



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on August 29, 2017

LA City Council to End Its Ban on “Ultra-compact” Handguns

According to the *Los Angeles Times*, LA’s city council is “poised to roll back its ban on ‘ultra-compact’ guns” [on Tuesday](#), thanks to pressure from the National Rifle Association (NRA) and the California Rifle & Pistol Association (CRPA). Those groups hold that California state law overrules and overrides the city’s attempt to ban small, concealable handguns from its citizens.



The ban, passed in 2001, was based on several assumptions that have proved to be false. For example, Mike Feurer, the city’s attorney, who was serving as a city councilman when the law was passed, said at the time, “These concealable, compact weapons are the weapons of choice for criminals.” This flatly contradicted the conclusions of a study based on interviews with 1,800 incarcerated felons in 1995 that criminals prefer the highest caliber guns they can obtain rather than smaller, lighter, lower caliber firearms. In fact, that same study showed that the most common firearm used in homicides was a large caliber revolver, rather than a smaller caliber semi-automatic pistol.

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The Violence Policy Center got involved in the conversation in 2001, calling the small handguns “pocket rockets” and claiming that their portability could cause their owners to misuse them in “moments of anger, depression, or other emotional instability.”

What the ban has done is keep women and poor blacks from buying and carrying them for self-defense, turning the law into an embodiment of both racism and misogyny. It also mitigated against the disabled who would otherwise be able to own a smaller more easily handled firearm for self-protection.

It was the *New York Times* that first used the term “Saturday Night Special” in 1968 immediately after passage of the Gun Control Act (GCA) that year. The GCA banned the importation of many inexpensive firearms, which included a large number of small revolvers manufactured by German gun maker Rohm Gesellschaft. A decade later author Don Kates teamed up with liberal Senator Frank Church to write the blockbuster *Restricting Handguns: The Liberal Skeptics Speak Out* in which they noted the distinctly racist overtones that were incorporated in the GCA. In fact, Roy Innis, the president of the Congress for



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Racial Equality (CORE) and board member of the NRA, said, “To make inexpensive guns impossible to get is to say that you’re putting a money test on getting a gun. It’s racism in its worst form.”

The National Institute of Justice put the case against such bans of “ultra-compact” firearms bluntly:

The people most likely to be deterred from acquiring a handgun by exceptionally high prices or by the nonavailability of certain kinds of handguns are not felons intent on arming themselves for criminal purposes (who can, if all else fails, steal the handgun they want), but rather poor people who have decided they need a gun to protect themselves against the felons but who find that the cheapest gun in the market costs more than they can afford to pay.

Once the city rolls back its ban on “ultra-compact” handguns, the state’s onerous restrictions on citizens seeking to purchase and carry a firearm remain in place. To purchase a handgun, a Californian must first obtain a Handgun Safety Certificate by passing a written test given by a certified state-licensed instructor on the safe and legal use of firearms. The purchaser must then perform a Safe Handling Demonstration when taking possession of the handgun. This is in addition to the fees required for the privilege of exercising a right.

None of which impeded Kori Ali Muhammad, a Muslim who shouted allahu akbar when being arrested, a proponent of BlackLivesMatter, and who told police he “hated white people,” who used a .357 magnum revolver to kill three people in Fresno in April. Most irritating was the fact that Muhammad had used the firearm to kill a security guard at a local Motel 6 five days before opening fire in downtown Fresno. The police had five days to track him down but failed.

The city council is “poised” to repeal its “ultra-compact” handgun ban on Tuesday, as the *LA Times* noted. What it failed to note is that citizens, thanks to the state’s strict regulations on purchasers and its continued “may issue” status of issuing concealed carry permits, rather than “shall issue,” will be no safer than they were on Monday.

Image: Screenshot of [YouTube video by Gun Websites](#)

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