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# The Economist

JULY 3RD - 9TH 1999

GUNS: AN  
AMERICAN MYTH

pages 17-19

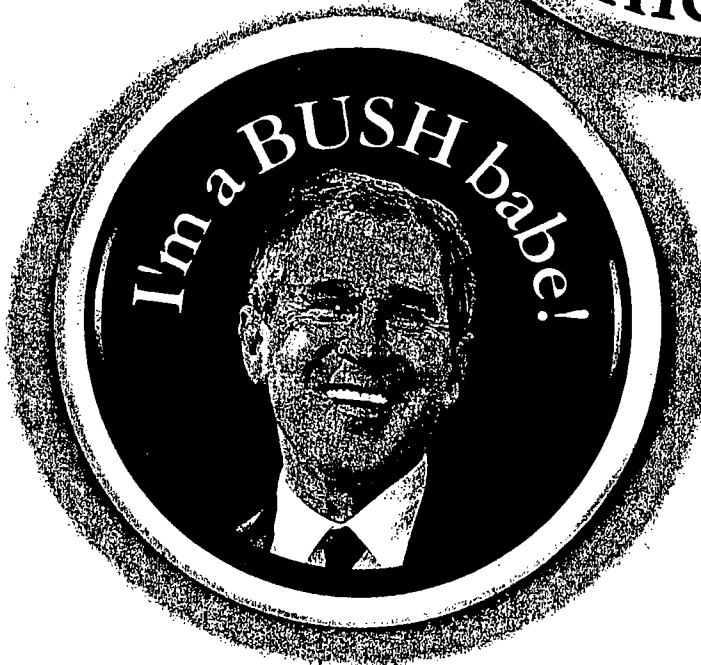
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# GUNS IN AMERICA



## Arms and the man

WASHINGTON, DC

**America's love affair with the gun is the eternal stuff of fiction. It has not always been the stuff of fact**

**R**ICHARD HENRY LEE, one of the signers of America's Declaration of Independence, wrote that "to preserve liberty, it is essential that the whole body of the people always possess arms and be taught alike, especially when young, how to use them." This association between guns and liberty seems hard-wired into the American consciousness. It has produced a country with more guns than people. It has made national heroes of the armed frontiersman, the cowboy and Teddy Roosevelt, the president who carried a big stick and a hunting rifle. Above all it has engendered such a powerful cult of the gun that whether you glorify it, fear it or accept it as a necessary evil, hardly anyone questions its basis in fact. Have guns really been an essential part of American life for 400 years?

At first glance it seems absurd to doubt it. From the time of the earliest settlement on the James river, the English colonies required every freeman to own a gun for self-defence. More than a century and a half later, the notion of the citizen-soldier was enshrined in the constitution. "A well regulated militia being necessary to the secu-

urity of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms shall not be infringed," holds the second amendment of the Bill of Rights, which establishes additional safeguards for Americans' freedom.

Yet in ordinary life people were not armed to the teeth a couple of centuries ago. Wills from revolutionary times present a different picture. Probate records that list the belongings passed on to heirs often give valuable insights into everyday activities and possessions. Michael Bellesiles, a professor at Emory University in Atlanta, has trawled through more than 1,000 probate records dating from between 1765 and 1850\*. Here is a typical finding: "He takes note of his favourite chocolate pot [says Mr Bellesiles]. The record notes broken bottles, bent spoons. It notes every scrap of land and every debt and credit he holds. There's not a single gun listed. And this is the commander of the Virginia

\*Michael Bellesiles's research is in the following works: "The Origins of Gun Culture in the United States, 1760 to 1865", *The Journal of American History*, September 1966; "Gun Laws in Early America", *Law and History Review*, Fall 1998; "Lethal Imagination", New York University Press, 1999; and a book to be published by Knopf in 2000.

militia." Between 1765 and 1790, fewer than 15% of probate inventories list guns of any kind (see chart 1 on next page), and more than half of those listed were broken. The larger-than-average proportion in the South was probably due to difficulties in persuading people to be slaves by peaceful means.

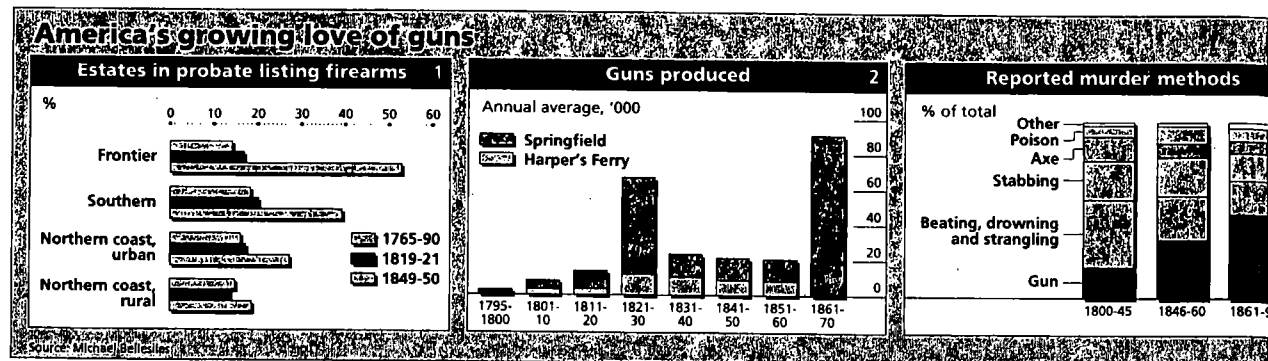
Official surveys of private-gun ownership show much the same thing. (Amazingly, to modern sensibilities, state and federal governments were able to undertake surveys of this sort without any debate in state legislatures about their right to do so.) The state of Massachusetts counted all privately owned guns on several occasions. Until 1840, at any rate, no more than 11% of the population owned guns—and Massachusetts was one of the two centres of gun production in the country. At the start of the war of 1812, the state had more spears than firearms in its arsenal. What was true at the state level was true nationwide. "It would appear," says Mr Bellesiles, "that at no time prior to 1850 did more than a tenth of the people own guns."

So, contrary to popular belief and legend, and contrary even to the declarations of the founding fathers, gun ownership was rare in the first half of America's history as an independent country. It was especially low in parts of the countryside and on the frontier, the very areas where guns are imagined to have been most important. By no stretch of the imagination was America founded on the private ownership of weapons.

But what about the civilian militias of the period, in which all adult men were supposed to serve? These included bodies such as the Minutemen of Massachusetts, embattled farmers who agreed to turn out at a minute's notice and managed to take on the British at Lexington and Concord. Surely they at least exemplified the republican ideal of universal military service by the citizenry?

Not really. Most militias were a joke. Describing a shooting competition at a militia muster in Pennsylvania, one newspaper wrote cruelly: "The size of the target is known accurately, having been carefully measured. It was precisely the size and shape of a barn door." The soldiery could not hit even this; the winner was the one who missed by the smallest margin. No wonder the militias of Oxford, Massachusetts, voted in 1823 to stop their annual target practice to avoid public humiliation. South Carolina fined people who heckled or disrupted the militia muster—to no avail.

Militias, it seems, were neither adept nor well-armed. In 1775 Captain Charles Johnson told the New Hampshire Provincial Congress that his company had "perhaps one pound of powder to 20 men and not



one-half our men have arms." The adjutant general of Massachusetts complained in 1834 that only "town paupers, idlers, vagrants, foreigners, itinerants, drunkards and the outcasts of society" manned his militias. Delaware was one of several states that fined people for non-attendance at musters. In 1816 it gave up the unequal struggle and repealed all the fines; and when the legislature dared to enact a new militia law in 1827, it was turfed out at the next elections and the law repealed. In the 1830s, General Winfield Scott discovered the Florida militia to be essentially unarmed—and this was during a war against the Seminole Indians.

These and other bits of information confirm the evidence of the probate records: guns were rare. Perhaps the fact should not surprise. Gunpowder and firing mechanisms had to be imported, so a gun cost about a year's income for an ordinary farmer. (For comparison, a basic rifle now costs the equivalent of three days' work at the average wage.) And guns were hard to maintain: muskets were made mostly of iron, which rusted easily and needed constant attention. Many busy farmers had better things to do with their time.

Even if farmers had wanted and been able to buy guns, they would usually have found them hard to obtain. Before the civil war, America had only two armouries, at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, and Springfield, Massachusetts (see chart 2). Their joint output was not enough even for basic national defence. In an attempt to equip the militias sufficiently to protect the newly independent country, Congress ordered the purchase of 7,000 muskets in 1793. A year later, it had managed to buy only 400.

Strikingly, the citizen-soldiers could not be bothered to arm themselves even when guns were both available and free of charge. In 1808 the government made its biggest attempt to arm and organise the citizenry, offering to buy weapons for every white male in the country. All the militias had to do to get guns was apply for them, reporting how many members they had. By 1839 only half the companies in Massachusetts had taken the trouble to do this.

Across the country, popular neglect was killing the militias. In 1839 the secretary of war complained that "when mustered, a

majority of [the militias] are armed with walking canes, fowling pieces or unserviceable muskets." Practically every militia commander reported that his members did not look after their guns properly. All complained of non-attendance. All worried about the low esteem in which the militias were generally held. In 1840 most states gave up filing militia returns altogether. Militias as the founding fathers had envisaged them were finished.

### Arming America by mistake

So when did mass ownership of guns begin to develop, if not at the start? It was during the civil war, from 1861 to 1865, and the agent of change was industrialisation. The American civil war was the first conflict in history in which the new techniques of mass production and transport played vital roles. Armies were ferried around by train and issued with the latest weapons from the most modern factories.

