



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 19, 2024

The United States of Concealed Carry

According to John Lott, the historical statistician who heads up his Crime Prevention Research Center (CPRC), [more than 21 million Americans have a concealed-carry permit](#). But what must be frustrating to a man intimately acquainted with and dependent upon reliable numbers is the fact that that estimate is likely much too low.

The reason: 29 states now allow “Constitutional carry,” which means a law-abiding citizen is free to carry a firearm without first getting permission from the government to do so. And that means he doesn’t show up in the numbers Lott uses in his annual report on the topic.

Lott explained:

While concealed handgun permit data is a better measure of changing gun ownership rates than NICS checks [background checks] or [opinion] polls, it clearly underestimates the true number and growth of people who can legally carry concealed handguns.

[And] the scale of that underestimation is increasing over time.

Three Reasons

- *Permits are now not required in 29 states.* Generally, people in these states only obtain permits so that they can carry concealed when traveling outside of their home state. With no fees or other requirements, these states are probably where concealed carry is most common. Indeed, despite the fact that the number of people who actually carried undoubtedly went up significantly when there were no longer any fees or training requirements to carry, the number of permits in Constitutional Carry states actually fell by 729,253.
- *Data on concealed carry is not readily available for a few states.* For example, New Hampshire only collects data on permits issued to nonresidents. Alabama simply doesn’t collect this data at all on the state level, and it is a very cumbersome process to obtain data from a large number of individual counties or cities. New York State Police hasn’t fulfilled the request for concealed carry data for months, stating that the ITTS department was still running the data.
- *For some states, the data is one or more years old and thus misses the recent, accelerated growth in permits.* Therefore, wrote Lott, “21.5 million is undoubtedly an underestimate of the total number of Americans with permits.”

For the Average American

Using old data from 2017, in a room filled with 10 people, there’s a 43% chance that someone in the room is carrying a concealed firearm. In a room with 20 people, the chances jump to 67%. With 50



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people, it's almost a certainty: 89%.

But that's using old and outdated data. Today, in a room with just five people, there's almost certainly at least one who is carrying concealed.

In addition, Lott pointed out that the number of number of permits issued to women increased by 250% just in the last 10 years while the number of permits issued to blacks tripled.

More Guns, Less Crime

Famous for writing *More Guns, Less Crime* in 1998 (and updating his research in 2010), Lott pointed out that "violent crime fell from 4.77 per 10 million people in 2007 to 3.64 per 10 million people in 2023, a 24% drop." This occurred when the percentage of adults with permits soared by three-fold.

Rather than engage in "I told you so," Lott backed into the issue by declaring instead that "there doesn't seem to be an obvious positive relationship between permits and crime." This is how Lott, the renowned and highly respected statistician, says "I told you so."

A Shout of Freedom

Without saying so, Lott's revealing annual report on Americans carrying concealed is a triumph for freedom: The less government (at any level) knows about us, the more free we are from its meddling, infringements, and threats.

What's especially important is that all of this was happening while gun rights were under vicious and unrelenting attack by Marxists in the White House and the media. The Biden-Harris administration used (and created) every tool it could think of to hamstring, infringe, and attack precious rights guaranteed under the Constitution. These include supporting new gun-control measures, using the ATF to force gun dealers out of business, and supporting efforts to remove protections from frivolous lawsuits granted to the gun industry by Congress in 2005.

The Biden administration's statement following the school shooting earlier this week in Madison, Wisconsin, reflects perfectly the failed and failing attempts to lay the groundwork for gun confiscation. Biden's push for Congress to "do something" following the shooting included the old, tired litany of invasions and infringements he's promoted for years, none of which had any relevance to or would have had any impact on the 15-year-old shooter's violent attack on innocents.

Lott is to be excused for his perceived frustration over the accuracy of his numbers of people who are carrying concealed. It is a shout of freedom.

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