

PHOTOCOPY
PRESERVATION

Cause -

Gun stats

Statistics on Guns and Gun Violence

American Gun Ownership

- Over 200 million firearms are currently in circulation in the United States.
(ATF Commerce in Firearms in the United States, February 2000)
- Each year, about 4.5 million new firearms, including approximately 2 million handguns, are sold in the United States. An estimated 2 million secondhand firearms are sold each year as well.
(ATF Commerce in Firearms in the United States, February 2000)

Gun Violence

- Between 1992 and 1998, there was a 35 percent decline in violent crimes with guns. In 1998, there were 364,776 violent crimes committed with firearms, as compared to approximately 565,575 violent crimes committed with firearms in 1992. (Violent crime includes murder, robbery and aggravated assault.)
(FBI Uniform Crime Report, 1998)
- In 1998, 65% of all murder victims – over 9,100 victims – were killed with a firearm. Thirty-eight percent of robberies and 19% of aggravated assaults were committed using a firearm.
(FBI Uniform Crime Report, 1998)

Children and Gun Violence

- In 1997, 4,205 children and teens were killed by gunfire – nearly 12 every day. Of this total, over 60 percent were homicides, 30 percent were suicides, and over 7 percent were accidents.
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistic data)
- The accidental death rate of children under 15 in the U.S. is 9 times higher than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.
(Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics)
- The rise in juvenile murders between 1984 and 1993 was all firearm-related, as was the subsequent decline.
(OJJDP March 2000 Kids and Guns – Juvenile Justice Bulletin)
- For the 1996-97, and 1997-98 school years combined, nearly 10,000 students were expelled for bringing a firearm to school.
(Department of Education, Gun-Free Schools Act Report, 1999)
- An estimated 22 million children in the United States younger than 18 live in homes with guns. Of these homes, 43 percent keep one or more guns in an unlocked place and without a trigger lock.
(“Firearm Storage Patterns in US Homes With Children,” American Journal of Public Health, April 2000)

The Brady Law

The first thirteen months of the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS):

- Allowed the FBI and its partners in state and local law enforcement to perform instant searches of over 35 million records, running over 10 million checks
- Stopped approximately 179,000 prohibited felons, fugitives, domestic abusers, and other prohibited persons from buying guns from licensed dealers. Since the Brady Law took effect in 1994, over 500,000 prohibited purchasers have been prevented from buying guns.
- 72% of prospective gun buyers are cleared within 30 seconds of the dealer's request for the check.
- 95% of prospective gun buyers are cleared within two hours.
- A purchaser whose NICS check takes more than 24 hours is almost 20 times more likely to be a prohibited buyer.

KEEPING GUNS AWAY FROM YOUTH AND CRIMINALS

-- *The Clinton-Gore Administration Record* --

KEEPING GUNS OUT OF THE HANDS OF CRIMINALS

Winning Passage of the Brady Bill. Since taking effect in 1994, the Brady Law has helped to prevent over a half a million felons, fugitives, domestic abusers, and other prohibited purchasers from buying guns. In November 1998, the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) took effect under the Brady Law, allowing access to a fuller set of records that law enforcement officials can use to conduct checks of all prospective gun purchases – not just for handguns. As of March 2000, NICS has conducted over 10 million background checks on gun purchasers, and stopped an estimated 179,000 illegal gun sales.

Banning the Manufacture and Importation of 19 of the Deadliest Assault Weapons. The 1994 Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act banned 19 of the deadliest assault weapons and their copies, while specifically protecting more than 50 legitimate sporting weapons. Cop-killing assault weapons, like the Uzi, are the weapons of choice for drug dealers and gangs – not hunters and sportsmen.

Banning the Importation of Modified Deadly Weapons. In 1998, President Clinton announced a general ban on the importation of more than 50 non-recreational, modified assault weapons. The Treasury Department concluded that modified semiautomatic assault rifles that accept large capacity military magazines – or LCMM rifles – are not “particularly suitable for or readily adaptable to sporting purposes” and are generally not importable. The more than 50 models of firearms affected by the decision are modified versions of military assault weapons that were banned by the Bush Administration in 1989 or by the assault weapons ban of 1994.

