereas in China, and specifically for the Communist Party, guns are a means for fueling a revolution, with Mao Zedong famously stating, “Political power grows out of a barrel of a gun.”⁹ These divergent attitudes provide an opportunity for disinformation spreaders to exploit the Chinese immigrant mindset as a way of advancing a pro-gun agenda.

In step with American attitudes towards guns, Chinese pro-gun advocates assert that banning guns infringe upon people’s rights and is a step towards government restriction. This argument resonates particularly within the Chinese community due to the experiences of many Chinese immigrants who left China where political dissent is prohibited under the Chinese authorities and censorship is part of social control. They have transitioned from political environments characterized by complete disempowerment to a democratic society where gun ownership is not only permitted but permeates American culture. This stark contrast fuels apprehension and skepticism towards any gun control efforts to revoke individuals’ rights that the government may attempt.

Pro-gun narratives in English media emphasize the infringement to the constitutional rights to bear arms and the potential dangers of a government with excessive control. This resonates with Chinese immigrants who have witnessed the consequences of a Chinese government that restricts freedom of speech and engages in censorship.

⁸U.S. Constitution, amend. II. constitution.congress.gov/browse/amendment-2/.

⁹ Yeung, Jessie and George, Steve. “China and the U.S. Were Both Born From Armed Conflict. They’re Now Polar Opposites on Gun Control.” CNN, 20 Sept. 2021, www.cnn.com/2021/09/20/china/gun-control-us-china-mic-intl-hnk/index.html.



中国出来的人，无论政治倾向如何，对两件事是普遍怀有偏见的：一是拥枪，二是宗教。这是中共打在这个群体身上最深的烙印之二。

[Translate Tweet](#)

1:40 AM · Jan 24, 2023 · 442.2K Views

[This page is no longer available; it was on Twitter.]

中国出来的人，无论政治倾向如何，对两件事是普遍怀有偏见的：一是拥枪，二是宗教。这是中共打在这个群体身上最深的烙印之二。

People coming out of China, regardless of political leanings, are universally prejudiced against two things: gun ownership and religion. This is two of the deepest stigmas that the CCP has placed on this group.

Disinformation Narrative 2: Police in the U.S. are not obligated to protect people, thus owning guns is necessary for self-defense, especially in these times of rising anti-Asian hate.

The disinformation narrative about the ability or unwillingness of the police to protect individuals has been circulating since 2016 and has resurfaced multiple times in recent years. This false narrative suggests that law enforcement is unreliable or ineffective in ensuring public safety and pushes the idea that individuals should take personal responsibility for their safety by arming themselves. It employs fear tactics, emphasizing isolated incidents of violence or crime to create a sense of urgency and insecurity.

This narrative feeds into the distrust of law enforcement that some immigrants may have in their home countries as a result of corruption, abuse of power, and lack of accountability. It also reinforces the discomfort other immigrants have in navigating the legal and law enforcement systems due to cultural and language differences. This can lead to a sense of alienation and mistrust as well as the false notion that they need to be self-reliant.

At the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which there was an increase in reported hate acts against the Asian American community,¹⁰ this narrative became even more entrenched. In some cases, social media posters mix factual

¹⁰ Ruiz, Neil, et al. "Asian Americans and Discrimination During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Pew Research Center, 30 Nov. 2023, www.pewresearch.org/race-ethnicity/2023/11/30/asian-americans-and-discrimination-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/.

information about the increase in anti-Asian hate with disinformation about guns. Pro-gun posters exploit people's fears about personal safety to promote the dangerous narrative that simply owning guns can deter racist acts. As a result, researchers have found that Asian Americans who experienced more racial discrimination were more likely to purchase a gun during the pandemic.¹¹ The firearm industry has used this fear of rising anti-Asian hate to market specifically to Asian Americans.¹²

~~很多人不理解，美国屡次有这种大型枪击案，为什么美国人还要支持拥枪？这不得不从美国的法律说起。~~

~~因为美国制度设计并不要求美国警察保护人民，所以民众必须保护自己。而警察这个职责的划分还得回溯到上世纪70年代。~~

<https://web.archive.org/web/20230921224450/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/0Njn8IVQ6VRQdhYAm6jQjw>

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Many people don't understand why Americans support gun ownership when there are repeated mass shootings of this kind in the United States. This has to start with the laws of the United States.

