

October 15, 2015

Given the current gun debate, the news of a Harvard Law Journal publishing a study showing more privately owned guns would reduce crime, was bound to find its way to *Pickings*. However, the blog pointing out the study, [Belief Net](#), was new to us so we did some checking. We actually found the PDF version of the study which was published in the [Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy](#). Checking further, we learned that the journal was published by Harvard law students of a libertarian bent. So, given all that, the study is a welcome addition to the gun debate. Here's Belief Net;

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*In other words, more firearms, less crime, concludes the virtually unpublicized research report by attorney Don B. Kates and Dr. Gary Mauser. But the key is firearms in the hands of private citizens.*

*"The study was overlooked when it first came out in 2007," writes Michael Snyder, "but it was recently re-discovered and while the findings may not surprise some, the place where the study was undertaken is a bit surprising. The study came from the Harvard Journal of Law, that bastion of extreme, Ivy League liberalism. Titled *Would Banning Firearms Reduce Murder and Suicide?*, the report "found some surprising things."*

*The popular assertion that the United States has the industrialized world's highest murder rate, says the Harvard study, is a throwback to the Cold War when Russian murder rates were nearly four times higher than American rates. In a strategic disinformation campaign, the U.S. was painted worldwide as a gunslinging nightmare of street violence – far worse than what was going on in Russia. The line was repeated so many times that many believed it to be true. Now, many still do.*

*Today violence continues in Russia – far worse than in the U.S. – although the Russian people remain virtually disarmed. "Similar murder rates also characterize the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and various other now-independent European nations of the former U.S.S.R.," note Kates and Mauser. Kates is a Yale-educated criminologist and constitutional lawyer. Dr. Mauser is a Canadian criminologist at Simon Fraser University with a Ph.D. from the University of California Irvine. "International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths. Unfortunately, such discussions are all too often been afflicted by misconceptions and factual error." ...*

**[Kevin Williamson](#)** says there is one strengthening of gun laws he would favor - more stricter curbs on "straw purchasing" of guns. That's were someone with no criminal record purchases a gun for someone who could not pass a background check. *This week in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee County Circuit Court is hearing arguments in a lawsuit filed by two police officers, both of them shot in the head by a young man named Julius Burton back in 2009. The officers are suing the former owners of the defunct gun shop that sold the*

*pistol Burton used to a straw purchaser, Jacob Collins. Burton was at the time too young to legally purchase a handgun.*

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*Wisconsin isn't alone in its nonchalance. California normally treats straw purchases as misdemeanors or minor infractions. Even as the people of Baltimore suffer horrific levels of violence, Maryland classifies the crime as a misdemeanor, too. Straw buying is a felony in progressive Connecticut, albeit one in the second-least-serious order of felonies. It is classified as a serious crime in Illinois (Class 2 felony), but police rarely (meaning "almost never") go after the nephews and girlfriends with clean records who provide Chicago's diverse and sundry gangsters with their weapons. In Delaware, it's a Class F felony, like forging a check. In Oregon, it's a misdemeanor. ...*

**Townhall columnist Susan Brown** writes that the president's response to the Oregon shooting shows he wishes to take away our guns.

*We hear you loud and clear about guns, President Obama. It's a little odd though, that you'd make insinuations about taking our guns away after the recent college shooting in Oregon, especially now that the EU Times reports the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) listed the shooter as an "American black-Islamist terror suspect" not quite the "white Republican" some initially suggested. ISIS also allegedly claimed culpability.*

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*We get you, Mr. Obama. If you were really angry about the right things, you'd be angry that witnesses say Mercer religiously profiled people, executing Christians. You conveniently didn't mention that detail in your anti-gun rant October 1 in Washington. Instead you said it was time to politicize the event. Politicize. ...*

**David Harsanyi** weighs in on the gun debate.

*After the horrific mass shooting at a community college in Oregon, President Obama made an impassioned case that gun violence is "something we should politicize"—and why should this be any different:*