Naturally, weapons production soared. In the 12 months to July 1864, the state-owned Springfield armoury produced over 600,000 rifles, nearly as many as in the whole of its 70-year history. The Union government's Ordnance Department spent \$179m (about \$2.5 billion at today's prices) from 1861 to 1866 on buying or making weapons.

Much of the money was collected by the dozens of new private factories that opened or grew to meet the increased demand. Chief among them was Samuel Colt's, the first private company to manufacture guns on a large scale. Between 1836, when Colt's factory first opened, and 1861, when the civil war began, production averaged a few thousand weapons a year. By 1865 Colt had become the largest private supplier to the Union army, selling 386,417 revolvers in the course of the conflict. Like other gun makers, Colt started to reap huge economies of scale, as the war went on, and the costs of production dropped sharply. In 1865 the Colt Peacemaker revolver

cost \$17 to buy—about two months' pay for a labourer.

The civil war expanded not just production but also the ownership of gun outfit the Union government 300,000 muskets and 27,000 rifles; the Confederacy had another 150,000 guns of various sorts; and there were tens of thousands of guns in private hands. During the war the Ordnance Department of the Union government bought or made 3.5m carbines, revolvers, pistols and muskets, as well as over 1 billion cartridges and 1 billion percussion caps. In addition, it imported worth of rifles, muskets and carbine Europe. In all, the Union issued at least small arms to its soldiers in five years: perhaps eight times as much as the total supply of guns at the beginning of the war.

The men were not only issued with arms but also taught how to use them. At the peak, the Union army counted over 2 million enlisted men and the Confederate army over 1m. These were easily the largest military forces ever assembled. Most important, these weapons were left in the hands of the soldiers at the end of the war. Anxious to press ahead with reconstruction, the victorious Union government allowed soldiers, including those of the Confederacy, to take their guns home. (In theory, soldiers were supposed to buy their guns but many made no effort to collect the weapons that was due.)

The civil war thus transformed America from a country with a few hundred thousand guns into one with millions of them. It was a war, rather than any other, that created the widespread belief in the right of individuals to carry guns. The first armed America then created the first wave to go with it. In the decade immediately after the war, murder rates soared and guns became the preferred weapon of choice (see chart 3). This crime wave was one important reason why the ownership and production of guns did not fall after the "late unple-



A Colt in the hand...

## America's Handgun Households

Saturday, May 10, 1997

*The Washington Post*

America is loaded and set to kill: More than one out of three U.S. households owns firearms. Between the guns in the hands of criminals and the guns in the drawers and closets at home, the means to sudden ends are everywhere. Americans continue to kill each other at a rate that astounds the rest of the world. And the latest Justice Department statistics offer little comfort, even though they do show that "the proportion of households that keep firearms appears to be declining." (It used to be that about half of U.S. households possessed guns.)

Forget the safely stored long guns of sportsmen, and consider the invitations to death generated by concealable weapons in the home and on the person. The gun manufacturers and their favorite lobbyists at the NRA may have had some internal organizational differences of late, but they never cease to play on genuine fears of crime for their call to household arms. Just keep the guns out of the hands of criminals, they say, and in the hands of anybody else who wants guns for protection. But what about those weapons at home -- and the tragedies that they invite?

Most handgun owners try to be conscientious about firearms-safety practices. But the same Justice Department survey found that one out of five firearms households surveyed had at least one unlocked and loaded gun. During the year of this survey, 185 children under the age of 14 died as the result of accidental shootings. Toddlers, despondent teenagers and others are pulling triggers and ending lives.

If people are going to continue to insist on guns for self-defense, changes in design could and should be required. "Personalized" handguns can be made to operate only with magnetic, electronic coded signals. At the very least, child-safety locks ought to be required, as law enforcement authorities have been advocating.

The idea of an armed citizenry, carrying concealed weapons and stocking still more in rooms at home, is hardly calming. But so long as people resort to this approach, there must be strict training requirements, tight laws requiring locks or electronic safeguards and -- ultimately -- a realization that sensible restrictions on the mad flow and abuse of handguns are necessary to a civilized country.

Friday, February 14, 1997

*The Washington Post*

## Child Victims

Report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says that this country accounts for nearly three-quarters of all the murders of children in the industrialized world. American youngsters also account for more than half the world's child suicides. It is ironic that as medical advances have greatly reduced the risk of dying from childhood diseases such as measles and polio, violence has become a more common killer.

Researchers on this study attributed the high rate of violence against children here to social factors such as the disintegration of the American family and this will certainly be challenged the increasing number of working mothers. It also is surely true that some children are abused in their own homes and killed by their own disturbed mothers or fathers. These cases are no longer uncommon, and they are perhaps the most resistant to government intervention because no one expects such unnatural behavior, and few of the early warning signs are apparent outside the home. How can society predict when an apparently perfectly normal mother drowns her two little boys, or kills her children in despair over a failed marriage?

But the government is not powerless to at least reduce the carnage. A shameful number of children are killed in the District of Columbia each year. They are hit by stray bullets while on a playground. They are shot by gang rivals or armed robbers out to steal shoes and jackets. They are killed watching television at home when bullets from a street gunfight come through the window. They die because a friend found a gun at home and thought it wasn't loaded. These are the familiar stories of children who die violently in this city. They are shot dead by guns that are too easy to get and are used to avenge the slightest real or imagined affront.

Few would have thought five years ago that the murder rate in many large cities would go down so quickly and so far. It is not impossible to reverse trends, and where children are being murdered, it is imperative to try. The single best way to start making a dent in the terrible child-victim statistics is to acknowledge the major role of guns in this tragedy and take steps nationally to bring them under control.

## **The Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research**

### **Talking Points - Guns in the Home**

Guns are ubiquitous consumer products. More than 40% of all U.S. households contain at least one firearm. One in every four households contains a handgun.<sup>1</sup> Handguns are used in the vast majority of gun violence. For example, of all the firearm homicides in 1995 in which the type of gun was known, 88% were committed with handguns.<sup>2</sup>

Many people who own guns keep them primarily for hunting or recreation, but many citizens also keep them for self-defense. This is particularly the case, among owners of handguns.<sup>3</sup> Although many gun owners keep a gun in the home for protection, studies have shown that guns are rarely used for this purpose and that the risks of keeping a gun in the home outweigh the benefits.<sup>4</sup> In fact, in homes with guns, the homicide of a household member is almost three times more likely to occur than in homes without guns.<sup>5</sup> The risk of suicide of a family member is increased by nearly five times in homes with guns; the risk of suicide is higher still for adolescents and young adults.<sup>6</sup>

Having a gun in the home also increases the risk that incidents of domestic violence will result in homicide. Family and intimate assaults involving firearms are twelve times more likely to result in death than non-firearm related assaults.<sup>7</sup>

Gun proponents claim that guns are an effective and necessary method of self-protection. Gun manufacturers advertise their products with the promise that a handgun in the home will provide protection. The U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, however, estimates that there are an average of only about 65,000 defensive uses of guns each year compared to the more than 800,000 crimes committed with guns.<sup>8</sup>

Guns in the home also result in unintentional death and injury. Guns kept loaded and within reach for protection are often within reach of curious young children who unintentionally shoot themselves or others.<sup>9</sup>

Although 38,000 people are killed by guns each year in the U.S.,<sup>10</sup> and an estimated 100,000 people are injured,<sup>11</sup> guns remain a virtually unregulated consumer product. In fact, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, which has jurisdiction to regulate the safety of most other household and recreational products, has been expressly forbidden by Congress to exercise authority over firearms.<sup>12</sup> Legislators, however, can pass new laws to regulate guns as consumer products. And no federal court has found a law regulating guns to be in violation of the U.S. Constitution's Second Amendment, which addresses the preservation of state militias.<sup>13</sup>

Consumers of guns need to know the risks involved in keeping a gun in the home and need the protection offered by product safety

regulation.

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May 21, 1997

*The New York Times*

## Personal Health

Jane E. Brody

A few years ago, a young Las Vegas family was shattered by a 3-year-old girl who found her father's loaded revolver in a desk drawer. Thinking the gun was a toy, she aimed it at her pregnant mother, who was asleep on the sofa, and pulled the trigger. The mother died on her way to the hospital.

Earlier this month, a 13-year-old Brooklyn boy, whom a neighbor described as a good person who "always did the right thing," was shot and killed while he and his friends were playing with a gun.

In Montgomery, Ala., a 9-year-old boy accidentally shot his 7-year-old brother with a gun he had found in the glove compartment of the family car. The boy died, even though the incident occurred in a hospital parking lot, where the father had left the car and the boys while he ran an errand.

These incidents are the tip of a growing iceberg of deaths related to guns in and around people's homes. Nearly half the households in the United States contain firearms and one-fourth have handguns. More than half a million guns are stolen from homes each year. Deaths caused by firearms, most of them handguns, number 40,000 each year in the United States. More than 1,600 of them are accidents, and the number of nonfatal injuries caused by gun accidents is four to six times as high. Josh Sugarmann, executive director of the Violence Policy Center, a research organization in Washington, points out that "guns are the second most deadly consumer product, after cars, on the market," and that in some states the death rate related to firearms already exceeded that associated with motor vehicles. In an article in *Mother Jones* magazine in January 1994, Mr. Sugarmann noted, "Many consumer products, from lawn darts to the Dalkon Shield, have been banned in the United States, even though they claimed only a fraction of the lives guns do in a day."

