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*Does allowing private individuals to carry concealed handguns reduce crime? No.*

**The notion that allowing private individuals to carry handguns reduces crime is one of the big lies promoted by the gun lobby.**

The NRA has been trying for decades to get all states to adopt laws allowing anyone who's not otherwise prohibited from owning a firearm under federal law to be able to legally carry concealed handguns. The NRA's manifesto for this effort is the book, *More Guns, Less Crime*, by John Lott, Jr., which purports to show that liberal concealed carry laws reduce crime.<sup>1</sup> The "more guns, less crime" argument, though, has been thoroughly debunked by other researchers, and Lott has been personally discredited by the revelation that he was writing testimonials to himself under the pseudonym, "Mary Rosh."<sup>2</sup>

A committee of the National Academy of Science conducted an extensive review of the effect of concealed weapon laws and concluded that the available evidence does not support claims by the gun lobby that allowing private citizens to legally carry concealed weapons reduces crime.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, the Violence Policy Center has documented nearly a thousand firearm related killings committed by persons with concealed weapons (CCW) permits since May of 2007, including 31 mass shootings, 56 murder suicides, and 17 murders of police officers.<sup>4</sup> Another study by the VPC showed that over a five year period, Texas CCW permit holders were arrested for 5,314 crimes, including murder, rape, robbery, child molestation, and kidnapping.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, CCW permit holders were arrested for weapons related crimes at a rate that was 81% higher than the general population. Another study of CCW permit holders in Florida showed that over 1,400 individuals who had pleaded guilty or no contest to felony crimes had subsequently been granted CCW permits.<sup>6</sup>

There is also no credible evidence to support the argument that carrying a concealed weapon protects the individual gun owner. In fact, a study of assault victims in Philadelphia showed that someone who was carrying a gun at the time of the assault was more than four times more likely to be killed than someone who was not carrying a gun,<sup>7</sup> and law enforcement data show that the ratio of violent crimes committed with a handgun to self defense with a handgun is 15:1.<sup>8</sup>

Despite the extensive evidence that carrying concealed handguns confers much greater risk than benefit both to the person carrying the gun and to the general public, the NRA has been remarkably successful in getting states to adopt liberal concealed carry laws. Currently, 11 states don't require any permit at all for people to carry concealed handguns.<sup>9</sup> Of the other 39 states that do require permits for concealed weapons, 30 have "shall issue" policies that allow authorities little or no discretion in refusing to issue a permit if the person requesting the permit meets other requirements for legally owning a gun. The other nine states have "may issue" policies under which authorities may refuse a request for concealed weapon permit from a legal gun owner if the authority believes the person requesting the permit doesn't have a good reason for carrying a concealed handgun or is otherwise at risk for misusing a firearm.

One of Donald Trump's campaign promises during the 2016 presidential campaign was to

make a concealed weapons permit issued in one state good in any other state.<sup>10</sup> There is currently a bill in the House of Representatives, H.R.38, that would do just that. In fact, as currently written, H.R.38 would allow anyone who got a CCW permit in the state with the most lax requirements for concealed weapons permits to carry a concealed handgun in any other state, even if the other state had laws that would otherwise prohibit the CCW permit holder from owning or carrying a gun at all!

H.R. 38 currently has 193 cosponsors in the House of Representatives. Please contact your US representative and your US Senators and urge them to vote no on this dangerous bill. Links for contact information for members of Congress are appended below.

Link for contact information for U.S. Senators:

<https://www.senate.gov/senators/contact/>

Link for contact information for U.S. Representatives:

<http://www.house.gov/representatives/find>

## References

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- <sup>2</sup> Donald Kennedy, "Research Fraud and Public Policy," *Science* 300, no. 5618 (April 18, 2003): 393–393, doi:10.1126/science.300.5618.393.
- <sup>3</sup> National Research Council Committee to Improve Research Information and Data on Firearms, "Right-to-Carry Laws," in *Firearms and Violence: A Critical Review* (Washington, D.C.: The National Academies Press, 2005), 120–51.
- <sup>4</sup> "VPC: Concealed Carry Killers," *VPC: Concealed Carry Killers*, accessed March 29, 2017, <http://concealedcarrykillers.org/>.
- <sup>5</sup> Karen Brock and Marty Langley, "License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime" (Washington, D.C.: Violence Policy Center, June 2002), <http://www.vpc.org/graphics/ltk4.pdf>.
- <sup>6</sup> Megan O'Matz and John Maines, "In Florida, It's Easy to Get License to Carry Gun," *Tribunedigital-Orlandosentinel*, January 28, 2007, [http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/MGUNS28\\_1\\_carry-a-gun-license-to-carry-concealed](http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/MGUNS28_1_carry-a-gun-license-to-carry-concealed).
- <sup>7</sup> Charles C. Branas et al., "Investigating the Link Between Gun Possession and Gun Assault," *American Journal of Public Health* 99, no. 11 (November 1, 2009): 2034–40, doi:10.2105/AJPH.2008.143099.
- <sup>8</sup> Michael R. Rand, "Guns and Crime: Handgun Victimization, Firearm Self-Defense, and Firearm Theft," Bureau of Justice Statistics Crime Data Brief (U.S. Department of Justice, April 1994).
- <sup>9</sup> "Concealed Weapons Permitting | Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence," accessed May 18, 2017, <http://smartgunlaws.org/gun-laws/policy-areas/firearms-in-public-places/concealed-weapons-permitting/>.
- <sup>10</sup> Jovana Taylor, "Donald Trump on 9 Key Gun Issues, in His Own Words," *The Trace*, October 19, 2016, <https://www.thetrace.org/2016/10/donald-trump-gun-rights-positions/>.