Because the design of the U.S. system does not require the U.S. police to protect the people, the people must protect themselves. And the division of this duty of the police goes back to the 1970s.

~~美国亚裔共和党执行主任：建议亚裔拥枪，会让歹徒进攻时有所顾虑~~

~~Original [redacted] 2021-04-23 03:59~~

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美国亚裔共和党执行主任：建议亚裔拥枪，会让歹徒进攻时有所顾虑

Asian American Republican Party Executive Director: Suggesting Asians own guns gives thugs something to worry about when attacking.

¹¹ Wu, Tsu-Yin, et al. "Examining Racism and Firearm-Related Risks Among Asian Americans in the United States During the COVID-19 Pandemic." Preventive Medicine Reports, vol. 27, June 2022, www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211335522001073.

¹² "How the Firearms Industry Markets Guns to Asian Americans." Violence Policy Center, Sept. 2021, vpc.org/how-the-firearms-industry-markets-guns-to-asian-americans/.

Narratives that mirror English-language gun violence disinformation

Disinformation Narrative 3: The shooters in mass shootings are Black, people of color, or transgender, and are affiliated with Democrats

In March 2023, Aiden Hale killed three nine-year-old children and three adults at the Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee.¹³ Aiden was a former student of the school and a transgender man.¹⁴ The Nashville school shooting triggered a walk-out of more than 7,000 Nashville students and led to the expulsion of two state lawmakers who spoke up on behalf of their constituents in support of gun safety.¹⁵ Instead of finding fault with the shooter's ability to purchase guns, conservatives blamed his mental health and demonized his gender identity.¹⁶

After every mass shooting, various disinformation narratives emerge within the pro-gun community, but the most common response is to scapegoat. Pro-gun narratives blame mental health issues for acts of violence or unfairly associate specific groups with crime instead of focusing on the role and availability of guns.

Similar to English-language disinformation, Chinese-language disinformation argues that it's people, not firearms that are the problem. We have observed a tendency to blame specific communities, namely Black and transgender. In this way, pro-gun advocates pit Chinese-speaking communities against other minority groups. By scapegoating Black and transgender communities, the implication is that they are left-leaning, and thus, Democrats and by extension the "woke agenda" are to blame for mass shootings.

¹³ Hassan, Adeel and Cochrane, Emily. "What We Know About the Nashville School Shooting." The New York Times. 23 Sept. 2023, www.nytimes.com/article/nashville-school-shooting.html.

¹⁴ Wegner, Rachel., et al. "'Truly Horrific': Nashville Mourns After Mass Shooting at Elementary School." The Tennessean, 27 Mar. 2023, www.tennessean.com/story/news/crime/2023/03/27/nashville-mourns-mass-shooting-covenant-school/70052585007/.

¹⁵ Renkl, Margaret. "As Young People March for Their Lives, Tennessee Crushes Dissent and Overrides Democracy." The New York Times, 5 Apr. 2023, www.nytimes.com/2023/04/05/opinion/tenn-gun-protest-democrats-ejection.html.

¹⁶ Seitz-Wald, Alex and Hixenbaugh, Mike. "Some on the Right Blame Gender Identity and Not Guns for Nashville Shooting." NBC News, 28 Mar. 2023, www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/right-blame-gender-identity-not-guns-nashville-shooting-rcna76969.

Two major disinformation narratives in Chinese-language spaces:

1. The claim that there are numerous incidents of Black individuals shooting whites and Asians, and that the media fails to mention “black supremacy” in their reporting.
2. The assertion that the left’s support for transgender youth is influencing individuals toward harmful behaviors, and that “perverted” education is the primary factor behind shootings.

