



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on October 28, 2011

## Polls Show Gun Ownership and Second Amendment Support Up

Despite the Obama administration's best efforts to place stricter gun controls on American citizens, support for the Second Amendment is currently at a record high. A recent Gallup poll shows a mere 26 percent of the respondents believe the federal government should ban handguns. Seventy-three percent of those polled are opposed to a government ban on handguns. Another Gallup poll reveals that the percentage of American gun owners has increased as well.



The Second Amendment poll shows a marked increase from the first time the question was asked in 1959, when 60 percent of the respondents favored banning handguns. Those figures changed dramatically by 1975, however, when the majority of Americans began to show opposition for such a measure.

This most current poll shows that support for gun-control measures is at a historic low. Gallup's [website](#) reports:

For the first time, Gallup finds greater opposition to than support for a ban on semiautomatic guns or assault rifles, 53% to 43%. In the initial asking of this question in 1996, the numbers were nearly reversed, with 57% for and 42% against an assault rifle ban. Congress passed such a ban in 1994, but the law expired when Congress did not act to renew it in 2004. Around the time the law expired, Americans were about evenly divided in their views.

The majority of those polled seem to believe, however, that the government should continue to enforce existing gun laws, but should not pass new gun laws.

Gallup made a variety of assertions to explain the increasing support for the Second Amendment, because it cannot be explained by a major shift in the trends in Americans' perceptions of crime, as there is none. "In 2008, Gallup found [widespread agreement](#) with the idea that the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees the right of Americans to own guns. Americans may also be moving toward more libertarian views in some areas, one example of which is [greater support for legalizing marijuana use](#)," Gallup reports.

"What's interesting here is Americans are shifting to a more pro-gun stance despite high profile incidents of gun violence — like the Arizona shooting of Rep. Gabrielle Giffords and 18 others," reports [CNN](#) in reaction to the findings.

In addition to the increased support for the Second Amendment, a recent Gallup poll shows a massive increase in the percentage of Americans who own guns. According to Gallup, "Forty-seven percent of



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American adults currently report that they have a gun in their home or elsewhere on their property. This is up from 41% a year ago and is the highest Gallup has recorded since 1993, albeit marginally above the 44% and 45% highs seen during that period."

"Gun ownership is more common in the South (54 percent) and Midwest (51 percent) than in the East (36 percent) or West (43 percent)," the report says.

Not only is gun ownership at an increase overall, but it has also increased significantly among women, with 43 percent this year compared to 36 percent from last year.

Gallup summarized its followings:

A clear societal change took place regarding gun ownership in the early 1990s, when the percentage of Americans saying there was a gun in their home or on their property dropped from the low to mid-50s into the low to mid-40s and remained at that level for the next 15 years. Whether this reflected a true decline in gun ownership or a cultural shift in Americans' willingness to say they had guns is unclear. However, the new data suggest that attitudes may again be changing. At 47%, reported gun ownership is the highest it has been in nearly two decades — a finding that may be related to Americans' dampened support for gun-control laws. However, to ensure that this year's increase reflects a meaningful rebound in reported gun ownership, it will be important to see whether the uptick continues in future polling.

The recent polls certainly reflect a significant change in how Americans view guns and gun control. Following the Supreme Court's rejection of Chicago's handgun ban in *McDonald v. City of Chicago*, David Ritgers of the Cato Institute observed that "the simple, undeniable truth is that gun control does not work." Ritger wrote at the time of the Supreme Court ruling:

Strict gun-control policies have failed to deliver on their essential promise: that denying law-abiding citizens access to the means of self-defense will somehow make them safer. This should come as no surprise, since gun control has always been about control, not guns.

According to Ritger, gun control began with racial motivations to "deny armed freedmen who could stand up for their rights." He contends that by the 1960s, gun control laws were not motivated by racism so much as the fears that escalated from "social change, the drug trade, and the assassination of several national figures," which "turned gun control into an article of faith among progressive politicians."

History reveals that gun control has failed wherever implemented, whether in Canada, the United States, or the United Kingdom, where desperate citizens are turning to baseball bats as a means for self-defense. Following England's 1997 handgun ban, crime rose dramatically. A similar trend was seen in Australia, as well as Canada.

The American people are simply responding to the data and embracing their right to keep and bear arms, as cited in the Constitution.



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