*This is a political choice that we make, to allow this to happen every few months in America. We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction.*

*Everything in that statement is wrong. What happened in Oregon is tragic, and the nation should comfort families and look for reasonable and practical ways to stem violence, but there is only one murderer. Now, if government somehow bolstered, endorsed, or "allowed" the actions of Chris Harper-Mercer—as they might, say, the death of 10,000-plus viable babies each year or the civilian deaths that occur during an American drone action—a person could plausibly argue that we are collectively answerable as a nation. ...*

**John Hinderaker** spots Bernie's gun foolishness. He doesn't want to see a whole bunch of guns going to one spot. Kinda like someone getting concerned if "a whole bunch of chemical weapons are moving around . . . "

*Bernie Sanders represents Vermont, the freest state in the union where firearms are concerned. So it shouldn't be surprising that his record on guns is not as liberal as most national Democrats'. At the same time, some have exaggerated his support for the Second Amendment. While it is true that the NRA supported Sanders in his 1990 House race, his record since entering Congress has been mixed.*

*But one of his pro-gun votes was in favor of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which shields manufacturers from civil liability when guns function properly. Now that he is running for president, Sanders is tacking to the left on the one issue where he does not already hold down his party's port flank. Thus, on Meet the Press this morning, Sanders retreated on his 2005 support for the PLCAA:*

*"That was a complicated vote and I'm willing to see changes in that provision. Here's the reason I voted the way I voted: If you are a gun shop owner in Vermont and you sell somebody a gun and that person flips out and then kills somebody, I don't think it's really fair to hold that person responsible, the gun shop owner.*

*On the other hand, where there is a problem is there is evidence that manufacturers, gun manufacturers, do know that they're selling a whole lot of guns in an area that really should not be buying that many guns. That many of those guns are going to other areas, probably for criminal purposes. So can we take another look at that liability issue? Yes."*

*What on Earth does that mean? ...*

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## Belief Net

### [Harvard University Study Reveals Astonishing Link Between Firearms, Crime and Gun Control](#)

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painted worldwide as a gunslinging nightmare of street violence – far worse than what was going on in Russia. The line was repeated so many times that many believed it to be true. Now, many still do.

Today violence continues in Russia – far worse than in the U.S. – although the Russian people remain virtually disarmed. “Similar murder rates also characterize the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and various other now-independent European nations of the former U.S.S.R.,” note Kates and Mauser. Kates is a Yale-educated criminologist and constitutional lawyer. Dr. Mauser is a Canadian criminologist at Simon Fraser University with a Ph.D. from the University of California Irvine. “International evidence and comparisons have long been offered as proof of the mantra that more guns mean more deaths and that fewer guns, therefore, mean fewer deaths. Unfortunately, such discussions are all too often afflicted by misconceptions and factual error.”

By the early 1990s, Russia's murder rate was three times higher than that of the United States. Thus, “in the United States and the former Soviet Union transitioning into current-day Russia,” say Kates and Mauser, “homicide results suggest that where guns are scarce, other weapons are substituted in killings.”

“There is a compound assertion that guns are uniquely available in the United States compared with other modern developed nations, which is why the United States has by far the highest murder rate,” report Kates and Mauser. “Though these assertions have been endlessly repeated,” the statement “is, in fact, false.”

Norway, Finland, Germany, France and Denmark, which have high rates of gun ownership, have low murder rates. On the other hand, in Luxembourg, where handguns are totally banned and ownership of any kind of gun is minimal, the murder rate is nine times higher than Germany. Their source of information? The United Nations' International Study on Firearms Regulation, published by the UN's Economic and Social Council and the United Nations Commission on Crime-Prevention and Criminal Justice.

When Kates and Mauser compared England with the United States, they found “‘a negative correlation,’ that is, ‘where firearms are most dense violent crime rates are lowest, and where guns are least dense, violent crime rates are highest.’ There is no consistent significant positive association between gun ownership levels and violence rates.”

