



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on July 9, 2013

CDC Study Ordered by Obama Contradicts White House Anti-gun Narrative

In January, following the Sandy Hook Elementary School massacre, President Obama [issued](#) a "Presidential Memorandum directing the Centers for Disease Control to research the causes and prevention of gun violence," along with 22 other "initiatives." [That study](#), subcontracted out to the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, was completed in June and contained some surprises for the president.



Obama had announced at the beginning of the year his push for three major gun control initiatives — universal background checks, a ban on "assault weapons," and a ban on "high-capacity" magazines — to prevent future mass shootings, no doubt hoping that the CDC study would oblige him by providing evidence that additional gun control measures were justified to reduce gun violence. On the contrary, that study refuted nearly all the standard anti-gun narrative and instead supported many of the positions taken by gun ownership supporters.

For example, the majority of gun-related deaths between 2000 and 2010 were due to suicide and not criminal violence:

Between the years 2000-2010 firearm-related suicides significantly outnumbered homicides for all age groups, annually accounting for 61 percent of the more than 335,600 people who died from firearms related violence in the United States.

In addition, defensive use of guns "is a common occurrence," according to the study:

Almost all national survey estimates indicate that defensive gun uses by victims are at least as common as offensive uses by criminals, with estimates of annual uses ranging from about 500,000 to more than 3 million per year, in the context of about 300,000 violent crimes involving firearms in 2008.

Accidental deaths due to firearms has continued to fall as well, with "the number of unintentional deaths due to firearm-related incidents account[ing] for less than 1 percent of all unintentional fatalities in 2010."

Furthermore, the key finding the president was no doubt seeking — that more laws would result in less crime — was missing. The study said that "interventions," such as background checks and restrictions on firearms and increased penalties for illegal gun use, showed "mixed" results, while "turn-in" programs "are ineffective" in reducing crime. The study noted that most criminals obtained their guns in the underground economy — from friends, family members, or gang members — well outside any influence from gun controls on legitimate gun owners.

Also, the report noted that mass shootings such as the one in Newtown, Connecticut, have declined and "account for a very small fraction of all firearm-related deaths."

There was one startling conclusion which, taken at face value, seemed to give the president what he



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was looking for. The study reported that “the U.S. rate of firearm-related homicide is higher than that of any other industrialized country: 19.5 times higher than the rates in other high-income countries.”

However, Zara Matheson of the Martin Prosperity Institute, produced a map that compared gun violence rates in the major metropolitan areas of the country to rates of foreign countries. As Graham Noble of *Guardian Express* [noted](#), “If one were to exclude figures for Illinois, California, New Jersey and Washington, DC, the homicide rate in the United States would be in line with any other country.” These areas, of course, are noted for the most restrictive gun laws in the country, thus negating any opportunity for the president to celebrate the report’s findings.

The current report from the CDC echoed findings [the CDC published back in 2003](#) that showed that suicides were responsible for 58 percent of all firearms-related deaths in 2000. Also noted is that back in 2003 Americans owned an estimated 192 million firearms, while today that number is estimated to be closer to 300 million, an increase of more than 55 percent.

Said the CDC back in 2003, “Evidence was *insufficient to determine the effectiveness of any of these laws*” (Emphasis added.):

- Bans on specified firearms or ammunition,
- Restrictions on firearm acquisition,
- Waiting periods for firearm acquisition,
- Firearm registration and licensing of owners, and
- Zero tolerance for firearms in schools.

If the president was looking to the CDC report for support on how to reduce the threat of firearm-related violence through legislation restricting the rights of American citizens, he was sorely disappointed. Perhaps that’s why so few of the media have publicized the report. In fact, [the only establishment media even to mention the report was the Washington Post](#), which criticized it for not answering questions that it wasn’t asked to answer!

A graduate of Cornell University and a former investment advisor, Bob is a regular contributor to The New American magazine and blogs frequently at www.LightFromTheRight.com, primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com



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