



Chicago: Drop in Crime as Concealed Carry Applications Surge

This year, Illinois became the 50th state to issue concealed carry permits. And despite strident warnings from anti-gun advocates that allowing such permits would create more crimes, it has actually lowered crime rates.

The *Washington Times* writes, "Reports of burglary and motor vehicle theft are down 20 percent and 26 percent respectively. In the first quarter, the city's homicide rate was at a 56-year low."



Police in Chicago have acknowledged the importance of armed citizens after an 86-year-old man with a concealed carry permit fired his weapon at an armed suspect who had been fleeing police last month. The man managed to stop the suspect, permitting the police to make an arrest. The suspect had harassed customers at an AT&T store and even pistol-whipped one. Authorities later said that the man who aided the police is a "model citizen" who "helped others avoid being victims."

The correlation between an increase in concealed carry permits and a decrease in crimes for most is too obvious to ignore.

Richard Pearson, executive director of the Illinois State Rifle Association observed,

It isn't any coincidence crime rates started to go down when concealed carry was permitted. Just the idea that the criminals don't know who's armed and who isn't has a deterrence effect. The police department hasn't changed a single tactic — they haven't announced a shift in policy or of course — and yet you have these incredible numbers.

At the end of July, over 80,000 concealed carry applications had been submitted, with 68,549 licenses issued. Pearson estimates that by the end of the year, 100,000 law-abiding citizens in Illinois will be carrying guns. He adds that over 300,000 may have concealed carry permits.

Citizen response to the issuance of concealed carry permits was immediate. Pearson notes that in January, gun training and shooting classes — which are required for the application — were filling up before the rifle association was even able to schedule them.

"The temperature would be 40 below, and you'd have these guys out on the range, having to crack off the ice from their guns to see the target," Pearson said. "But they'd do it, because they were that passionate about getting their license."

But the Chicago Police Department is hesitant to attribute the decrease in crime to the increase in concealed carry permits. Police Superintendent Garry McCarthy claims it has to do with better police work and training, "intelligent policing strategies," and the confiscation by his department of more than 1,300 illegal guns in the first three months of the year.

Nevertheless, data from the Crime Prevention Research Center points to a direct connection between



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increased concealed carry permits and decreased crime. Their research shows that 11.1 million Americans have concealed carry permits, a 147-percent increase from 4.5 million just seven years ago. During the same period, homicide and violent crimes have decreased by 22 percent.

The survey is the first measure of concealed carry permits since 2011, when the Government Accountability Office found that eight million Americans owned such a permit. And as noted by the Crime Prevention Research Center, though the survey found that 11,113,013 Americans 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 gun owners have the most concealed carry permits, at 1.3 million, with Texas a close second, at 708,000. Of all the states, Hawaii has the lowest, with just 183.

From 2007 to early estimates for 2013, national murder rates have dropped from 5.6 to 4.4 per 100,000.

Crime Prevention Research Center President John Lott, a Fox News contributor, observed,

When you allow people to carry concealed handguns, you see changes in the behavior of criminals. 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.

There's a lot of academic research that's been done on this, and if you look at the peer-reviewed studies, the bottom line is a large majority find a benefit of concealed carry on crime rates — and, at worst, there's no cost.

You can deter criminals with longer prison sentences and penalties, but arming people with the right to defend themselves with a gun is also a deterrence. We found that the size of the drop [in crime] is directly related to the percentage of the population with permits.

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.

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.

Chicago's stringent gun laws were so severe that they bordered on the absurd. Last year, it was brought to the attention of Chicago Alderman Edward Burke that the legislation even barred city museums from displaying unloaded guns.

But because of its strict gun laws, Chicago continued to be plagued by homicides and gun violence. The *New York Times* reported in January of last year, "Chicago, a city with no civilian gun ranges and bans on both assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, finds itself laboring to stem a flood of gun violence that contributed to more than 500 homicides last year and at least 40 killings already in 2013."

Richard Pearson, executive director of the Illinois State Rifle Association, remarked that the restrictions have done nothing but "made the citizens prey."



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But with the concealed carry permits now spiking, that may soon change.



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