



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 10, 2014

Study Suggests More Concealed Carry Permits, Less Crime

As the number of Americans with concealed carry permits has increased, a new study reveals that during the same time period, the percentage of violent crimes has decreased. The study, conducted by the Crime Prevention Research Center, reveals that 11.1 million Americans now carry concealed weapons, a significant increase from 4.5 million in 2007. And that 146-percent increase coincides with a 22-percent decrease in both murder and violent crime rates.



The survey is the first measure of concealed carry permits since 2011, when the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) found that eight million Americans had such permits. And as noted by the Crime Prevention Research Center, though the survey found that 11,113,013 Americans currently hold concealed carry permits, the number is likely much higher because not all states that issue permits have those figures available.

The figures reveal that Florida has the highest number of concealed carry permits, at 1.3 million, with Texas a close second, at 708,000. Of the states, Hawaii has the lowest, with just 183.

A number of factors contributed to the rise in concealed carry permits, including new state laws. In March, Illinois became the 50th state to allow concealed carry of firearms.

Earlier this year, a ruling from the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals determined that California must allow law-abiding citizens to carry concealed firearms in public. In that 2-1 decision, the judges found that San Diego County's rule that residents must show "good cause" to obtain a concealed weapons permit, which does not simply include the desire to protect oneself, was in violation of the U.S. Constitution. That ruling is currently waiting for a review by the entire circuit.

Gun sales overall have been increasing over the last several years. In fact, data reveals that small arms manufacturers experienced a significant boost after President Obama was elected to a second term. An article in Bloomberg noted on November 7, 2012 that Smith & Wesson and Sturm Ruger & Co. were among some of the companies benefiting from Obama's reelection:

Shares of Smith & Wesson jumped 9.6 percent to \$10.37 at the close in New York, the biggest gain since Sept. 7, while Sturm Ruger & Co. (RGR) rose 6.8 percent to \$47.68. Both make handguns as well as rifles that include semiautomatic models.

After sidestepping gun-control measures in his first term, Obama said last month he would consider reintroducing a ban on civilian purchases of military-style assault weapons. Firearm sales have grown at 10 percent annually since 2008, when Obama was elected, compared with a 7 percent rate from 2001 to 2007, according to Benchmark Co.

And while an increasing number of Americans own guns, murder rates continue to dip. According to the study by Crime Prevention Research Center, from 2007 to early estimates for 2013, murder rates have dropped from 5.6 to 4.4 per 100,000.



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The data undermines assertions made by anti-gun groups that protecting the Second Amendment poses a threat to the safety of the American people.

"When you allow people to carry concealed handguns, you see changes in the behavior of criminals," said the center's president, John R. Lott, a Fox News contributor. "Some criminals stop committing crimes, others move on to crimes in which they don't come into contact with victims and others actually move to areas where they have less fear of being confronted by armed victims."

Fox News reports:

The real measure of the deterrent effect of concealed carry permits, according to Lott, is not laws on the books, but the percentage of a given state's population that holds the permits. In 10 states, more than 8 percent of adults hold concealed carry permits, and all are among the states with the lowest crime rates. Lott claims his group's analysis shows that each one percentage point increase in the adult population holding permits brings a 1.4 percent drop in the murder rate.

"We found that the size of the drop [in crime] is directly related to the percentage of the population with permits," Lott said. Six states do not require a permit to carry concealed weapons, and according to Lott, those states have some of the lowest crime rates in the nation.

Not everyone agrees with Lott's assessment, however. According to Tod Burke, a former police officer and professor of criminal justice at Radford University, the reduction in crime results from smarter, "data-driven" policing and increased incarceration of violent criminals. "I think we have to be cautious about having a causal relationship between gun permits and a decrease in crime," said Burke.

But studies do seem to indicate that it is more than a coincidence that crime decreases in areas where more people are armed.

A 2007 Harvard Study entitled ["Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?"](#) looks at figures for "intentional deaths" throughout continental Europe and compares them with the United States to show that more gun control does not necessarily lead to lower death rates or violent crime. The study concludes that the "the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths" is wrong.

The Harvard study noted that in gun ownership in Russia was 4,000 per 100,000 inhabitants while the murder rate was 20.52 per 100,000 in 2002. In that same year, Finland, where gun ownership was higher at 39,000 per 100,000, the murder rate was as low as 1.98 per 100,000.

In its examination of Western Europe, the study shows that Norway "has far and away Western Europe's highest household gun ownership rate [at 36,000 per 100,000 in 2001], but also its lowest murder rate [at .81 per 100,000 in 2001]."

The study then examined instances of intentional deaths by looking at the U.S. and comparing them to Continental Europe. Despite assertions that the United States is the most violent nation in the world by anti-gun groups, the U.S. came in seventh behind Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and the Ukraine in murders. In suicides, the U.S. ranked 22.

The authors of the study concluded that gun opponents should "at the very least [be able] to show a large number of nations with more guns have more death and that nations that impose stringent gun controls have achieved substantial reductions in criminal violence (or suicide)." But noted in its intense study, "those correlations are not observed when a large number of nations are compared around the world."



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Still, anti-gun advocates continue to feverishly oppose the Second Amendment, even when the data disproves their assertions.

Data from a 2013 report by the Federal Bureau of Investigation indicated that the focus on restricting semi-automatic rifles following the tragic shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut was misguided. In fact, according to the FBI, more hammers, clubs, and other blunt objects are involved in murders than rifles or shotguns.

In 2011, 323 murders were committed with a rifle and 356 with a shotgun, while a staggering 496 were committed with hammers and clubs.

Furthermore, from 2005 to 2011, more people in the United States were killed with blunt objects such as hammers and clubs, or with hands and fists, than with rifles. In many of those years, twice as many people were killed with hands and fists than with rifles.

In 2006, there were 618 murders committed with a hammer or club, while 438 murders were committed with a rifle. In 2005, 445 murders were committed with a rifle while 605 by hammers and clubs. Also in 2011, 1,694 people were killed by “knives or cutting instruments,” far more than rifles and shotguns combined.

In light of all this information, if government officials truly desire to reduce murder rates and keep the population, especially children, safer, they should encourage gun ownership by responsible, law abiding citizens rather than try to restrict access to firearms. After all, making something illegal doesn't make it go away, but simply drives it into the hands of criminals. Such is the case with drugs in this country currently, and was the case with alcohol during Prohibition.

Governments throughout history have restricted people's access to weapons for the primary purpose of controlling the population. The most oppressive governments are the ones that prevent the “masses” from arming themselves. This is precisely why the Founding Fathers included the Second Amendment in the U.S. Constitution, preventing the federal government from infringing on the people's natural right to defend themselves.

Photo of pro-gun rally in Illinois on March 5, 2014: AP Images



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