In 2004, the U.S. National Academy of Sciences released an evaluation from its review of existing research. After reviewing 253 journal articles, 99 books, 43 government publications and its own original empirical research, it failed to identify any gun control that had reduced violent crime, suicide, or gun accidents, note Kates and Mauser.

“The same conclusion was reached in 2003 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control,” write Kates and Mauser. “Armed crime, never a problem in England, has now become one. Handguns are banned but the Kingdom has millions of illegal firearms. Criminals have no trouble finding them and exhibit a new willingness to use them. In the decade after 1957, the use of guns in serious crime increased a hundredfold. In the late 1990s, England moved from stringent controls to a complete ban of all handguns and many types of long guns. Hundreds of thousands of guns were confiscated from those owners law-abiding enough to turn them in to authorities.” But crime increased instead of decreasing.

Ignoring these realities, gun control advocates have cited England, as the cradle of our liberties, as “a nation made so peaceful by strict gun control that its police did not even need to carry

guns,” write Kates and Mauser. “The United States, it was argued, could attain such a desirable situation by radically reducing gun ownership, preferably by banning and confiscating handguns.”

Somehow, it goes unreported that “despite constant and substantially increasing gun ownership, the United States saw progressive and dramatic reductions in criminal violence,” write Kates and Mauser. “On the other hand, the same time period in the United Kingdom saw a constant and dramatic increase in violent crime to which England’s response was ever-more drastic gun control. Nevertheless, criminal violence rampantly increased so that by 2000 England surpassed the United States to become one of the developed world’s most violence-ridden nations.

“Gun owners across America reading this right now will say: ‘Well, duh!’” writes Michael Snyder. Even so, the California state legislature recently approved \$24 million to expedite the confiscation of 40,000 handguns and assault weapons purchased legally, according to the Huffington Post. Gun registration records are being used to seize those California guns from owners who legally purchased and registered the guns – but who the state of California has now decided pose a risk to public safety.

“We are fortunate in California to have the first and only system in the nation that tracks and identifies individuals who at one time made legal purchases of firearms but are now barred from possessing them,” said Senator Mark Leno (D-San Francisco).

Senator Leno’s measure utilizes \$24 million from Dealer Record of Sale funds. That account holds fees collected during any transfer or sale of a firearm in California. Assemblyman Brian Jones (R-Santee) voted against the measure because he said the fees were intended to cover background checks – not underwrite confiscations, the Huffington Post noted.

“What we are seeing is ideology in collision with reality” writes Terry Roberts in California’s North Coast Journal newspaper. Confiscations are being made for all the wrong reasons, he says. “Recent mass shootings were all in places that were ‘gun free zones.’ The theater in Colorado was the only theater out of seven in the near vicinity of the shooter with ‘no firearms allowed’ posted outside. Ditto, for the other mass shootings. They were all in ‘gun free zones.’”

“Where have the worst school shootings occurred?” writes John Lott. “Contrary to public perception, Western Europe. The very worst occurred in a school in Erfurt, Germany in 2002, where 18 were killed. The second worst took place in Dunblane, Scotland in 1996, where 16 kindergarteners and their teacher were shot. The third worst high school attack, with 15 murdered, happened in Winnenden, Germany.” The fourth worst? Columbine.

“Most often, the mere presence of a firearm is enough to stop criminal activity in its tracks,” writes Scott Bach, president of the Association of New Jersey Rifle and Pistol Clubs. “To the woman whose clothes are about to be torn from her body by a knife-wielding rapist in a deserted parking lot, a handgun in the purse is a lifeline. It is a genuine equalizer that may mean the difference between her life and her death. It gives her a chance when she otherwise would have none.”