Alarmed by the statistics and many tragic incidents attended by their members, a number of medical organizations have become staunch advocates of tighter gun regulations and safety precautions. The Emergency Nurses Association in Parkridge, Ill., which has begun a national parent education program called "Gun Safety, It's No Accident," wants all guns in homes stored unloaded and locked up in ways that prevent access by children and other unauthorized people. The Johns Hopkins School of Public Health has a Center for Gun Policy and Research that is pressing for personalization of handguns to prevent all but the authorized users from firing them. The American Academy of Pediatrics, noting the failure of lesser measures to control gun-related tragedies, has suggested amending the constitutional right of citizens to bear arms.

Recent national polls have shown that about two-thirds of citizens support stricter gun-control laws, and a 1993 poll found that 52 percent of adults favored a Federal ban on ownership of handguns.

### **Risk vs. Protection**

The Johns Hopkins Center, established in 1995 with financing from the Joyce Foundation of Chicago, has pointed out that "while personalized handguns will likely reduce the risks of some gun deaths, reliable studies still teach us that possessing a gun in the home is more perilous than protective." Studies published in medical journals since 1990 have repeatedly documented the fact that guns are more likely to cause than prevent harm to innocent people. The most recent such report, published last month in Archives of Internal Medicine, found that gun shot wounds were the single most common cause of death for women in the home, accounting for 42 percent of suicides and 46 percent of homicides. The researchers, who examined all suicides and murders in the homes of female victims in three metropolitan counties, concluded that the presence of a gun in the home increased their risk of being murdered and committing suicide. Although many people say they own a gun for self-protection, instead of for protecting family members, the gun is more likely to be used against them, most often in the heat of a domestic argument or jealous rage. According to a report last year in the journal Pediatrics, a publication of the academy data from "several rigorously conducted studies indicate that home ownership of gun" increased the risk of homicide among teen-agers and young adults more than threefold and the risk of suicide more than tenfold. In these studies, guns were used in nearly three-fifths of the suicides and a third of the homicides that occurred in the victim's home. The availability of a gun greatly increases the likelihood that a suicide attempt will succeed. Since suicide impulses are usually fleeting, many suicides involving a gun could be prevented if a less-lethal method were used. Nationwide, firearms -- mostly handguns -- are used in about 19,000 suicides each year. Among young people from 10 to 19 more than 1,400 suicides are committed with guns each year.

### **What can be done**

The belief of many gun advocates that teaching children how to use a gun properly will prevent accidents is belied by one West Coast surgeon's account. The surgeon left the operating room to tell a young couple that their little boy was dead, having accidentally shot himself while playing with his father's handgun. The boy's father, who was a member of the National Rifle Association, "became visibly angry saying that "I taught the dumb kid how to use it right."

The emergency nurses point out that 1.2 million children are likely to be left alone in homes with guns. They urge that children be taught, not how to use a gun, but never, ever to play with one and that if they find a gun, to leave it alone and tell an adult about it. Parents should explain the difference between gun violence on television and in films and the real-life consequences of gun use.

People who have guns should always store them unloaded, separate from their ammunition, and secured with a gun lock, gun alarm or other tamper-proof device that prevents unauthorized use or renders the gun inoperable. Trigger locks are not adequate protection. The weapon should be stored in a locked gun cabinet, safe or gun vault inaccessible to children. Currently, 40 percent of gun owners keep guns in a bedroom or closet, where children and burglars can easily find them. Studies in several cities show that about 30 percent of families with children keep loaded guns in the home.

Even when parents are conscientious about gun safety, their neighbors, relatives and the parents of their friends may be less so. Parents would be wise to discuss gun safety with the adults in every household their children are likely to visit.

If you need help on proper gun storage and gun locks, ask your local police department for advice.



## COALITION TO STOP GUN VIOLENCE

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WASHINGTON, DC 20036  
PHONE: (202) 530-0340

### REPORTS:

#### *The Unspoken Tragedy: Firearm Suicide in the United States*

The Unspoken Tragedy is a comprehensive study of the latest research on suicide. The Coalition to Stop Gun Violence reports that guns are the most common method of suicide for males and females of all age groups. Each year, approximately 17,000 people die from firearm suicide. In fact, more Americans die from firearm suicide than firearm homicide. "For too long people have looked at gun violence as simply a crime problem," says Michael Beard, Executive Director of CSGV, "But if America is ever going to come to terms with its addiction to guns, we need to understand that we are not only killing each other, we are killing ourselves - literally. The Unspoken Tragedy sheds light on a subject many have chosen to ignore."

The Unspoken Tragedy investigates the growing trends of firearm use in suicide. CSGV reports that historically, females and young people have experienced relatively low suicide rates. However, both females and youths have experienced dramatic increases in firearm suicide rates over the last 15 years. "Americans' concern for their family's protection is completely legitimate," says Michael Beard, "But, instead of offering protection, a gun in the home puts families at an even greater risk."

Some of the findings include:

From 1988 to 1992, 60% of suicide fatalities involved firearms. Young people who have a gun in their home are at a greater risk of suicide than young people who do not have guns in their home. Suicidal adolescents are 75 times more likely to commit suicide when a gun is kept in their home.

In 1992, the suicide rate for 15- to 19- year-olds was 13.0 per 100,000, exceeding the national average of 12.0 per 100,000.

From 1980-1992, the suicide rate for 10-14 year-olds increased 120%. Firearms are now the most frequent method of suicide for both males and females within this age group.

From 1980-1992, the suicide rate for 15-19 year-olds increased 28.3%. Firearm related suicides accounted for 81% of the increase in this age group.

Females attempt suicide 2-9 times more often than males, but historically have used less lethal means. However, the proportion of females using firearms in suicides has increased over the last four decades.

The study stresses the difficulty of identifying who may attempt suicide. A substantial number of young suicide victims exhibit no academic or behavioral problems before they attempt to take their life. The Unspoken Tragedy concludes that often there is no way to determine who might attempt suicide and that guns in the home make most attempts fatal.

The report also stresses the influence of impulse in suicide attempts. The greater the difficulty of obtaining a means to commit suicide, the less likely it is that an attempt will occur according to the study. "All too often I hear from the grieving parents of a kid who picked up a gun to play Russian roulette," Beard says, "Given the risks of having a gun in the home, why would anyone take the chance? Suicide attempts are often spur of the moment incidents and all too often handguns ensure that they become fatal tragedies."

The name Unspoken Tragedy is derived from the hesitance with which both sides in the gun control debate have treated this issue. Conventional methods of gun control would do little to reduce firearm suicide, while the gun lobby is understandably not anxious to publicize any segment of the mounting death toll from gunfire. CSGV recommends families remove guns from their homes and that the sale of future handguns be banned.

### ***NRA Report: "Overrated: The NRA and the 1994 Elections."***

This report dispels the myth that the 1994 elections were an overwhelming triumph orchestrated by the National Rifle Association. Instead, the Coalition found that the gun lobby's effect on the election was minimal and that the outcome of the election appeared to be an NRA victory primarily due to the gun lobby's preference for Republican candidates.

"They're just not as powerful as people think," stated Jeff Muchnick of the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence, "The lesson of the last election is that you can take on the gun lobby and survive in Congress even if you're from Texas." The report

details how the only two Texas Congressmen defeated on election day were longtime NRA supporters, while at the same time members of the Texas delegation who voted to ban assault weapons were winning reelection.

One key aspect of the report examined the reelection rates of Democratic House incumbents based on their gun control voting records. "Overrated" found that strong gun control supporters were just as likely to be re-elected as their solidly pro-gun colleagues. Only Democratic incumbents were studied because no Republican incumbents were defeated last year.

The large number of Democrats who lost is one reason the NRA has been able to take credit for winning elections the report found. Overall, the NRA contributed 4.7 times more to Republicans than to Democrats. In the Senate, the NRA gave exclusively to Republicans. When the NRA did give to Democrats, the recipients were most often incumbents who were not faced with a strong challenger. In the House, only one Democratic challenger and three open seat Democratic candidates received any NRA funding. The discrepancy between donations to the two major parties led the authors of the report to dub the NRA "the National Republican Association." In addition, the report found that Republicans won with or without NRA support and cited several examples of Democrats losing despite the support of the gun lobby.

The NRA's practice of targeting members of Congress who maintain anything less than complete loyalty is revealed in "Overrated." The report details NRA campaigns against former long-term supporters who went against the NRA on one key vote. "The lesson here," according to Muchnick, "is if you vote against the NRA once, you might as well do so all the time."

## **PERIODICALS:**

### ***Stop Gun Violence Newsletter:***

This quarterly newsletter is written with the "grass roots" activist in mind. The Stop Gun Violence Newsletter contains pertinent information for anybody who wants to be involved in anti-gun violence movement. Each issue contains information regarding everything from grass roots activities around the nation to current legislation at the Federal, State and Local level.

### ***The Firearms Litigation Reporter:***

In our efforts to keep the legal community abreast of the latest in firearms litigation, the Firearms Litigation Clearinghouse

publishes the Firearms Litigation Reporter. Every quarter, the staff at the Firearms Litigation Clearinghouse searches the country for the most interesting issues and cases surrounding firearms litigation. The Reporter covers a wide variety of litigation topics such as, specific firearm defects, specific manufacturer information, winning strategies and more. Attorneys and non-attorneys alike subscribe to the Firearms Litigation Reporter to keep informed of the emerging field of firearms litigation.

## Guns & Schools

Fifty-nine percent of students, grades 6-12, reported that they could get a handgun if they wanted one; 36 percent of those who said they could get a handgun reported that they could obtain it within an hour.

*SOURCE: LH Research, Inc. A Survey of the American People on Guns as a Children's Health Issue. 1993.*

Two in 25 high school students, or 7.9 percent, reported having carried a gun in the last 30 days.

*SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1995.*

In a nationwide profile of juvenile gun possession and use, 53 percent of students who said they carried a gun, said they obtained the gun from a family member and 37 percent obtained the gun off the street.

*SOURCE: McCarthy N. Children Not Escaping Tough on Crime Climate. California Bar Journal. 1995. California Bar Journal.*

## Suicide

Handguns account for 70 percent of firearm suicides among all age groups.

*SOURCE: Wintemute GJ. American Journal of Public Health. 1988.*

The risk of suicide is increased by nearly 5 times in homes with guns; the risk is higher still for adolescents and young adults.

*SOURCE: Kellermann AL, et al. Gun Ownership as a Risk Factor for Homicide in the Home. The New England Journal of Medicine. 1993.*

Seventy-eight percent of firearm suicide attempts are fatal.

*SOURCE: Annest JL et al. National Estimates of Nonfatal Firearm-Related Injuries: Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1995.*

In 1992, firearm-related deaths accounted for 64.9 percent of the suicides among individuals under the age of 25.

*SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1995.*

In 1992, 1,426 youth aged 0-19 committed suicide with a firearm.

*SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Injury Mortality: National Summary of Injury Mortality Data 1986-1992. 1995.*

## Accidental Deaths

One in six parents say they know a child who accidentally shot himself or herself with a gun.

*SOURCE: LH Research, Inc. A Survey of the American People on Guns as a Children's Health Issue. 1993.*

Seventy-one percent of weapons involved in accidents were handguns.

*SOURCE: The U.S. General Accounting Office. 1991.*

An analysis of 266 accidental handgun shootings of children aged 16 and under revealed that 50 percent of the accidents occurred in the victim's homes, and 38 percent occurred in the homes of friends and relatives.

*SOURCE: Center to Prevent Handgun Violence. Killing Seasons. 1989.*

In 1991, gun accidents were the fifth leading cause of accidental death for children aged 14 and under.

*SOURCE: National Safety Council. Accident Facts. 1992.*

## Handguns

More citizens die in handgun fire in just two days in the U.S. than in one year in Canada, Great Britain, Japan, Sweden, and Australia combined.

*SOURCE: Embassies and foreign crime reporting agencies/FBI Uniform Crime Reports. 1992.*

One out of four American homes contains at least one handgun.

*SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center. General Social Surveys, 1972-1994: Cumulative Codebook. University of Chicago, The National Data Program for Social Sciences. 1994.*

One-half of all handgun owners say they keep their guns loaded at least some of the time.

*SOURCE: Weil DS and Hemenway D. Loaded Guns in the Home. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1992.*

A new handgun is produced in the United States every 12 seconds.

*SOURCE: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. 1994.*

There are more than 223 million firearms in the United States; 76 million are handguns.

*SOURCE: Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms. 1994.*

## Firearms

If current trends continue, firearm fatalities are projected to become the leading cause of injury-related death in this country by the year 2003.

*SOURCE: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report. 1994.*

Gunshot wounds are the second leading cause of death for all people aged 10-34.

*SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics. 1993.*

More Americans were killed by guns in two years than during the entire Vietnam War.

*SOURCE: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993*

A gun triples the risk of a homicide in the home.

*SOURCE: Kellermann AL, Rivara FP, Rushforth NB. Gun Ownership as a Risk Factor for Homicide in the Home. New England Journal of Medicine. 1993.*

Guns kept in the home are 43 times more likely to kill a family member, friend or acquaintance than an intruder.

*SOURCE: Kellermann AL and Teay DT. Protection or Peril? An Analysis of Firearm-related Deaths in the Home. New England Journal of Medicine. 1993.*

Forty-one percent of American households contain one or more guns.

*SOURCE: National Opinion Research Center. General Social Surveys, 1972-1994: Cumulative Codebook. University of Chicago, The National Data Program for Social Sciences. 1994.*

In 198 robberies and burglaries in gun-owning homes in Atlanta, guns were used for self-protection only three times.

*SOURCE: Kellermann AL. Weapons Involvement in Home Invasion Crimes. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1995.*

Every six seconds a gun is made in America.

*SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993.*

Every year 300,000 firearms are reported stolen to the FBI.

*SOURCE: FBI, National Crime Information Center.  
1995.*

## Kids & Guns

An estimated 1.2 million elementary school-aged children come home to a house with a gun and no parent.

*SOURCE: Lee RK and Sacks JJ. Latchkey Children and Guns in Homes. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1990.*

More preschoolers died from guns in 1994 than police officers killed in the line of duty.

*SOURCE: Federal Bureau of Investigation. Uniform Crime Report: Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted. Washington, DC: U.S., Dept. of Justice. Report of the final mortality statistics, 1994. Monthly Vital Report. 1996.*

Every day, 15 American children are killed with guns.

*SOURCE: National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 1993.*

U.S. children are 12 times more likely to die by gunfire than children in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

*SOURCE: Centers For Disease Control and Prevention, 1997.*

Thirty percent of families with children keep loaded guns in the home.

*SOURCE: Weil DS and Hemenway D. Loaded Guns in the Home. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1992.*

Hospital emergency room departments treat four children for gunshot wounds for every child killed by gunfire.

*SOURCE: Annett JL et al. National Estimates of Nonfatal Firearm-Related Injuries: Beyond the Tip of the Iceberg. Journal of the American Medical Association. 1995.*

Handguns kill more than ten kids every day.

*SOURCE: Johns Hopkins University Center for Gun Policy and Research Estimate. 1996.*

In 1994, gun deaths were the third leading cause of death for children aged 5-14. If current trends continue, firearm fatalities are projected to become the leading cause of injury-related death in this country by

the year 2003.

*SOURCE: Singh GK, Kochanek KD, MacDorman MF.  
Advance report of final mortality statistics, 1994.  
Monthly Vital Report. 1996. Centers for Disease Control  
and Prevention. Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report.  
1994.*

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HEADLINE: AN EPIDEMIC OF VIOLENCE.

BODY:

IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS FOLLOWING THE Columbine shootings, everyone walked around in a daze. Some watched everything on TV. Others didn't talk about it. We were all in shock. No one knew what to think.

I had written the editorial "Children Who Kill" after the Oregon shootings and thought I had some ideas about the roots of violence, but the Columbine shootings do not lend themselves to easy answers. We must, however, find the answers and make Columbine a turning point in the history of violence in US society.

In order to understand Columbine, I had to first answer the question of whether or not we are, in fact, a violent society. While this is a common belief, few of us know how frequent shootings like the Columbine incident really are and what the incidence of violence actually is in the US.

Following a two-year analysis of violence and children, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a new policy in January 1999 recommending preventative measures to curtail the spread of what it calls an epidemic. This is the first time a US medical association has acknowledged that violence is a health issue, not only a criminal justice issue.

"Violence has become increasingly prominent ... in the United States, which has the highest youth homicide and suicide rates among 26 wealthiest nations in the world and one of the highest rates of homicide worldwide," the AAP says. While there is a general decline in US homicides nationwide, violence and violent injuries among children have not decreased.

Homicide and suicide have become the second and third leading causes of death of all teenagers, and the leading cause of death among black youths. Homicide rates for males 15 to 19 years of age increased 113 percent between 1985 and 1995. Teenagers today are more likely to die of gunshot wounds than of all natural causes combined.

According to the AAP, violent injury and death result far more often from altercations between family members and acquaintances than from robberies or other criminal activity.

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To help the nation's pediatricians assess and screen patients, the new AAP policy identifies risk factors such as substance abuse problems, history of mental illness, family stresses that could lead to violence, and exposure to violence at home and in the media.

As part of the efforts to deter violence and violence-related injuries, the AAP suggests that pediatricians embark on a variety of advocacy efforts on behalf of children. These include support for quality, affordable child care, reduced corporal punishment, and reduced availability or elimination of handguns.

To prevent violence before it starts, the AAP also addresses research on early brain development and offers pediatricians guidance on age-appropriate development for children from birth through late adolescence.

What the AAP refers to when it mentions the importance of early brain and child development is the attachment process of the first three to five years of life. This is the critical period when the foundation is laid in the human psyche for trust, empathy, dependency, and optimism. It is the attachment to one consistent, warm, loving, and encouraging caregiver that also ensures the development of conscience.

Anthropologists tell us that the most violent tribes are those in which infants are not touched. Neurologists tell us that holding and carrying an infant is the most important factor in the development of normal neurological functioning. Biologists tell us that the early relationship between mammals and their young is fragile.

The organization Prevent Child Abuse America, formerly the National Committee to Prevent Child Abuse, suggests that child abuse and neglect are often major contributing factors in violence among adolescents and adults.

"We'd like to think that these devastating and brutal acts of violence were unavoidable and unpredictable, but that's often not the case," said Sidney Johnson III, executive director of Prevent Child Abuse America. "Most of the time, clues suggesting possible violent behavior had been making themselves known for years."

Johnson goes on to say, "The actions of the alleged perpetrators in Colorado [and, might we say, those who bullied them] would appear to be consistent with that of children holding rage and anger from a much earlier time in their lives who haven't been able to channel it in constructive behaviors. Typically, these children lack the ability to regulate their own emotions and the ability to empathize with others, sometimes resulting in suicide, substance abuse, violent behavior and a cold indifference to other human beings."

Robin Karr-Morse, author of the 1997 book *Ghosts from the Nursery*. Tracing the Roots of Violence, said, "Media coverage of these tragedies tends to treat violent behavior as if it suddenly emerges from a developmental void. To understand the tide of violent behavior typified by this tragedy, we must look at the first 33 months of life, which harbor the seeds of violence for a growing percentage of American children."