看看最近几年实施大规模枪杀案（Mass Shooters）的都是些什么渣？

最后一组名单显示：凶手绝大多数是“民主党人”-Democrat和马克思主义者！

有预感推特又要封我的号啦!!! 😂😂😂

[Translate post](#)

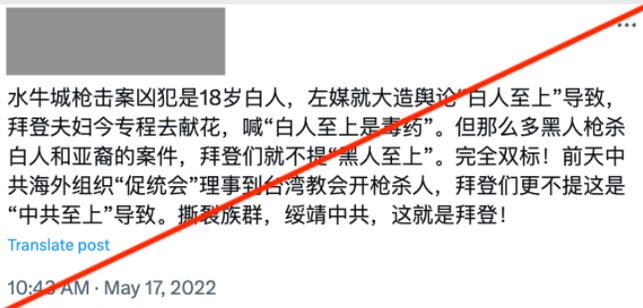


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看看最近几年实施大规模枪杀案（Mass Shooters）的都是些什么渣？最后一组名单显示：凶手绝大多数是“民主党人”-Democrat和马克思主义者！有预感推特又要封我的号啦!!!

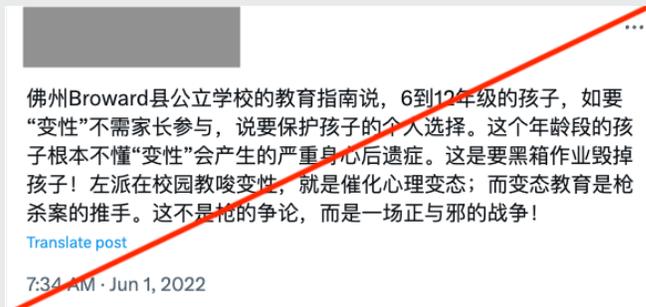
What kind of scum have been committing Mass Shooters in recent years? The list shows that the vast majority of killers are “Democrats” – Democrats and Marxists! I have a feeling Twitter is going to block my number again!!!



<https://web.archive.org/web/20220517174357/https://twitter.com/CaoChangqing/status/1526619363347865601>

水牛城枪击案凶犯是18岁白人，左媒就大造舆论“白人至上”导致，拜登夫妇今专程去献花，喊“白人至上是毒药”。但那么多黑人枪杀白人和亚裔的案件，拜登们就不提“黑人至上”。完全双标！前天中共海外组织“促统会”理事到台湾教会开枪杀人，拜登们更不提这是“中共至上”导致。撕裂族群，绥靖中共，这就是拜登！

The Buffalo shooting was committed by an 18-year-old white man, and the left media made a big deal out of “white supremacy,” and the Bidens made a special trip today to lay flowers and yell “white supremacy is poison.” But the Bidens don’t mention “black supremacy” in so many cases of blacks shooting whites and Asians. It’s a complete double standard! The day before yesterday, a director of the Chinese Communist Party’s overseas organization “Association for the Promotion of Unification” shot and killed a man in a Taiwanese church, and the Biden’s didn’t even mention that this was the result of “Chinese Communist Party supremacy.” Tearing apart the ethnic groups and appeasement of the CCP, this is Biden!



<https://web.archive.org/web/20220601143508/https://twitter.com/CaoChangqing/status/1532007589307117569>

佛州Broward县公立学校的教育指南说，6到12年级的孩子，如要“变性”不需家长参与，说要保护孩子的个人选择。这个年龄段的孩子根本不懂“变性”会产生严重身心后遗症。这是要黑箱作业毁掉孩子！左派在校园教唆变性，就是催化心理变态；而变态教育是枪杀案的推手。这不是枪的争论，而是一场正与邪的战争！

The Broward County Public Schools’ educational guidelines say that children in grades 6 through 12 can have a “sex change” without parental involvement, stating that the child’s personal choices should be protected. Children at this age have no idea of the serious physical and psychological consequences of being “transgendered.” This is a black box approach to destroying children! By abetting transgenderism in schools, the left is catalyzing psychopathology; and psychopathic education is the driving force behind gun murders. This is not a gun debate, but a war between good and evil!