“Criminologists of all political persuasions, in over a dozen studies,” writes Bach, “estimate that firearms are used for protection against criminals several hundred thousand to 2.5 million times per year, often without a shot fired. This is a staggering statistic, but it’s not one you are likely to hear on the evening news. Why is it that you don’t hear about the homeowner who defended his family before the police could arrive; or the shopkeeper who saved his own life and the lives of

his customers; or the woman who stopped her own rape and murder; or the teacher who stopped the school shooting?”

“Yet when a single criminal goes on a rampage, that's all you hear about, over and over and over again, along with angry cries to ban firearms,” writes Bach. “Why? A study by the Media Research Center concluded media coverage of firearms is overwhelmingly biased. In a recent period, “television networks collectively aired 514 anti-gun stories, to a mere 46 that were pro-firearm, a ratio of more than 11-to-1 against firearms.”

“And did you know that there is now an official propaganda manual that has been put out for gun control advocates?” asks Snyder. “This manual actually encourages gun control advocates to emotionally exploit major shooting incidents to advance the cause of gun control.” It's a how-to manual on manipulating the public's emotions toward gun control in the aftermath of a major shooting.

“A high-profile gun-violence incident temporarily draws more people into the conversation about gun violence,” asserts the guide, an 80-page document titled “Preventing Gun Violence Through Effective Messaging,” “We should rely on emotionally powerful language, feelings and images to bring home the terrible impact of gun violence.” It also urges gun-control advocates use images of frightening-looking guns and shooting scenes to make their point.

“The most powerful time to communicate is when concern and emotions are running at their peak,” the guide insists. “The debate over gun violence in America is periodically punctuated by high-profile gun violence incidents including Columbine, Virginia Tech, Tucson, the Trayvon Martin killing, Aurora and Oak Creek. When an incident such as these attracts sustained media attention, it creates a unique climate for our communications efforts.” In other words, they time their propaganda carefully. Just when it will alarm you the most.”

“We are only being told one side of the story,” notes Bach. “When we hear only one side, we assume that what we are told is all there is to know, and we do not inquire further.” The reality is that criminals “really, really, really don't want to get shot,” writes Snyder. “When you pass strict gun control laws, you take the fear of getting shot away and criminals tend to flourish.”

In some American cities, “where strict gun control laws have been passed,” writes Snyder, “police are so overwhelmed that they have announced that they simply won't even bother responding to certain kinds of crime anymore. The truth is that the government cannot protect us adequately, and that is one reason why millions are arming themselves and gun sales have been setting new records year after year.” He offers are “some little-known gun facts:”

### **Little-Known Gun Fact 1**

Over the past 20 years, gun sales have absolutely exploded, but homicides with firearms are down 39 percent during that time and “other crimes with firearms” are down 69 percent. **2** Almost every mass shooting that has occurred in the United States since 1950 has taken place in a state with strict gun control laws. With just one exception, every public mass shooting in the USA since at least 1950 has taken place where citizens are banned from carrying guns. **3** The United States is Number 1 in the world in gun ownership, and yet it is only 28th in the world in gun murders per 100,000 people. **4** The violent crime rate in the United States actually fell from 757.7 per 100,000 in 1992 to 386.3 per 100,000 in 2011. During that same time period, the murder rate fell from 9.3 per 100,000 to 4.7 per 100,000. **5** Overall, guns in the United States are used 80 times more often to prevent crime than they are to take lives.

### **Little-Known Gun Fact 6**

Despite the very strict ban on guns in the UK, the overall rate of violent crime in the UK is about 4 times higher than it is in the United States. **7** In one recent year, there were 2,034 violent crimes per 100,000 people in the UK. **8** In the United States, there were only 466 violent crimes per 100,000 people during that same year. Do we really want to be more like the UK? **9** The UK has approximately 125 percent more rape victims per 100,000 people each year than the United States does. **10** The UK has approximately 133 percent more assault victims per 100,000 people each year than the United States does. UK has the fourth highest burglary rate in the EU. **11** The UK has the second highest overall crime rate in the EU.

