



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on June 16, 2014

## Obama, Media Mislead on Gun Crime Statistics in U.S., Australia

The Troutdale, Oregon, shooting on June 10 gave both the president and the liberal media another opportunity to rehash old arguments and repeat old lies about the need for more gun control in the United States. When Jared Padgett entered a boys' locker room at Reynolds High School on June 10, [he murdered a classmate](#) before being confronted by armed officers. Following that confrontation, Padgett took his own life. The fact that he stole the weapons from his family home, defeating various security measures, meant that he also defeated any background check measures that were in place to prevent such a shooting from occurring.



That simple fact escaped the attention of the president who, taking advantage of the tragedy, pushed his ongoing agenda for more gun control measures:

My biggest frustration so far is the fact that this society has not been willing to take some basic steps to keep guns out of the hands of people who can do just unbelievable damage. We're the only developed country on earth where this happens. And it happens now once a week. And it's a one-day story. There's no place else like this.

He then reiterated the myth that gun confiscation measures implemented nearly 20 years ago in Australia had significantly reduced such mass shootings there and that, by implication, the United States should go and do likewise:

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A couple of decades ago Australia had a mass shooting similar to Columbine or Newtown, and Australia just said, "Well, that's it. We're not doing — we're not seeing that again," and basically imposed very severe, tough gun laws, and they haven't had a mass shooting since. I mean, our levels of gun violence are off the charts. There's no other advanced, developed country on earth that would put up with this.

The very next day, as if in lockstep, the *Washington Post's* editorial board referred to the Troutdale shooting as just one of many of those mass shootings that justified more onerous restrictions on gun ownership in the United States:

Such senseless violence shouldn't happen. Not in Troutdale or Newtown or Columbine or Blacksburg or Seattle or Tucson or Las Vegas or Santa Barbara or the Washington Navy Yard for, for that matter, any place in the United States.

It's all Congress' fault:



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No place is really safe. That's because Congress refuses — even in the face of increasingly frequent shootings — to even consider, let alone enact, any kind of responsible gun control.

While the *Post* referred to the president's remarks from the day before, it failed to mention any other incidents where mass shootings were severely limited or avoided altogether by the presence of armed force in the hands of a private citizen. It failed to mention the unsung hero, Joseph Wilcox, who earlier this month [confronted a shooter at a Walmart store in Las Vegas](#). It failed to mention the sharp decline in criminal homicides and violent crime in just a single city since its citizens were allowed to carry concealed: Detroit. It failed to mention Detroit Police Chief James Craig's comment to the press about how important private ownership and use of such firearms are in combatting criminals bent on mayhem:

I did, in fact, say that good Americans, good Detroiters, if responsible, could get CPLs [concealed pistol permits] and that it could — emphasis on the word could — be a deterrent to violent crime. I said that because of my experience in four cities, having seen good Americans and good Detroiters that have CCWs [carrying concealed weapons permits], and what effect it has had on deterring violent crime.

In fact, there's been research ... by the Department of Justice and some scholars that armed citizens, good citizens, can have a deterring effect on violent crime.

Neither the president nor *Washington Post* referred to the latest report from Pew Research which showed that the gun homicide rate in the United States has declined by half since 1993. Said Pew:

Compared with 1993, the peak of U.S. gun homicides, the firearm homicide rate was 49% lower in 2010, and there were fewer deaths, even though the nation's population grew.

The victimization rate for other violent crimes with a firearm — assaults, robberies and sex crimes — was 75% lower in 2011 than in 1993.

Violent non-fatal crime victimization overall (with or without a firearm) also is down markedly (72%) over two decades.

This startling downward trend was taking place at the same time that the number of firearms, and their owners, have been increasing. In just one year, for example, the percentage of American households owning at least one firearm has increased by five percent from 2012 to 2013.

Neither the president nor the *Post* noted that according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, "homicides that claimed at least three lives accounted for less than 1% of all homicide deaths from 1980 to 2008." When using four deaths per incident, as a recent Congressional Research report did, there were a total of just 547 deaths from mass shootings in the United States in the 30 years from 1983 through 2012, far less than the "one per week" quoted by the president.

As far as Australia is concerned, the president also failed the Pinocchio test by suggesting that violent crime and gun homicides had declined there since that country confiscated long guns and bought back more than 70,000 handguns following passage of the National Firearms Agreement (NFA) in 1996. In August, 2008 the University of Melbourne published the results of its study of the matter ("The Australian Firearms Buyback and Its Effect on Gun Deaths") and concluded that "the results of these tests suggest that the NFA did not have any large effects on reducing firearm homicide or suicide rates." But it most certainly did have an effect on relegating its citizens to second-class status. As Australian member of parliament David Leyonhjelm wrote in an email to Guns.com:



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The gun laws have made no difference [in] the level of homicides, up or down...

The bottom line is [that] we are suffering under draconian gun laws that treat us like criminals in waiting, with zero public benefit but substantial public cost.

If President Obama genuinely believes Australia offers a model for reducing firearm crime ... he is seriously misinformed.

Misinformed perhaps, but undeterred.

*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](http://www.LightFromTheRight.com), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at [badelmann@thenewamerican.com](mailto:badelmann@thenewamerican.com).*

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