In response to the pervasive spread of disinformation narratives, CAA is actively challenging it with accurate information and progressive narratives on WeChat. Launched in 2022, PiYaoBa provides Chinese Americans with in-language resources and tools to counter disinformation with comprehensive fact-checking articles.



辟谣吧
Chinese Fact Check

☰ 🔍

驱动纳什维尔校园屠杀的是性别身份，还是枪支？

04/03/2023

作者：詹涓

虽然本周纳什维尔圣约学校大屠杀的许多细节仍未揭晓，但警方已经确认枪手是28岁的奥黛丽·黑尔（Audrey Hale）。周一，黑尔携带三支合法购买的枪支，进入其曾短暂就读的小学，射杀了三名9岁的儿童和三名工作人员。黑尔本人随后在与警方短暂的对峙中被击毙。

在枪击事件发生后，警方曾一度称枪手是女性，但在几小时后的新闻发布会上，纳什维尔大都会警察局局长约翰·德雷克（John Drake）说，枪手是跨性别者。近期将自己的人称

驱动纳什维尔校园屠杀的是性别身份，还是枪支？

PiYaoBa: The real problem behind the 2023 Nashville school shooting is the guns, stop blaming the gender issues



别再给移民与性少数群体泼脏水，加强枪支管控才是硬道理

05/28/2022

本周二（5月24日），德州乌瓦尔德市（Uvalde）罗布小学（Robb Elementary School）发生大型枪击案。18岁的凶手闯入配有武装安保人员的学校，杀害19名儿童和2名教师。

此事被众多英文媒体实时报道后，全网震惊、悲痛。尤其是有孩子的家长们感受到替代性创伤和恐惧：如果遭遇枪击的是我的孩子，我该怎么办？

根据**枪支暴力档案（Gun Violence Archive）**的记录：截止到5月27日，美国今年已经有17428起枪支暴力造成的死亡，14488人受伤。其中有142名儿童被杀害，303名儿童受

辟谣吧：别再给移民与性少数群体泼脏水，加强枪支管控才是硬道理

PiYaoBa: Stop throwing dirt on immigrants and sexual minorities, tighter gun control is the way to go

Disinformation Narrative 4: The gun control policies of Democrats has led to increased crime and shootings.

Pro-gun advocates blame Democrats and the Biden administration for an increase in crime¹⁷ and gun violence¹⁸. Any attempt by Democrats, conservatives argue, to advocate for stricter gun safety measures is gaslighting. The disinformation narratives in Chinese-language spaces claim that mass shootings are hoaxes staged by the government and that Democratic policies to restrict guns lead to more crime. This is a move that takes a page from conservative playbooks accusing Democrats of being “soft on crime” and exploiting fear and anxiety in order to win elections.

¹⁷ Stein, Chris. “Republicans Claim Democrats Can’t Keep Us Safe - Crime Data Disagrees.” The Guardian, 30 June 2023, www.theguardian.com/us-news/2023/jun/30/murder-rates-democrat-republican-states-gun-control.

¹⁸ Dress, Brad. “Scalise Pins Blame on Democrats for Gun Violence.” The Hill, 5 June 2023, thehill.com/homenews/sunday-talk-shows/3512342-scalise-pins-blame-on-democrats-for-gun-violence/.

Three major disinformation narratives in Chinese-language spaces:

1. Conspiracy theories that the shooting was a hoax, a Democrat-created “false flag” operation conceived to distract from a Democratic scandal or to manipulate people into supporting stricter gun control measures.
2. Claims that stricter gun laws in Democratic “blue states” lead to more crime and shootings. The argument goes that when law-abiding citizens are unable to possess guns, the crime rate increases.
3. Claims that the Democratic Party’s efforts to ban legal guns indirectly support criminals. This narrative implies that by advocating for gun safety, Democrats are assisting criminals in their activities.