### **Little-Known Gun Fact 12**

Down in Australia, gun murders increased by about 19 percent and armed robberies increased by about 69 percent after a gun ban was instituted. **13** The city of Chicago has some of the strictest gun laws in the United States. So has this reduced crime? The murder rate in Chicago was about 17 percent higher in 2012 than it was in 2011, and Chicago is now considered to be “the deadliest global city,” **14** After the city of Kennesaw, Georgia passed a law requiring every home to have a gun, the crime rate dropped by more than 50 percent over the course of the next 23 years and there was an 89 percent decline in burglaries.

### **Little-Known Gun Fact 15**

According to Gun Owners of America, the governments of the world slaughtered more than 170 million of their own people during the 20th century. The vast majority of those people had been disarmed by their own governments. Why? It wasn't to stop crime.

[http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30\\_No2\\_KatesMauseronline.pdf](http://www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/jlpp/Vol30_No2_KatesMauseronline.pdf)

## **National Review**

### **[America Should Be Prosecuting Straw Purchasers, Not Gun Dealers](#)**

by Kevin D. Williamson

This week in Wisconsin, the Milwaukee County Circuit Court is hearing arguments in a lawsuit filed by two police officers, both of them shot in the head by a young man named Julius Burton back in 2009. The officers are suing the former owners of the defunct gun shop that sold the pistol Burton used to a straw purchaser, Jacob Collins. Burton was at the time too young to legally purchase a handgun.

Like many other jurisdictions, Wisconsin doesn't really take straw purchases of firearms very seriously. At the time of Collins's crime, the offense was only a misdemeanor. (Subsequent legislation has upgraded straw purchasing to a low-level felony.) The crime was, and is, seldom prosecuted, and, before the Burton-Collins incident, offenders would “typically get probation or less than a year in prison because of their clean records and the notion they have not committed a violent crime, according to a review of five years of federal court records,” as the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* reported in 2010.

Wisconsin isn't alone in its nonchalance. California normally treats straw purchases as misdemeanors or minor infractions. Even as the people of Baltimore suffer horrific levels of

violence, Maryland classifies the crime as a misdemeanor, too. Straw buying is a felony in progressive Connecticut, albeit one in the second-least-serious order of felonies. It is classified as a serious crime in Illinois (Class 2 felony), but police rarely (meaning “almost never”) go after the nephews and girlfriends with clean records who provide Chicago’s diverse and sundry gangsters with their weapons. In Delaware, it’s a Class F felony, like forging a check. In Oregon, it’s a misdemeanor.

Uncle Stupid doesn’t take it that seriously either. *Chicago Sun-Times, 2012:*

The ATF office for the Northern District of Illinois had a decline in weapons prosecutions from fiscal year 2010 to 2011, and the trend was expected to continue the following year.

. . . Over the past five years, meanwhile, prosecutors have shifted their strategy involving gun cases, according to records and interviews.

The U.S. attorney’s office is no longer prosecuting most locally based gun cases involving straw purchasing. Instead, federal prosecutors have been focusing on interstate gun-trafficking rings.

In the same article, retired ATF agent Mark Jones told the newspaper: “Firearms dealers are so well protected it makes it really hard to prosecute them.”

Well, when the going gets “really hard” . . .

I visited Chicago a few years back to write about the city’s gang-driven murder problem, and a retired police official told me that the nature of the people making straw purchases — young relatives, girlfriends who may or may not have been facing the threat of physical violence, grandmothers, etc. — made prosecuting those cases unattractive. In most of those cases, the authorities emphatically should put the straw purchasers in prison for as long as possible. Throw a few gangsters’ grandmothers behind bars for 20 years and see if that gets anybody’s attention. In the case of the young women suborned into breaking the law, that should be just another charge to put on the main offender.

