



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 12, 2014

Pew Research Shows Increasing Public Support for Gun Rights

On Thursday, just four days before the second anniversary of the horrific Newtown, Connecticut, massacre by Adam Lanza at Sandy Hook Elementary School, Pew Research [released its latest poll](#) on Americans' view on the Second Amendment versus gun control. To some their conclusions were startling, while to others it was dismaying. The *Washington Times* reported that Americans' support for gun rights "is higher than it's been in decades," while left-leaning *CS Monitor* was much more subdued, saying only that "Americans say protecting the rights of gun owners is more important than gun control."



A closer look at the exact wording of the question that Pew has been asking Americans for 20 years, however, reveals a sea change in attitude toward the ownership of firearms that crosses nearly every conceivable demographic, whether it be age, education, political affiliation, or race. Here's what Pew asked some 1,500 people in early December:

What do you think is more important — to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?

Pew has been asking that same question since 1993, and so the paradigm shift is not only obvious, but statistically valid as well. In 1993, just 34 percent of those polled held that the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms was more important, while 57 percent said they favored more gun controls. Support for the Second Amendment hit a nadir in March 2000, about a year after the Columbine High School massacre occurred near Denver, Colorado. In that poll, just 29 percent of Americans favored the Second Amendment, while 66 percent favored additional restrictions on gun ownership.

Over the next dozen years, the attitude of Americans slowly shifted toward the Second Amendment, with polls taken six months before the monstrous massacre of innocents by Lanza showed 46 percent of Americans favoring the Second Amendment — a 17-percent gain from 2000.

The Second Amendment took a modest but temporary hit as President Obama and his cadre of gun control extremists were featured center-stage by the media for months following Newtown. In December 2012, those favoring it dropped slightly to 42 percent, a low never to be seen again by Pew.

December 2014's poll results now show that 52 percent of Americans favor the Second Amendment over more gun legislation, while those favoring restrictions on gun ownership slipped to just 46 percent, the lowest level seen since Columbine.

The biggest change, and the one the media has downplayed or ignored altogether, is the attitude change among black Americans. When Pew asked Americans in December 2012 whether gun ownership



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does more to protect people than it endangers personal safety, 29 percent of blacks thought that gun ownership helped protect people. But just one year later, in December 2013, an astounding 54 percent of blacks thought gun ownership helped protect people from violence. In that poll, even Democrats as a whole changed their tune, albeit only slightly, with just 33 percent of them in 2012 thinking so, while 35 percent of them thought so in 2013. As Pew noted in its latest study:

Across many demographic and political groups, opinion has moved in the direction of greater support for gun rights since January 2013.

The one demographic that remains fixed in the firmament is the opinion of liberal Democrats. In December 2012, only 23 percent of them held that gun ownership helped protect innocents from violence, while in December 2013, according to Pew, just 20 percent hold that view. In that same poll, 65 percent of liberal Democrats in 2012 thought gun ownership put people's safety at risk while 76 percent of them now hold that view.

This contrasts with every other demographic Pew measured, from whites, blacks, college graduates, high-schoolers, Republicans, Independents, parents, urbanites, suburbanites, rurals, and every age group from 18 through 65 and older.

What's remarkable is that this study reflects the views of 1,500 Americans who have been savaged by the media and the president and his gun control allies mercilessly since Columbine and Newtown. Funded by billionaires on the Left, anti-gun groups do not lack for financial firepower to promote their agenda, and in the recent midterms various races were targeted by them. By and large those efforts failed, for the moment. In fact, on Sunday, December 13, members of the strongly pro-gun ownership group Oathkeepers will descend on the Washington statehouse to protest publicly their unhappiness with the passage of an anti-gun initiative, i594. They plan to trade, buy, and sell weapons in clear violation of the new initiative, daring legislators and their enforcers to do anything about it.

When the president decided that Newtown was another "opportunity" not to be missed, he pressed hard for more gun restrictions, including nationwide background checks, a ban on high-capacity magazines, and on so-called assault rifles. The pro-gun movement was strong enough even in the then-Democrat-controlled Senate to stall his bill.

The Pew poll is no outlier either. On November 14, the National Rifle Association's Institute for Legislative Action (NRAILA), published the results of a Gallup poll that reported that "53 percent of Americans now believe that having guns at home makes them safer, nearly double the percentage reporting the same belief 14 years ago." NRAILA also noted at the time the same recalcitrant demographic of naysayers holding the opposite view:

Only among Democrats does a majority still believe that having a gun at home makes them less safe.

The NRAILA also reported in November the results of the FBI's annual crime report for 2013:

From 2012 to 2013, the nation's murder rate decreased [by] five percent, to at least a 57-year low.

The 2013 rate was down 56 percent from the all-time high recorded in 1980, and down 54 percent since 1991, when total violent crime hit an all-time high.

From 1991 until now, anti-gunners have stoked the desire of Americans to exercise their Second Amendment rights, which has been reflected in gun owners purchasing between 135 million and 140 million new firearms over that period. In the 1970's the National Council to Control Handguns — now



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known as the Brady Campaign — “consequences terrible to imagine” if Americans continued to exercise their right to protect themselves. At the time it was estimated that Americans owned 40 million firearms. Current estimates of that number now range between 270 million to 310 million.

Life is increasingly hard for those who believe the Second Amendment is a relic that needs to be tossed into the dustbin of history. The latest poll from Pew merely confirms it.

A graduate of an Ivy League school 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.



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