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枪支管控越严格的地方枪击案越频繁，犯罪率越高。因为人民手里没枪，犯罪就越容易。

The stricter the gun control the more frequent the shootings and the higher the crime rate. Because the people don't have guns in their hands, the easier it is to commit crimes.

美国禁枪会发生什么？

退一万步讲，假如“修宪”成功了，美国政府开始收缴民间的枪支，会发生什么？

首先因为禁枪只能禁掉合法的枪，黑帮和犯罪分子可不会遵守法律不持枪，在如今治安崩殒的环境下，禁掉合法的枪，那就是给犯罪分子送上助攻。

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What would happen if the U.S. banned guns?

If the “constitutional amendment” succeeds and the U.S. government starts to collect guns from the public, what will happen?

First of all, banning guns can only ban legal guns, gangs and criminals will not abide by the law and not have guns. In today’s environment of law and order collapse, banning legal guns will give criminals a helping hand.

Disinformation Narrative 5: Good guys with guns will stop bad guys from committing crimes.

The National Rifle Association (NRA) and other pro-gun advocates propagate a claim that “the only way to stop a bad guy with a gun is a good guy with a gun.” In reality, if this were true, if more guns everywhere made us safer, America would be the safest country on earth.¹⁹ Instead, we have a gun homicide rate 26 times that of other higher income countries.²⁰ Chinese-language pro-gun messengers take this a step further by combining this idea with the disinformation narrative that police have no obligation to protect people. These narratives parlay public concerns about community and personal safety into the misleading idea that owning guns ensures safety. Furthermore, this narrative aligns with Republican legislation in favor of open carry and arming teachers.

¹⁹ “Debunking Gun Myths at the Dinner Table.” Everytown for Gun Safety, 22 Nov. 2023, www.everytown.org/debunking-gun-myths-at-the-dinner-table/.

²⁰ Narea, Nicole, et al. “America’s Unique, Enduring Gun Problem, Explained.” Vox, 7 Dec. 2023, www.vox.com/23142734/las-vegas-unlv-mass-shooting.

A disinformation narrative in Chinese-language spaces:

The only way to stop bad guys with guns – is for good guys to have guns!

这次的枪支事件的特殊性，也再次引发了美国关于枪支管制的分歧性辩论。

有网友认为，正是因为美国部分地区，允许在公共场合合法携带枪支，所以才会出现这位英雄，及时防止了恶性事件演化成更惨烈的悲剧。

就像德州校园枪击案一样，即使门口站着400位荷枪实弹的警察，也不如一位勇敢且有武器的平民英雄。

“我们要再说一遍：阻止持枪坏人的唯一方法——就是好人持枪！”美国步枪协会(National Rifle Association)周一上午在twitter上说。

https://web.archive.org/web/20230921223832/https://mp.weixin.qq.com/s/xlElmUfAJKu5FsPgtqwU_A

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The exceptional nature of this gun incident has also reignited the divisive debate about gun control in the United States.

Some netizens believe that it is because some parts of the United States allow the legal carrying of firearms in public, that this hero emerged in time to prevent a vicious incident from evolving into a more tragic tragedy.

Just like the Texas school shooting, even if there were 400 loaded police officers standing at the door, it was not as bad as a brave and armed civilian hero.

“We'll say it again: The only way to stop bad guys with guns – is for good guys to have guns!” The National Rifle Association (NRA) said on Twitter Monday morning.



BY THE NUMBERS: DATA ON CHINESE-LANGUAGE PRO-GUN DISINFORMATION

Pro-gun disinformation surges following mass shootings.

PiYaoBa identified and documented a total of **104 major disinformation articles and videos concerning gun violence** on Chinese-language social media platforms (including WeChat, Twitter, and Telegram) from January 10, 2022 to December 10, 2023.