The focus on gun shops isn’t about effective law enforcement; it’s about bureaucratic laziness: It’s a hell of a lot less work to lean on federally licensed retailers with fixed addresses and regular business hours than it is to go chasing Joe Gangster’s rap-sheet-free little brother all over Baltimore on a misdemeanor charge. In reality, the authorities do very little to counteract straw purchasing, because it is a difficult crime to prosecute — see Special Agent Jones and his “really hard” standard above — and nobody’s career gets made on a straw-purchase case.

If the evidence presented at trial is to be believed, the gun dealers in the Wisconsin case probably should have been charged with conspiracy. The ineligible buyer, Burton, walked in and pointed to the gun he wanted, telling his friend, “That’s the one.” Collins, whose lawyers say he is developmentally disabled, answered “No” to the question on a federal purchase form inquiring as to whether he was buying the gun for himself. Somebody at the store helped him “correct” that. There is surveillance footage of the purchase. But, apparently, nobody at the prosecutor’s office, or at Barack Obama’s Department of Justice — firearms sales are federally regulated — has the energy to file a charge on that.

Trials lawyers have lots of energy, though, especially when there’s somebody with lots of money: Never mind Bob’s Shotgun Emporium and Bait Shop in East Donkey, Ark. — this is about Remington/Freedom, Sturm Ruger, Smith & Wesson, and other big companies with big

bank accounts. Democrats and their trial-lawyer supporters are looking for a way to claim a victory on gun control and get paid at the same time.

Thus, there is a movement under way to shift the responsibility for criminal violence away from criminals and onto third parties that are easier to police and blessed with much deeper pockets. Gun dealers are only the beginning of that: The real prize is firearms manufacturers. The ridiculous writing being plainly visible in every way, prudent legislation was passed in 2005 partly shielding firearms makers from wide-ranging liability lawsuits holding them responsible for violent crime. Among the people who voted in favor of that bill was Senator Bernie Sanders of Vermont, no doubt keenly aware of the historical prominence of firearms makers in New England. Vermont, it bears noting, has basically no gun laws — you don't need a permit, or even to be a U.S. citizen, to carry a concealed handgun, or to wear one openly on your hip — and basically no violent crime, either, which throws a monkey wrench or three into the popular progressive model of correlation touching those questions. But Sanders, despite being well positioned to know better, has suddenly evolved on the issue, which probably has something to do with the fact that the daft old moonbat really thinks he can be elected president of these United States.

Meanwhile, a few U.S. ZIP codes, practically all of them represented by Democrats, are plagued by violent criminals brandishing firearms, and nobody in power is willing to lift a pinky finger to do anything meaningful about it. Why?

"It's really hard."

Straw purchasing is a serious crime. Maybe it is time that the good people of Maryland, Illinois, California, Connecticut, the U.S. Justice Department, etc., started treating it like one.

## Townhall

### [Obama's Response to Oregon Shooting: Take Away Our Guns](#)

by Susan Stamper Brown

We hear you loud and clear about guns, President Obama. It's a little odd though, that you'd make insinuations about taking our guns away after the recent college shooting in Oregon, especially now that the EU Times reports the Federal Security Service of the Russian Federation (FSB) listed the shooter as an "American black-Islamist terror suspect" not quite the "white Republican" some initially suggested. ISIS also allegedly claimed culpability.

According to EUTimes.net, Chris Harper Mercer "had previously been identified by electronic intelligence specialists within the Foreign Intelligence Service as being an Islamic State adherent after he had attempted to gain passage to Syria via Turkey during the first week of September 2015." The report went on suggesting the Obama regime refused to accept this terror list from the Federation and "Mercer was able to accomplish his terror act" at Umpqua Community College.

We get you, Mr. Obama. If you were really angry about the right things, you'd be angry that witnesses say Mercer religiously profiled people, executing Christians. You conveniently didn't

mention that detail in your anti-gun rant October 1 in Washington. Instead you said it was time to politicize the event. Politicize.

We understand you. If you cared an inkling about the genocidal killing of Christians around the globe, you'd have done something long ago. The venomous anti-Christian rhetoric foaming from your mouth is now coming home to roost. Your words matter.