Strengthening Penalties that Apply to Gun-Carrying Criminals and Drug Traffickers. In November 1998, the President signed a new law to clarify and strengthen the federal penalties that apply to violent criminals and drug felons who commit crimes while carrying a gun. This new law makes it clear that violent criminals and drug felons who possess a firearm during the commission of a federal crime are subject to an additional – and mandatory – sentence of five years. The law provides that in addition to the penalties that apply for underlying violent or drug crimes – criminals receive a mandatory minimum sentence of at least seven years for brandishing a firearm and of at least 10 years if the firearm is discharged.

Cracking Down on Problem Gun Dealers. In February 2000, the President announced new enforcement actions that the ATF will take to crack down on problem gun dealers in order to prevent guns from entering into the illegal firearms market. While the vast majority of gun dealers are law-abiding businesspeople, a recent ATF report shows the need to focus resources on the relatively small number of dealers and pawnbrokers who are the source of most traced crime guns. President Clinton announced new actions ATF will take to target enforcement and inspection resources on those dealers who have high numbers of crime gun traces, whose guns quickly turn up in crimes after sale, and who have a poor record of cooperation with law enforcement.

Strengthening Gun Enforcement Efforts. Under the Clinton Administration, the number of gun prosecutions has increased 16 percent from 1992 to 1999, and gun crime has decreased by over 35 percent. In March 1999, President Clinton directed the Secretary of the Treasury and Attorney General to develop a national strategy to increase gun prosecutions and further reduce gun violence. This strategy will expand the Administration's successful enforcement efforts like Project Exile in Richmond, VA and Operation Ceasefire in Boston, MA to more jurisdictions. The strategy includes: expanded efforts to identify illegal gun markets and gun "hot spots"; improved coordination with state and local law enforcement; closer supervision of gun criminals on parole or probation; and innovative, community-based efforts to reduce gun violence.

Creating a National Gun Buyback Program. In 1999, President Clinton launched the largest gun buyback program in history. The program provides \$15 million for public housing authorities to partner with local law enforcement agencies to take an estimated 300,000 firearms out of circulation in communities nationwide. Cities across the nation – including New York, Chicago and Washington, D.C. – have conducted successful gun buybacks to curtail incidences of gun violence, including accidental shootings, homicides, suicides and domestic violence. Over 80 public housing authorities, including Flint, Michigan and Memphis, Tennessee, have already committed to conducting gun buybacks within the next year.

RESTRICTING YOUTH ACCESS TO GUNS

Launching the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative. In 1996, President Clinton launched the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative (YCGII) in 17 cities to help trace crime guns to their source, as well as identify and arrest the adults who traffic firearms to children. Since then, the President has expanded the YCGII initiative to 37 cities ATF agents have conducted more than 200,000 crime gun traces for local law enforcement. In 1998 alone, ATF initiated over 300 investigations in these cities, which involved over 3,300 illegally trafficked firearms. The President's FY 2001 budget proposes to increase YCGII to 50 cities with more ATF agents and additional resources to help more cities to trace their firearms.

Issuing Directive on Child Safety Locks for Handguns. Child safety locks and other safety devices can reduce the unauthorized use of handguns, by a child at play or a teen looking to commit a crime. Many youth have to look no further than their own home to get their hands on a gun: an estimated one-third of all privately-owned handguns are left both loaded and unlocked. In March 1997, the President signed a directive to every federal agency, requiring child safety locking devices with all handguns issued to federal law enforcement officers. And, in an historic agreement, eight major gun manufacturers followed the President's lead and have voluntarily agreed to provide child safety locking devices with all their handguns.