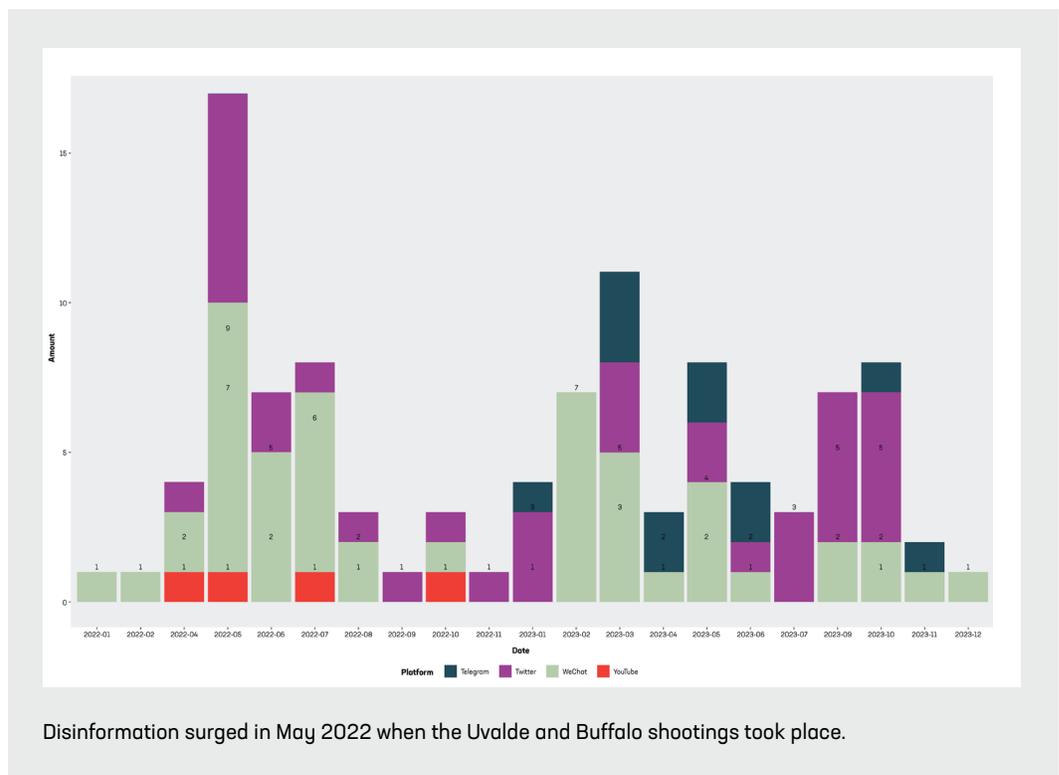
We define “major” disinformation as a piece of disinformation that has accrued at least 2,000 views on the original platform where the disinformation was first observed and it has spread on multiple Chinese social media platforms.

Furthermore, we do not count repeated or similar disinformation on other platforms; the same content was documented only once.

On average, each piece of gun violence disinformation has been viewed over 27,650 times. This number was calculated by adding the views on each platform. Note: The calculation includes converting part of Twitter/X views data, as Twitter did not display views in 2022. So a representative formula was derived using calculations from a random sampling of multiple tweets from different users: 1 retweet is estimated to equal 300-700 views, with the median value being 500 views. **In total, the 104 pieces of gun disinformation have amassed over 2 million views.**

Following major mass shootings, pro-gun disinformation increases, regardless of the trauma caused by these tragic events. We observed a significant spike in disinformation after the Uvalde and Buffalo shootings in May 2022. Furthermore, even after the devastating mass shootings in Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay, which profoundly impacted Chinese American communities, the dissemination of disinformation continued to rise from January to March 2023.

