



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on March 29, 2016

Soaring Gun Sales Cause Crime Rate to Plummet

Following the record-setting year of gun purchases and ownership, Smith & Wesson projected increasing sales for 2016, coming in at between \$150 million and \$155 million for the first quarter of the new year. Once all the data was in, however, the nation's oldest gun maker was forced to revise those numbers upward by 16 percent, to between \$175 and \$180 million for the next quarter.

This squares with the increasing number of background checks, which jumped last year to 23 million, the largest number ever recorded since the federal background check system started in 1998.



The notoriously anti-gun *New York Times* tried to learn what was behind the [increasing interest in buying and owning firearms](#), and was forced to admit that political pressure on law-abiding gun owners was the primary reason, declaring, "Fear of gun-buying restrictions has been the main driver of spikes in gun sales, far surpassing the effects of mass shootings and terrorist attacks."

The *Times*, which pointed out the conundrum facing anti-gunners. "Th[is] dynamic shows a Catch-22 for gun control proponents: pushing for new restrictions can lead to an influx of new guns," the article noted. This, of course, is exactly the opposite of the intended result, made clear years ago when Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) declared: "If I could have banned them all — 'Mr. and Mrs. America, turn in your guns' — I would have!"

Also no doubt annoying to the *Times* is the simple fact that as gun ownership has increased, violent crime has declined. John Lott made waves with the publication of *More Guns, Less Crime* in 1998, based on a county-by-county study of the impact that 13 different types of gun controls had on crime. He revised it in 2000 and then again in 2010, each time making the increasingly persuasive case that as gun ownership expanded among American citizens, violent crime dropped. According to the FBI, the violent crime rate in 1994 was 713 per 100,000 population. Ten years later it had dropped to 463 per 100,000. In 2012 it dropped still further, to 387 per 100,000.

Likely even further annoying to the anti-gun crowd was a study by two scholars, Don Kates and Gary Mauser, published in 2007 by Harvard University, entitled "Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?"

Their answer? No: "Whether gun availability is viewed as a cause or as a mere coincidence, the long term macrocosmic evidence is that gun ownership, spread widely throughout societies, consistently correlates with stable or declining murder rates.... The data consistently show that ... more guns equal less crime." (Emphasis in original.)

That's what Phyllis Engler, a recently retired physical education teacher, said following her first gun training class last week at the American Range shooting facility outside of Austintown, Ohio. She suffers from arthritis but told James Haggerty of the *Wall Street Journal* that "it was hard holding [the pistol] ...



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but I think with practice, I'll be fine." She added: "They better not mess with the women of Austintown."

The number of seniors taking gun training classes from NRA instructors across the country has quadrupled in just the last five years. Gun shop owners are reporting similar experiences, with Glenn Duncan, the owner of Duncan's Outdoor Shop in Bay City, Michigan, estimating that at least a third of his customers now are women.

Felons may be criminals, but they aren't stupid. A survey of convicted felons conducted by two University of Massachusetts professors discovered that 81 percent of those looking for a criminal opportunity determined in advance if their target was armed, 74 percent avoided homes that were occupied for fear of being shot by someone, and 57 percent said they feared armed citizens more than they did the police.

It's one thing to own a firearm. It's another thing to know how and when to use it. Engler is right: Criminals had better not mess with armed citizens possessing skill at arms. As more and more citizens take advantage of their Second Amendment-protected rights, one may reasonably expect those violent crime statistics to continue to decline.

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 [LightFromTheRight.com](#), primarily on economics and politics. He can be reached at badelman@thenewamerican.com.



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