We clearly comprehend your alliances. Without a doubt, you would have held a White House 9/11-style vigil if the Oregon shooter profiled and killed Muslims. You've denied your oath to protect everyday Americans by rolling out the red carpet for untold numbers of non-vetted Muslim "refugees," ISIS says they are sending.

We see you. We see right through your angry eyes. You're not angry because Christians were killed in Oregon. Or kids in Sandy Hook. And especially not the soldiers at Fort Hood. You are angry because you can't get your way. You are angry at the Constitution. You are angry at America's founders who cared enough about the little law-abiding folks like us to weave into the Constitution a Second Amendment fail-safe to protect us from narcissistic dictators. You are angry at us. The God-revering, Constitution-loving, law-abiding, gun-toting Americans who overwhelmingly do not commit these crimes.

We get you. If you really cared about innocent bloodshed, you'd give speeches from your podium every Monday morning about the black-on-black killings in your beloved hometown. You conveniently overlook all the minority kids being killed by droves in big cities run by your fellow Democrats and instead hone in on law-abiding gun owners. Chicago is Gotham reborn, but in your eyes, there's nothing to see there, time to move on. Move on to more important things like what you see as the real problem. Us.

We see through you. You want to take away our guns, but you'll deny it with a smile or that self-righteous, arrogant smirk. You want to take our guns like your buddy Castro did down in Cuba and your other buddy Chavez did in Venezuela. We get it. You're angry. You're angry because you can't do the same to us. You are angry because you are the president of the wrong country. You are angry because you can't fit the square peg of America into your empty, round hole.

We see your true colors. And it's not red, white and blue. Hope all you want, but your ideology will never change the greatest country on the face of the earth. America is bigger than you. America is greater than your presidency. America will rise again in the aftermath of this attack on our Constitution known as your presidency. America will be better, greater, because we've learned our lesson. America will never again elect an anti-American-anti-Christian-narcissistic-dictator-wanna'-be as president. Greatness awaits. It's just 402 days, 20 hours, 56 minutes and 20 seconds until Tuesday, November 8, 2016.

## **The Federalist**

### **[The More You Politicize Guns, The Weaker Your Case Becomes](#)**

***As difficult as it might be to accept, there are problems that can't be fixed by Washington***  
by David Harsanyi

After the horrific mass shooting at a community college in Oregon, President Obama [made an impassioned case](#) that gun violence is "something we should politicize"—and why should this be any different:

This is a political choice that we make, to allow this to happen every few months in America. We collectively are answerable to those families who lose their loved ones because of our inaction.

Everything in that statement is wrong. What happened in Oregon is tragic, and the nation should comfort families and look for reasonable and practical ways to stem violence, but there is only one murderer. Now, if government somehow bolstered, endorsed, or “allowed” the actions of Chris Harper-Mercer—as they might, say, the death of 10,000-plus [viable babies each year](#) or the civilian deaths that occur during an American drone action—a person could plausibly argue that we are collectively answerable as a nation.

Then again, when the president asserts Americans are collectively answerable, what he really suggests—according to his own broader argument—is that conservatives who’ve blocked his gun-control legislation are wholly responsible. The problem with that contention, outside of the obvious fact that Republicans never condone the use of guns for illegal violence (in fact, these rampages hurt their cause more than anything) is that Democrats [haven’t offered a single bill or idea](#) (short of confiscation) that would impede any of the mass shootings, or overall gun violence. This is not a political choice, because it’s likely there is no available political answer.

For the liberal, every societal problem has a state-issued remedy waiting to be administered over the objections of a reactionary Republican. But just because you have a tremendous amount of emotion and frustration built up around a certain cause doesn’t make your favored legislation any more practical, effective or realistic. It doesn’t change the fact that owning a gun is a civil right, that the preponderance of owners are not criminals, or that there are 300 million guns out there.