Figure 1: Gun violence disinformation timeline 2022-2023, by month and platform



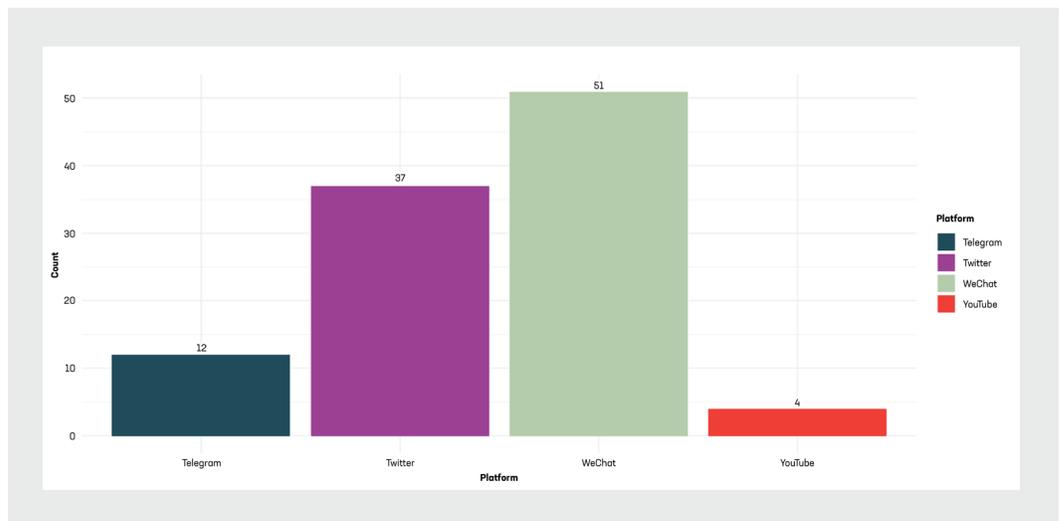
Disinformation surged in May 2022 when the Uvalde and Buffalo shootings took place.

Pro-gun disinformation exhibits similar trends on WeChat and Twitter, with both platforms experiencing an increase in disinformation following major mass shooting news. YouTube, which has the least number of gun violence disinformation narratives to begin with, does not follow this trend.

The majority of Chinese-language disinformation circulates on WeChat.

Pro-gun disinformation predominantly circulates on WeChat (50%), Twitter (34%), and Telegram (10%), often in the form of text accompanied by photos, particularly within group chat discussions. This pattern is consistent with the general overall distribution of Chinese-language disinformation. We have found that half of it occurs on WeChat.

Figure 2: Distribution of gun violence disinformation across platforms 2022-2023



The number of average views varies across platforms. The highest average views are on WeChat (8.44 K), followed by YouTube (7.27 K), and Twitter (6.53 K).

Figure 3: Average views by platform

Platforms	Average Views (K)
WeChat	8.44
YouTube	7.27
Twitter	6.53
Telegram	3.02

RECOMMENDATIONS

As nearly half (46%) of all misinformation and disinformation about guns circulates on WeChat, this presents specific challenges. WeChat is a Chinese app that includes instant messaging, social media, and mobile payment. As of 2023, WeChat has 4 million users in the U.S.²¹ That means that out of the 5.4 million members of the Chinese diaspora in the United States, 74% use WeChat. Due to its closed nature and censorship by the Chinese government, it is difficult to share accurate information on the app.

Along with disinformation, gun manufacturers are increasingly marketing to people of color, including Asian Americans, identifying them as a “new emerging market”²² due to their increasing population size and consumer influence. They’ve engaged Asian spokespersons and tailored messaging to our communities.

Many immigrants are so new to the idea of gun ownership that they may not recognize the risks that come with it. Data shows that ownership of guns leads to more firearm injuries and deaths.²³ Gun violence is also inextricably linked to

²¹ Shewale, Rohit. “18+ WeChat Statistics For 2024.” Demandsage, 12 Dec. 2023, www.demandsage.com/wechat-statistics/.

²² “How the Firearms Industry Markets Guns to Asian Americans.” Violence Policy Center, Sept. 2021, vpc.org/how-the-firearms-industry-markets-guns-to-asian-americans/.