According to Johnson, the abuse and neglect that result in violent behavior take place in families of all classes, races, and ethnicities. While many

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people tend to think it only happens in poor families, the emotional neglect that results in the building of such rage among our children and teens is particularly prevalent in our middle class.

One way that we can abuse our children is by spanking them. The AAP suggests a reduction in corporal punishment as a recommended form of discipline. We cannot expect to give children the message of nonviolent problem solving if we do not practice it ourselves.

Moreover, spanking our children erodes their self-concept. Dr. Donald F. DeMoulin, a professor at the University of Tennessee and an expert in preventing violence in schools, believes that an unhealthy self-concept can lead a child down an antisocial path of destruction -- from outcast to isolation to rebellion and finally, to violence.

Bullying lowers a teen's self-concept. The bully himself or herself suffers from low self-esteem. Seeking solace from ridicule, the child associates with peers who have suffered the same fate. While this association provides the needed elevation of self-concept, it does so through negative means. The child may exhibit a brashness that may be mistaken for self-esteem, but the self-image is fed by destructive forces and is ultimately negative rather than nurturing.

According to Leon Botstein, president of Bard College, an unhealthy self-concept can be encouraged by the artificial environment of high school: "... the rules of high school turn out not to be the rules of life. Often the high school outsider becomes the more successful and admired adult. The definitions of masculinity and femininity go through sufficient transformation to make the game of popularity in high school an embarrassment. In no workplace, not even in colleges or universities, is there such a narrow segmentation by chronology.

"Given the poor quality of recruitment and training for high school teachers, it is no wonder that the curriculum and the enterprise of learning hold so little sway over young people. When puberty meets education and learning in modern America, the victory of puberty masquerading as popular culture and the tyranny of peer groups based on ludicrous values meet little resistance."

How much of this violence among our teens happens in schools? According to a recent report by the Department of Education, over 6,000 students were expelled in 1996 and 1997 for bringing guns to their schools. A 1995 study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicated that 8 percent of all students reported bringing a gun to school in a 30-day period. One handgun control organization estimates that 44 incidents of violence in US schools involving firearms were reported in the media from September 1998 through May 1999.

Is it firearms that are the problem or are teens simply more violent? There are approximately 192 million privately owned firearms in the US- 65 million of which are handguns. In 1996, 10,744 people were murdered in the US; firearms were used in two out of three of those murders.

Guns kept in the home for self-protection are 43 times more likely to kill a family member or a friend than to kill a person in self-defense. The presence of a gun in the home triples the risk of homicide in the home. The presence of a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide fivefold.

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In 1995 alone, 35,957 Americans were killed with firearms (homicides, suicides, accidents). In comparison, 33,651 Americans were killed in the Korean War, while 58,148 Americans were killed in the Vietnam War.

In 1994, the firearm injury death rate among males 15 to 24 years of age was 32 percent higher than the motor vehicle injury death rate. In 1995, 14 children ages 19 and under were killed with guns every day in the US.

In 1996, handguns were used to murder 2 people in New Zealand, 15 in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, 213 in Germany, and 9,390 in the US.

On April 27, 1999, President Clinton proposed gun legislation supported by the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence. The first of his proposed bills, the one requiring background checks for sales at gun shows, failed to pass the first time, but did ultimately pass because of presidential pressure. As of this writing, seven other bills remain to be passed.

Curiously, only 15 states in the US have Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws. These laws require gun owners living in households with minor children to store their guns locked and out of the reach of children. By contrast, following widespread outrage about a March 1995 shooting in Scotland in which 16 children and their teacher were killed, the British government passed a ban on handguns.

While it's obvious that the availability of guns in the US contributes to increased violence, is violence in the media also a risk factor for violence in society? According to Sylvia Ann Hewlett and Cornel West, authors of *The War Against Parents*, since 1960 more than 3,000 studies, involving almost 250,000 viewers, have evaluated television's effects on children and teenagers. The experts are in agreement. In the words of a leading researcher, Leonard Eron, "The scientific debate is over." A causal relationship between viewing violent programming and subsequent aggressive behaviors, including criminal activity, is real.

The average child watches 8,000 murders and 100,000 other acts of violence on television before entering the seventh grade. According to The Lion & Lamb Project, one long-range study involving 875 children showed that early viewing of violent television programs was positively related to later aggression -- including violent criminal offenses, spousal abuse, and child abuse.

Over the years researchers have shown how a particular movie or television drama can inspire imitative or copycat behavior. In 1979, bombing and extortion threats followed the broadcast of the TV movie *Doomsday Flight*. A few years later, at least one copycat killing followed airing of *The Burning Bed*. A teenager was run over and killed, and two others were seriously injured while imitating a stunt in the 1993 movie *The Program*. John Hinkley's shooting of Ronald Reagan was influenced by *Taxi Driver*. And the 1994 movie *Natural Born Killers* is in a class by itself, having inspired at least 11 copycat murders.

An article in the January issue of *Pediatrics* states, "American media contribute more to adverse health outcomes than to positive or prosocial ones." A recent National Television Violence Study examined nearly 10,000 hours of television programming over a three-year period and found that 61 percent contained violence, with children's programming being the most violent.

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Evidence also suggests that many of the roots of violence in our youth, as well as the factors that put them at risk for violent behavior, are encouraged by the excesses of materialism in current US culture.

Our children are exposed to 20,000 television ads per year. There are now four 24-hour commercial channels totally devoted to children's programming. Films are peppered with advertising. In Sweden, commercials on television programming for children under 12 are prohibited by law.

Each year, teenagers view nearly 15,000 sexual references, innuendos, and jokes of which no less than 170 deal with abstinence, birth control, sexually transmitted diseases, or pregnancy. The so-called family hour of prime time television (8 to 9 p.m.) contains more than eight sexual incidents per hour, more than four times as many as in 1976.

Alcohol, tobacco, or illicit drugs are present in 70 percent of prime time network dramatic programs, 38 out of 40 top-grossing movies, and half of all music videos. Tobacco manufacturers spend \$ 6 billion per year, and alcohol manufacturers \$ 2 billion per year in all media, trying to entice young people to "just say yes."

As Ralph Nader said in a letter to Senator Trent Lott, who intends to convene a national conference on youth and culture, "... people in corporations are getting rich by promoting products to teenagers; corporations governed by incentives that impel them to respect no boundaries in exploiting the vulnerable minds of teenagers."

In the early 1980s, Ben Bagdikian's *The Media Monopoly* concluded that less than 50 companies had come to dominate the entirety of the US media, and as a result journalism was increasingly losing its ability to critically address the role and nature of corporate power in the US political economy. By the fourth edition of his book in 1992, mergers and acquisitions had reduced the number of dominant media firms to two dozen.

According to Robert McChesney, author of *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy*, since 1992 there has been an unprecedented wave of mergers and acquisitions among media giants; as a result, fewer than ten enormous vertically integrated media conglomerates now dominate US media. Time Warner, for example, the largest book and magazine publisher in the world, has annual sales of \$ 28 billion. Time Warner owns Warner Bros., New Line Cinema, HBO, CNN, Turner Network, TNT, as well as movie theaters, retail stores, and amusement parks.

Time Warner, however, is not the largest media company in the world. This is News Corporation, whose chairman and CEO, Rupert Murdoch, is reported by *Vanity Fair* to have a net worth of \$ 6 billion. Disney is the third media giant, with annual sales of approximately \$ 25 billion. Viacom, owner of Nickelodeon, Simon and Schuster, Paramount, and Blockbuster, has annual sales of \$ 6 to \$ 13 billion. TCI, GE (NBC), Seagrams (Universal, Polygram), and Sony (Columbia, Tri-Star) complete the roster.

It's not a pretty picture. These statistics can be immobilizing, and current political and economic climate counts on our apathy. We must, however, do something. We are our only hope. As G. K. Chesterton says, "We must love society to want to change it." Let's change it. Here are some solutions:

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If we are really going to value the importance of the first three years of life, we need universal prenatal care, a reduction in surgical and medicated births, public support of breastfeeding, and a renewed openness to touching, holding, and intimacy.

We can support national and local efforts to stop spanking and learn alternatives to punishment. A good place to start is with the organization that sponsored SpankOut, 1999, EPOCH (End Physical Punishment of Children). Contact them at EPOCH-USA, 155 W. Main Street, Suite 100-B, Columbus, OH 43215.614-221-8829. Fax: 614-228-5058. E-mail them at: nblock@infinet.com

We can identify societal resources for the development of good self-concept and nonviolent problem solving such as Prevent Child Abuse America. For information about child abuse prevention, call 1-800-CHILDREN or access the organization's Web site at [www.childabuse.org](http://www.childabuse.org)

We can help children learn how to be conflict managers at school and at home. The Community Board Program offers programs, curricula, and publications that address nonviolent conflict resolution. Contact them at 1540 Market Street, Suite 490, San Francisco, CA 94102.415-552-1250. Fax: 415-626-0595. Web site: [www.mediate.com/cbp](http://www.mediate.com/cbp)

Another organization with resources and curricula on nonviolent conflict resolution is the Institute of Peace and Justice, 4144 Lindell Boulevard, Suite 408, St. Louis, MO 63108. 314-533-4445.

We can discourage violent play. To transform children's war chests into toy chests, The Lion & Lamb Project cosponsors events such as Violent Toy Trade-Ins throughout the country. At the trade-ins, children bring in violent toys and work with artists to create a peace sculpture.