And if it’s a political argument you’re offering—and when hasn’t it been?—you’ll need more than the vacuousness of the “this is bad and so we have to do something.” That’s because anti-gun types are never able to answer a simple question: what law would you pass that could stop these shootings?

Many liberals see the Second Amendment as tragically misinterpreted or useless and guns as abhorrent, so they do not believe any legislative imposition is a tradeoff—even an ineffective law. Many conservatives view guns as a civil right, so this an unacceptable tradeoff. Some don’t even view mass shooting as primarily a gun problem. Now, that doesn’t mean guns have nothing to do with it, as Ramesh Ponnuru [puts it well responding to a Slate piece](#):

... one can simultaneously believe that the high volume of firearms contributes to our high homicide rate and that these laws aren’t good ideas. It’s actually pretty easy to believe both of these things at once, since none of the regulations at issue would do much at all to reduce our high volume of firearms.

But despite all the administration’s fearmongering, and as horrifying as any shooting is, gun violence has [precipitously declined over the decades](#) without any meaningful federal law being enacted. This likely tells us [there are a number of other social currents driving this kind violence](#). The Left believes the number of guns is at fault, rather than social ills—since no person can be evil, only a victim. So the debate takes on the same old contours, and we focus on firearms and nothing else. That kind of political debate only makes it less likely that anything good will happen.

When we politicize a tragedy, it is immediately sucked into a broader ideological conflict. Then the conservative (at least when out of power) will see (I believe, rightfully) an intrusive agenda that is a perpetual slippery slope. (Can you blame them when they hear: *No, we don’t want*

*confiscation, but look at Australia [did!](#) We don't want confiscation, but isn't that Second Amendment interpretation so stupid!?)* Trust me, it's not unreasonable to treat liberal policies as if they have a tendency for mission creep and unwieldy expansion.

## Power Line

### [Bernie Sanders, Gun Hypocrite](#)

by John Hinderaker

Bernie Sanders represents Vermont, the freest state in the union where firearms are concerned. So it shouldn't be surprising that his record on guns is not as liberal as most national Democrats'. At the same time, some have exaggerated his support for the Second Amendment. While it is true that the NRA supported Sanders in his 1990 House race, his record since entering Congress has been mixed.

But one of his pro-gun votes was in favor of the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act, which shields manufacturers from civil liability when guns function properly. Now that he is running for president, Sanders is tacking to the left on the one issue where he does not already hold down his party's port flank. Thus, on Meet the Press this morning, [Sanders retreated](#) on his 2005 support for the PLCAA:

That was a complicated vote and I'm willing to see changes in that provision. Here's the reason I voted the way I voted: If you are a gun shop owner in Vermont and you sell somebody a gun and that person flips out and then kills somebody, I don't think it's really fair to hold that person responsible, the gun shop owner.

On the other hand, where there is a problem is there is evidence that manufacturers, gun manufacturers, do know that they're selling a whole lot of guns in an area that really should not be buying that many guns. That many of those guns are going to other areas, probably for criminal purposes. So can we take another look at that liability issue? Yes.

What on Earth does that mean? In the first place, most guns are not sold directly by manufacturers, they are sold through dealers and chain stores. Moreover, a manufacturer has no way at all to know how many guns other manufacturers are selling in a particular area. Therefore, there is no way for a manufacturer to judge whether "they're selling a whole lot of guns in an area that really should not be buying that many guns."

Sanders' idea is, in any event, fatuous. Subjecting a firearms manufacturer to liability on the ground that it sold too many guns in an area that "really should not be buying that many guns," giving rise to an inference that "many of those guns are going to other areas, probably for criminal purposes," makes no sense. Forcing gun companies to impose geographic quotas on sales isn't a serious proposal, it is merely a way for Bernie to signal Democratic voters that he is willing to change his stripes on guns, once he is no longer subject to the will of Vermont voters. He is, in other words, a typical Democratic Party hypocrite.





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