²³ Branas, Charles, et al. “Investigating the Link Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault.” American Journal of Public Health, Nov. 2009, ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.2008.143099.

intimate partner violence, and abusers with firearms are five times more likely to kill their female victims.²⁴

It is imperative that we address the targeting of our communities and the spread of disinformation to prevent tragedies. To holistically address Chinese-language disinformation, as well as increased marketing by the gun industry to Asian Americans, we propose the following recommendations:

Recommendation 1

Government offices should be established and staffed to specifically address gun violence through a whole-of-government approach – such as the White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and California Office of Gun Violence Prevention. These offices should ensure that any implementation of new and existing policies around gun violence are linguistically accessible and culturally competent. They should work in active partnership with appropriate community leaders and organizations to educate and engage Asian Americans on how to make themselves safer from gun violence.

Recommendation 2

The gun violence prevention movement should invest in efforts to combat disinformation and misinformation within the Asian American and immigrant communities. This should include funding for research into effective interventions, conferring with Asian Americans leaders and organizations to devise strategies and solutions, and supporting these groups to engage in direct outreach and education to counter false information and common misconceptions around guns on English- and Asian-language social media platforms (e.g. WeChat, KakaoTalk, etc.) and other avenues.

Recommendation 3

Asian American community organizations should prioritize gun violence prevention in any efforts to advance community safety and justice. They should work with gun violence prevention leaders and organizations to develop resources about gun safety, including how to access existing laws and policies (e.g. gun violence restraining orders), information about safe storage practice, and the risks of gun ownership.

²⁴ Campbell, Jacquelyn, et al. "Risk Factors for Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results from a Multisite Case Control Study." *American Journal of Public Health*, July 2003, ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/full/10.2105/AJPH.93.7.1089.

CONCLUSION

The right-wing misinformation and disinformation that proliferates across Chinese-language social media on people's phones and computers have real-life consequences. Pro-gun narratives exploit people's fears to encourage them to buy guns, putting more people at risk of firearm injuries. They also scapegoat other marginalized groups, promoting fear and even hatred.

Additionally, Chinese right-wing social media influencers have exploited the gun issue to advance partisan politics. In the lead-up to the 2022 midterm election and the 2024 presidential elections, gun violence and other community safety issues tinged with right-wing narratives were used to attack progressives and the Democratic Party within the Chinese American community. On social media platforms, posts urged Chinese Americans to vote for Republicans, citing three primary reasons: "letting babies live, supporting police, and gun rights."




民主党	共和党
杀害胎儿	保护胎儿
削减警察预算	支持警察
剥夺拥枪权利	支持拥枪权利
开放边境	边境控制并建墙
支持非法移民	保护合法移民
增税	减税
减弱军力	加强军力
政府过度规管	保护小企业
让任何人投票	凭选民证件投票
福利国家	劳动，自食其力
疫情期间封闭社会	开放工作环境
大政府	小政府
对经济更多控制/多强制令	对经济更少控制/少强制令
反对任期限制	支持任期限制
社会主义	资本主义
自由主义（同性、变性、毒品、大麻）	保守主义（男女两性婚姻、反毒品合法化）
共产主义	宪法社会
政治正确	言论自由
暴乱与暴力	法律与秩序
暴政	自由共和

Killing babies	Letting babies live
Defunding Police	Supporting Police
Gun Control	Gun Rights
Open Borders	Border Control
Illegal Immigration	Legal Immigration
Higher Taxes	Tax Breaks
Weak Military	Strong Military
Over-Regulations	Small Businesses
Let Anyone Vote	Voter ID
Welfare State	Working Class
Lockdown State	Working Economy
Big Government	Small Government
More Control/Mandates	Less Control/Mandates
Against Term Limits	Favor Term Limits
Socialism	Capitalism
Liberalism	Conservatism
Communism	Constitutional
Political Correctness	Free Speech
Riots & Violence	Law & Order
Tyrannical Government	Free Republic

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北美保守评论
North America Conservative Review

In order to counter the harmful effects of pro-gun disinformation, it is crucial for Asian Americans to come together and raise public awareness about the dangers of firearms. This can be achieved through advocating for stronger gun safety laws, engaging in community outreach, and promoting education initiatives that emphasize accurate information. By actively participating in these efforts, Asian American can contribute to more informed and responsible conversations surrounding guns.



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