In addition, The Lion & Lamb Project sponsors Peaceable Play Days and Nonviolent Toy Fairs, which give children and parents opportunities to learn and remember ways of having fun that do not depend on violence as themes. To help communities organize their own events, the project has written Toys for Peace: A How-To Guide for Organizing Violent Toy Trade-Ins.

The Lion & Lamb Project is an organization concerned with violent messages stemming from television, movies, videos, music lyrics, arcade games, home computer and video games, on-line services, action figures, and war toys. They offer four workshops nationwide to help parents and educators transmit their own values of nonviolence to children. Contact them at 4300 Montgomery Avenue, Suite 104, Bethesda, MD 20814. 301-654-3091. Fax: 301-718-8192. E-mail: [lionlamb@lionlamb.org](mailto:lionlamb@lionlamb.org) Web site: [www.lionlamb.org](http://www.lionlamb.org)

To learn more about violence, and violence prevention, contact The Family and Community Critical Viewing Project, a partnership between the National PTA and the cable television industry. The PTA provides three videos, sponsors an antiviolence day, and holds training sessions for parents. To schedule a workshop in your community, contact your state PTA office. For materials, call 800-743-5355 or visit the program's Web site at [www.ciconline.org](http://www.ciconline.org) or the National PTA's Web site at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)

We can view wholesome vidoes. Watch for the KIDS FIRST! seal of approval. To be approved, a video must contain no gratuitous sex or violence; no racial,

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gender, cultural, or religious bias; no unsafe behavior; no condescension towards children; and no verbal or physical abuse. KIDS FIRST! has approved over 1,600 titles. Ask your local video store to have a KIDS FIRST! display in the children's section. Contact KIDS FIRST! through the Coalition for Quality Children's Media, 112 San Francisco Street, Suite 305-A, Santa Fe, NM 87501. 505-989-8076. Fax: 505-986-8477. E-mail: jury@cqcm.org www.cqcm.org

We can be responsible about guns and educate our children about firearm safety. The Center to Prevent Handgun Violence suggests these four simple safety steps for parents.

1. Keep guns away from children. The safest thing for your family is not to keep a gun in the house. But if you keep a gun at home, unload it and lock it away. Keep all ammunition separate from the gun.

2. Make sure that your children know the dangers of guns. Teach them not to handle or to touch guns.

3. Talk to your children about guns and violence. Explain to them that we all have strong emotions like anger and fear, but that these feelings can be expressed without striking others or using weapons. Demonstrate healthy ways to express anger and disappointment. Support your children when they use positive means for resolving conflict, such as:

Talking about feelings rather than acting them out

Making choices to avoid fights

Getting help from trusted adults

4. Talk to your children about the differences between media violence and violence in real life.

We can become informed about firearm facts, firearm violence, and gun control. For advocacy information, see these Web sites:

Handgun Control Inc. and The Center to Prevent

Handgun Violence: [www.handguncontrol.org](http://www.handguncontrol.org)

Violence Policy Center: [www.vpc.org](http://www.vpc.org): [www.gunfree.org](http://www.gunfree.org)

Cease Fire: [www.ceasefire.org](http://www.ceasefire.org)

We can educate our representatives about these issues and demand that special interests not override legitimate public concerns. If you want to access the phone numbers and E-mails of your representatives regarding firearm or any other legislation pertinent to families, you can call the Capitol Switchboard: 202-224-3123 (Senate) or 202-225-3121 (House) or see the Web site at <http://thomas.loc.gov/>

We can fight consumerism and advertising to children. Ralph Nader's organization Commercial Alert was founded to oppose the excesses of commercialism, advertising, and marketing. Nader's book Children First: A Parent's Guide to Corporate Predators is available from Commercial Alert. The

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Web site is [www.essential.org/alert/](http://www.essential.org/alert/) E-mail is [alert@essential.org](mailto:alert@essential.org) or call 202-296-2787.

To create at least a level playing field so that special interests can less easily market to our children, we have to eliminate advertising in commercial programming for children. This means that we need to subsidize not-for-profit, commercial-free, nongovernment media.

The US is unique in the industrialized world in spending only \$ 1.09 per capita on public broadcasting. By contrast, the United Kingdom spends \$ 38.56, Canada \$ 32.15, and Japan \$ 17.71.

Public media ensures the possibility of public control of the airwaves. As it is now, more people manipulate the news than report it. There are today in the US more people working in public relations than there are working journalists. Several surveys suggest that press releases and PR-generated material account for between 40 and 70 percent of the news in today's media.

LET'S FACE IT. WE ARE VIOLENT, materialistic society, and this hurts our families. What can we do to change it? First, let's not be naive any longer about the commercial interests of the gun manufacturers, the tobacco manufacturers, and the advertisers on children's programming. Let's not be naive about the special monied interests that regularly finance and influence out elected representatives.

Special interests and consumerism seduce our children and confuse their values. And they challenge the American family. Whether it's our inability to spend time with our families because of economic pressures or the commercial interests that compete for our children's attention, we have to take back control. Society may be out of control, but we must not be. We must be outraged.

Social change only happens when small, committed groups of people get together to effect change. This is the only way it ever happens. As the environmentalists say, "Think globally; act locally." Let's see what we can do.

For a bibliography of sources used for the statistics in this editorial, see Mothering's Web site at [www.mothering.com](http://www.mothering.com) or call 505-984-6299.

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

### Navigate Our Site:

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### Guns in the Home

There are over 200 million guns in America. That's almost one gun per every man, woman and child in the United States. Guns are not just in urban and rural homes, they're everywhere - cities, towns, suburbs and farms. In fact, there is a gun in 43% of households with children in America. There's a loaded gun in one in every ten households with children, and a gun that's left unlocked and just hidden away in one in every eight family homes.

### DOES A GUN IN THE HOME MAKE YOU SAFER?

**No.** Despite claims by the National Rifle Association (NRA) that you need a gun in your home to protect you and your family from possible home invasion, public health research demonstrates that the most person likely to shoot you or a family member with a gun already has the keys to your house. Simply put: **guns kept in the home for self-protection are more oftentimes used to kill somebody you know than to kill in self-defense**; 22 times more likely, according to a 1998 study by the New England Journal of Medicine.

More kids, teenagers and adult family members are dying from firearms in their own home than criminal intruders. When someone is home, a gun is used for protection in fewer than two percent of home invasion crimes. You may be surprised to know that, in 1996, according to the FBI, there were only 176 justifiable handgun homicides compared with a total of 9,390 handgun murders in the United States.

Once a bullet leaves a gun, who is to say that it will stop only a criminal and not a family member? Yet at every opportunity the National Rifle Association uses the fear of crime to promote the need for ordinary citizens to keep guns in their home for self-protection.

### KEEPING A GUN IN THE HOME CAN BE DEADLY

Because handguns and other firearms are so easily accessible to many children, adolescents and other family members in their homes, the risks of gun violence in the home increase dramatically. Consider this: The risk of homicide in the home is three times greater in households with guns. The risk of suicide is five times greater in households with guns. What's more, tragic stories of accidental or unintentional shootings from the careless storage of guns at home are all too common.

### A GUN IN THE HOME: KEY FACTS

- When a gun is present in the home, a marital or sibling dispute can quickly erupt into a homicide. According to a 1994 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, victims in spousal murders were the most likely to have died from gunshot wounds (53%), compared to victims in other types of family murder. **In 1996, 13,788 people were killed using firearms** and thousands more were seriously injured.
- Guns are also the weapon of choice for troubled individuals who commit suicide. In 1996, firearms were used in **18,166 suicide deaths in America**. Among young people, youths aged **10-19 committed suicide with a gun every six hours**. That's over **1,300 young people in a single year**.
- A gun in the home also **increases the likelihood of an unintentional shooting, particularly among children**. Unintentional shootings commonly occur when children find an adult's loaded handgun in a drawer or closet, and while playing with it shoot themselves, a sibling or a friend. In 1996, 1,134 people -- many of them children -- were killed accidentally or unintentionally by firearms.

#### **WHEN TRAGEDY STRIKES HOME: RECENT INCIDENTS**

- Recently, tragedy unexpectedly struck a home in Pontiac, Michigan. On July 15, 1999, a two-year-old boy was killed as he and his three-year-old brother played with a gun in their bedroom with their seven-month-old sister nearby.
- On July 21, 1999, in Lakepark, Florida, a six-year-old boy fatally shot his five-year-old brother, Corey Andrew Wilson, as the boys played with a shotgun they found under a bed in their grandparents' bedroom.
- Shawn Adam Miller, a sixteen-year-old boy from Travis County, Texas, described by neighbors as a "happy-go-lucky" teenager, shot and killed his parents, a 13-year-old neighbor and then himself in his home on July 20, 1999. Shawn used a .410-gauge shotgun owned by his family and kept in their home.
- On May 3, 1999, in Chicago, Illinois, a 16-year-old boy unintentionally killed his 15-year-old cousin while playing with a .38-caliber Smith & Wesson handgun. The two boys were visiting their grandmother's apartment, when they started playing with the loaded gun which accidentally discharged.

#### **DO PARENTS DO A GOOD JOB OF KEEPING KIDS AWAY FROM GUNS IN THE HOME?**

**No.** A recent study by Peter Hart Research on behalf of the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence found that, even though most parents realize that guns in the home endanger their children, many parents still leave guns accessible to kids. Specifically, in the survey of 806 parents, 43% of households with

children have guns, and 23% of gun households keep a gun loaded. 28% keep a gun hidden and unlocked. 54% of parents said that they would be highly concerned about their child's safety if they knew there was a gun in the home of their child's friend. Despite many parents' concern about the immediate dangers that guns left in the house pose to their children, they are failing to take the necessary steps to help ensure their children's safety. Many parents, though, do not see guns as a personal threat to their children or their family at all.