Signing into Law the Youth Handgun Safety Act. In 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Youth Handgun Safety Act, which generally banned the possession of handguns or handgun ammunition by juveniles under the age of 18, and made it a federal offense for adults to transfer handguns to juveniles, with limited exceptions. In 1997, the President directed the Treasury Department to require that signs be posted on the premises of Federal firearms licensees and that written notification be issued with each handgun sold to non-licensees to help ensure compliance with the Youth Handgun Safety Act.

Enforcing Zero Tolerance for Guns and Other Weapons in Schools. In October 1994, President Clinton signed into law the Gun-Free Schools Act, requiring school districts to expel students who bring guns to school. The President issued a Presidential Directive later that month to enforce the "zero tolerance" policy for guns in schools, consistent with the Gun-Free Schools Act. Over the 1996-98 school years, the U.S. Department of Education estimates that, under zero tolerance policies, nearly 10,000 students were expelled from public schools for bringing a firearm to school.

WORKING WITH THE GUN INDUSTRY TO IMPLEMENT UNPRECEDENTED REFORMS

Reached historic agreement with Smith and Wesson. On March 17, 2000, President Clinton announced an unprecedented partnership between the government and Smith and Wesson – the largest handgun manufacturer in the nation – to bring about meaningful reforms in the way the industry does business. The agreement represents the first time a major gun manufacturer has committed to fundamentally change the way guns are designed, distributed and marketed. Key provisions of the landmark agreement include: (1) new design standards to make guns safer and prevent accidental shootings and gun deaths, with required locking devices and smart gun technology; (2) new sales and distribution controls to help keep guns out of the hands of criminals including restrictions on sales at gun shows, required ballistics testing for new firearms, and gun safety training requirements for purchasers; and (3) a new oversight commission that will work with ATF to help oversee implementation of the agreement.

MOVING FORWARD WITH AN AGGRESSIVE AGENDA TO REDUCE GUN VIOLENCE

Introducing the Youth Gun Crime Enforcement Act. In 1999, the President unveiled the most comprehensive gun legislation put forward by any Administration in over 30 years. The President's legislation would strengthen the Brady Law and the assault weapons ban, restrict access to guns by our youth and crack down on illegal gun traffickers. The President's proposed bill would: (1) require Brady background checks for the purchase of explosives and at gun shows; (2) raise the age of the youth handgun ban from 18 to 21 years of age; (3) ban youth possession of semi-automatic assault rifles; (4) prohibit violent juveniles from ever owning guns; (5) require child safety locking devices for guns; (6) reduce illegal gun running by limiting the purchase of handguns to no more than one per month; (7) halt the importation of large capacity ammunition magazines (8) help law enforcement trace more crime guns to their source; and (9) require a 3-day mandatory waiting period for all handgun sales.

Proposing the Largest Increase Ever for Gun Enforcement. President Clinton's FY 2001 budget contains an unprecedented \$280 million for gun enforcement, to: (1) hire 500 new ATF agents and inspectors to crack down on armed criminals and illegal gun traffickers; (2) hire over 1,000 new federal, state and local gun prosecutors to put more dangerous gun criminal behind bars; (3) fund comprehensive crime gun tracing and increased ballistics testing to catch and prosecute more gun criminals; (4) fund local media campaigns to highlight penalties for breaking gun laws and proper storage of firearms to preventing child access; and (5) to support research in "smart gun" technologies that can limit a gun's use to its authorized owner.

Unveiling a State-Based Licensing Proposal for Handgun Purchases. In this year's State of the Union Address, President Clinton proposed a state-based licensing system that would apply to all handgun purchases. Under the President's proposal, individuals seeking to buy a handgun would be required to obtain a photo license from their state of residence, and to present the license when they purchase a handgun. States would issue a license only if the applicant has: (1) passed a Brady background check; and (2) shown proof of having completed a certified safety course or exam. Under the President's proposal, state participation would be optional, not mandated. For states that choose not to participate, federally-approved gun dealers or a federal entity would be authorized to issue licenses, in an arrangement comparable to the current Brady check system.