Too often a parent drops off their child at a friend's house for an afternoon play session or a sleep-over party not knowing that the car ride would be the last time they would see their child alive. Why? The study found that most parents don't discuss the issue of guns in the home with the parents of their children's friends. Amazingly, only 30% have asked the parents of their children's friends if there is a gun in the home before allowing a visit. 61% of the parents included in the survey responded that they never even thought about asking other parents about gun accessibility. Clearly, parents don't think about the tragic possibilities of an innocent visit to another home. While parents are asking each other about supervision, food allergies, adult television access, they are ignoring guns -- the one factor that could mean the life or death of their child.

## **CHILD ACCESS PREVENTION LAWS**

Handgun Control supports Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, or "safe storage" laws that require adults to either store loaded guns in a place that is reasonably inaccessible to children, or if they decide to leave their left out in the open, to use a safety device to lock the gun. If a child obtains an improperly stored, loaded gun, the adult owner is criminally liable.

Although the primary intention of CAP laws is to help prevent unintentional injury, CAP laws also serve to reduce juvenile suicide and homicide by keeping guns out of the reach of children.

Currently, 17 states -- California, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin have enacted CAP laws. ([See State Laws](#))

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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## GUN LAWS WORK, LOOPHOLES DON'T

### DO GUN LAWS WORK?

**Yes.** Despite claims by the gun lobby that most gun laws are unnecessary and ineffective at preventing gun violence, our gun laws do work. While Handgun Control recognizes that gun control regulation is not a cure-all for all of our nation's youth and gun violence problems, national, comprehensive gun laws -- such as the Brady Law and the federal assault weapons ban -- have proven to be successful and effective tools for keeping the wrong guns out of the wrong people's hands. Today, violent crime has fallen for six straight years, thanks, in part, to strong gun laws that provided mandatory background checks, banned the most dangerous types of assault weapons, and limited accessibility to kids and criminals.

But more needs to be done. In 1996 alone, 34,040 Americans died from guns. While our nation's gun laws have saved lives by making it more difficult for criminals, juveniles and other prohibited purchasers to buy guns over-the-counter, loopholes in these laws exist that continue to allow potentially dangerous people to get guns too easily. And even states with their own tough gun laws are victimized by the availability of guns in lax states. The tragic stories of gun violence that we read about or see on television everyday illustrate that current laws need to be strengthened, not weakened, and expose the gaping loopholes in our firearms laws which enable minors -- and criminals -- to get firearms. These loopholes exist, in large part, because the gun lobby continues to resist any attempt to close them.

### A BRIEF HISTORY OF GUN CONTROL LAWS

Gun control did not begin with the passage of the Brady Act in 1993. Our nation's first major gun law was the Gun Control Act of 1968 which was passed in the wake of the assassinations of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Senator Robert F. Kennedy earlier that year. The 1968 Gun Control Act established categories of prohibited purchasers and possessors including convicted felons, fugitives from justice, minors, individuals with a history of mental illness, anyone dishonorably discharged from the military, expatriates, and illegal aliens. The law also banned the mail-order sales of all firearms and ammunition, such as the rifle used by Lee Harvey Oswald to shoot President John F. Kennedy. The law also set standards for gun dealers and age guidelines for gun purchasers and prohibited the sale and manufacture of new fully automatic civilian machine guns.

The Gun Control Act of 1968 has become the foundation for our current federal gun laws, and has been instrumental in the ongoing fight against gun violence in America. But, until the implementation of the Brady Law in 1994, gun sales operated on the "honor system." A prospective firearm purchaser merely had to sign a statement attesting that he or she was not legally forbidden from purchasing a firearm. Very often, convicted criminals and other prohibited purchasers would just provide false information on their firearm applications, better known as "lie-and-buy" approach, and purchase a firearm despite being a legally forbidden to purchase a gun. The Brady Law changed "lie- and-buy" to "background check-then-buy" by requiring that every retail sale of a handgun be referred to law enforcement for a mandatory background check.

## **THE BRADY LAW**

The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act (Brady Law), which took seven years to pass in Congress, was finally signed into law on November 30, 1993, and went into effect in February 1994. In its original form, the Brady Law required a five-day waiting period and background check before completion of the sale of a handgun. On November 30, 1998, the five-day waiting period for handgun purchasers required by the Brady Law expired. It was replaced by a mandatory, computerized National Instant Check System (NICS), which provides the information for criminal background checks on all firearm purchasers, not just those buying handguns.

## **THE BRADY LAW IS CATCHING CRIMINALS**

While the NRA likes to argue that the "bad guys" only get their guns on the streets in the criminal market, the Brady Law has proven that criminals do try to buy handguns in gun stores. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, since the Brady Law went into effect, background checks nationwide have stopped approximately 400,000 felons and other prohibited purchasers from buying handguns over-the-counter from federally licensed firearm dealers. What does this mean? Thousands of murders, spousal abusers, gun traffickers and fugitives from justice have been denied purchase of handguns and apprehended because of the background check required by the Brady Law.

- Benjamin Nathaniel Smith, an avowed white supremacist, was stopped by the Brady background check trying to buy two Smith & Wesson 9-mm handgun and a 12-gauge shotgun from a licensed gun shop in Peoria Heights, Illinois. The computer background check showed that one of Smith's former girlfriends had taken out a restraining order, disqualifying him from buying firearms. Unfortunately, Mr. Smith was able to buy two handguns through a private, unregulated sale before he went on an interstate shooting rampage which targeted racial and religious minorities, killing two and injuring nine others. His shooting spree ended on July 6, 1999, when Mr. Smith took his own life while being pursued by the police.
- In 1996, a Northampton, Massachusetts man, who is a convicted felon, tried to buy a handgun in Vermont using fake identification. After the Brady background check, the man was denied the handgun and later arrested. The man had recently completed a six-to-eight year prison sentence for burning the house of a woman who was a witness against him in a case.

- The Chief of the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED) noted that as of early 1998, Brady background checks had enabled SLED to clear over 400 outstanding warrants and arrest 242 fugitives from justice.
- In 1996, the Brady Law stopped a handgun sale in Colorado to a man who was wanted for armed robbery in the State of Washington. Due to the Brady background check he was arrested in Colorado and extradited back to the State of Washington.

### **KEY FACTS: THE BRADY LAW IS HELPING TO REDUCE CRIME AND GUN TRAFFICKING IN AMERICA**

- According to an analysis of the FBI Uniform Crime Report, the percentage of violent crimes committed with firearms has declined dramatically after the Brady Law went into effect. What's more, gun-related violent crime is decreasing even faster than violent crime overall.
- Since the Brady Law went into effect through the end of 1996, the overall proportion of aggravated assaults involving a firearm fell by 12.4%. The FBI Uniform Crime Report for 1997 shows that gun homicides have declined by 24% since 1993; robbery with firearms, by 27%; and aggravated assault with firearms, by 26%.
- A study by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence analyzed the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearm's firearms trace database and showed that the Brady Act has disrupted established gun trafficking patterns by closing off access to guns in traditional source states, or states with lax gun laws. The study provided important evidence that the regulation of the retail sale of handguns is an effective means of interfering with the illegal gun market -- running counter to the old adage that only law abiding citizens are affected by gun laws.

### How the Brady Act Disrupts Interstate Gun Trafficking

### **THE ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN HAS TAKEN DANGEROUS GUNS OFF THE STREETS**

Do **we really need military-style assault weapons to hunt ducks** or even for self-defense? **No.** Assault weapons, including the AK-47, UZI, MAC-10 and the TEC-9, are high-power "weapons of war" capable of rapid fire shooting and the capacity to hold 20, 30 or even 50 rounds of ammunition. Assault weapons are designed with military features such as silencers, folding stocks, flash suppressors, barrel shrouds and bayonets which are ludicrously unsuited for civilian use.

The federal assault weapons ban, which passed in 1994, prohibits the manufacture and importation of 19 of the deadliest assault weapons and the "copies" or "duplicates" of these weapons, and large ammunition clips holding more than 10 rounds. Traditional guns designed for the use of hunting and recreational activities are not affected.

## **ASSAULT WEAPONS: KEY FACTS**

**Assault weapon bans work.** In 1989, when President Bush stopped the import of certain assault rifles, the number of imported assault rifles traced to crime dropped by 45 percent in one year. After the 1994 ban, there were 18% fewer assault weapons traced to crime in the first eight months of 1995 than were traced in the same period in 1994, and the wholesale price of "grandfathered" assault rifles nearly tripled in the first post-ban year.

Assault weapons were used...

- To kill 5 children and wound 29 others in a Stockton, CA schoolyard in 1989. The AK-47 held 75 – that's right, 75 – bullets.
- To kill 8 people and 6 others at a San Francisco law firm in 1993. Two TEC-9's with 50-round magazines were used in the massacre.
- To kill 4 ATF special agents and wound 16 others with an arsenal of assault weapons at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, TX, when the officers were attempting to serve warrants on the cult in 1993.
- Although assault weapons comprised only 1% of privately-owned guns in America, they accounted for 8.4% of all guns traced to crime in 1988-91.

### More Information about Assault Weapons

## **ONE-HANDGUN-A-MONTH IS REDUCING GUN TRAFFICKING**

In the early 1990's, Virginia gained a national reputation as a "source state" for guns used in crime in northeastern cities. Virginia's lax gun laws and proximity to northeastern cities with tough gun laws drew many gun traffickers to the state to purchase handguns in large quantities for sale in places like New York City and Washington, DC. In July of 1993, Virginia made the gun traffickers' work much more difficult by passing a law limiting handgun purchases to one per month per person.

The law has been enormously effective. An August 1995 Center to Prevent Handgun Violence study found that after the law's effective date, there was a 66 percent reduction in the likelihood that a gun purchased after July 1993 and traced back to the Southeast from the Northeast corridor would have originated in Virginia. Based on this information, researchers suggest that a national one-gun-a-month law could reduce gun trafficking tremendously all across the country.

Today, four states -- Virginia, Maryland, South Carolina, and just recently, California -- have enacted one-handgun-a-month laws as a roadblock for criminal gun trafficking.

## **LOOPHOLES IN OUR GUN LAWS STILL ALLOW KIDS AND CRIMINALS TO GET GUNS**

Although gun control legislation has succeeded in helping limit illegal firearm purchases, decrease gun-related crimes, deter criminal gun trafficking and reduce overall gun violence, gaping loopholes make our current laws inadequate for keeping guns away from children and criminals.

Prosecutors and law enforcement nationwide have called for the closing of loopholes that allow guns to flow to children or criminals. Handgun Control supports new, common-sense legislation to build upon the success of the Brady Law and to strengthen our existing laws to keep guns from juveniles, convicted felons and other prohibited purchasers. To do this, we must close the loopholes that continue to allow the wrong people to get guns.

## **LOOPHOLES LEAD TO BULLETHOLES**

### **1) The Child Access Loophole**

Adults are prohibited from transferring firearms to juveniles, but are not required to store guns so that kids cannot get access to them. This Child Access Prevention (CAP) proposal would require parents to keep loaded firearms out of the reach of children and would hold gun owners criminally responsible if a child gains access to an unsecured firearm and uses it to injure themselves or someone else. The NRA opposes CAP.

### **2) The Gun Show Loophole**

So-called "private collectors" can sell guns without background checks at gun shows and flea markets thereby skirting the Brady law which requires that federally licensed gun dealers initiate and complete a background check before they sell a firearm. No gun should be sold at a gun show without a background check and appropriate documentation. The NRA defends the "right" of private collectors to sell their guns whenever, wherever, to whomever.

### **3) The Internet Loophole**

Similar to the Gun Show Loophole, many sales on the Internet are performed without a background check, allowing criminals and other prohibited purchasers to acquire firearms. No one should be able to sell guns over the Internet without complying with the Brady background check requirements.

### **4) The Juvenile Assault Weapon Possession Loophole**

Although juveniles 18 and younger are prohibited by Federal law from purchasing handguns, neither the Federal government nor most states restrict the purchase and

ownership of long guns. While this loophole allows teenagers to hunt with rifles and shotguns, it also allows them to possess semi-automatic AK-47s, AR-15s and other assault rifles manufactured before 1994 and "grandfathered" under the 1994 assault weapon ban. No juvenile should be allowed to buy or possess an assault rifle. The NRA opposed the assault weapon ban, sponsored its attempted repeal, and has given no sign of support for keeping military weapons out of the hands of teenagers.

#### **5) The High-Capacity Ammunition Clip Importation Loophole**

The 1994 Assault Weapon Ban prohibited the future domestic manufacture and importation of magazines or ammunition feeding devices capable of holding more than ten rounds. However, any high-capacity magazines made before the date of enactment may be lawfully imported, possessed, sold or transferred. Foreign companies have circumvented the ban and dumped their products in our country. This bill would close the loophole by banning the importation of all large capacity magazines. Although it is illegal in almost every state to hunt most animals with more than 10 bullets, the NRA supports the right to possess magazines holding 20, 30, 50 or even 100 rounds of ammunition.

#### **6) The Background Check Loophole**

When the five-day waiting period provision of the Brady Law expired in November 1998, an "instant check" system went into effect. This new national database, however, does not contain many of the records that are necessary to complete a background check. This is particularly true for non-felony offenses (e.g. domestic violence) and mental health records. Nor does the instant check system allow time for a "cooling-off" period. There should be a three-day waiting period for all handgun purchases so all necessary records can be checked to ensure that only law-abiding people get guns. The NRA has always opposed waiting periods for handgun purchases.

What happened in my state when the Brady Law expired?

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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## ASSAULT WEAPONS IN AMERICA

### Military Guns in Civilian Hands

#### **So...who needs an AK-47 to go duck-hunting?**

That usually sums up the argument against military-style assault weapons to almost every American's satisfaction. Until 1994, when the assault weapons ban passed Congress as part of President Clinton's crime bill, semiautomatic versions of "Streetsweepers," UZIs, AK-47's, and other war weapons were manufactured, imported and sold freely in this country. The upsurge in gun violence relating to gang and drug activity that began in the late '80's created an enormous demand for these weapons, which fire up to 6 bullets a second and which frequently held magazines holding 20, 30 or even 50 rounds of ammunition.

Although it is illegal in every state to hunt animals with more than 10 rounds of ammunition, and although semiautomatic assault weapons are useless for recreational activities, the gun lobby fought the assault weapons ban to the bitter end. Their tactics, and their political strength in Congress, assured that the U.S. would be suffering the effects of assault weapons for years to come, by ensuring that the assault weapon ban grandfathered existing assault weapons. As a result, hundreds of thousands of assault weapons made before the ban took effect in September of 1994 may legally be bought and sold in the U.S. today. (One of the guns used in the Columbine shooting was the Tec-DC9 assault pistol, a gun specifically marketed to criminals to be fingerprint resistant before the 1994 ban.)

In 1999, however, the bellwether state California passed the nation's toughest ban on assault weapons with overwhelming public support. With your support, other states' legislatures can be convinced to emulate California and pass laws that will further reduce the availability and use of semiautomatic, military-style assault weapons in America.

#### The Problem

Semiautomatic assault weapons are not machine guns of the sort used by Al Capone. The sale or transfer of fully automatic machine guns, which automatically feed ammunition into the chamber so that one depression of the trigger automatically sprays multiple bullets as long as the trigger is pulled, were restricted by the National Firearms Act of 1934 (see Other Federal Gun Control Legislation). These fully automatic machine guns are still available, but

acquiring them requires the payment of a significant tax, a thorough FBI background check, and the approval of local law enforcement officials. Moreover, as replacement parts for these truly military guns become harder to find, the price of these weapons has steadily increased while their availability have declined.

Semiautomatic assault weapons are only slightly less deadly than machine guns. Pulling the trigger on these guns fires a single bullet, but also automatically loads the next bullet into the chamber, so that the user can fire up to 30 bullets in five seconds by repeatedly pulling the trigger. The best-known semi-automatic weapons, including the Israeli UZI, the Chinese-made SKS rifle and the Soviet AK-47 were all developed for military use, and cannot be used for hunting.

The Gun Control Act of 1968 allows the government to prohibit the import of guns not designed for sporting purposes, which most certainly includes assault weapons. As crimes committed with assault weapons increased, President Bush took the first step in controlling these weapons by banning certain imported assault rifles in 1989.

More action was needed, especially as it became obvious that the nation's law enforcement was badly outgunned by criminals armed with assault weapons. (In 1994, a leading law enforcement executive characterized semi-automatic assault weapons as nothing more than "cop-killer guns," and at that time assault weapons accounted for more than 17% of fatal shootings of police.)

Although it took four years and enormous public support to overcome the NRA's implacable opposition, the 1994 crime bill specifically banned the future manufacture and importation of semiautomatic assault weapons with no hunting or sporting purpose. The crime bill defines semiautomatic assault weapons both with a list of 19 specifically banned weapons, and with objective criteria designed to ban the further production of these weapons clearly intended and accessorized for military or criminal use. The crime bill also banned the future manufacture and import of large-capacity ammunition magazines holding more than 10 bullets.

Despite the support of the vast majority of the American public for the ban, in 1995 the new Republican-controlled House of Representatives voted to repeal it. Only the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, and the public's outrage at the gun lobby's connections with militia groups, forestalled Congress' and the NRA's attempts to return assault weapons to the nation's streets.

In the years since the ban took effect, assault weapon manufacturers here and abroad have responded by cosmetically altering several of their best-selling weapons and putting them back on the market. Colt, for example, modified the banned AR-15 into a new "Sporter" model that deleted a few accessories, while Intratec's TEC-9 became the AB- (for after-ban) 10. In 1997, an application was submitted to ATF to import the "Uzi American" – at which point President Clinton's administration suspended permits previously granted for the importation of 600,000 modified assault rifles. In April, 1998, noting that they had no sporting purpose, the President permanently banned many of these copycat assault weapons – most of which can accept large ammunition magazines still in circulation -- from further import

## ASSAULT WEAPONS: KEY FACTS

- Assault weapon bans work. In 1989, when President Bush stopped the import of certain assault rifles, the number of imported assault rifles traced to crime dropped by 45 percent in one year. After the 1994 ban, there were 18% fewer assault weapons traced to crime in the first eight months of 1995 than were traced in the same period in 1994, and the wholesale price of "grandfathered" assault rifles nearly tripled in the first post-ban year.
- Assault weapons are not just "ugly guns." Semi-automatic hunting rifles are designed to be fired from the shoulder and depend on the accurate shooting of one bullet at a time. Semi-automatic assault weapons are designed to be spray-fired from the hip and are designed to maximize death and injury from a very rapid rate of fire. Assault weapons are designed with military features such as silencers, folding stocks, flash suppressors, barrel shrouds and bayonets which are ludicrously unsuited for civilian use.

Assault weapons were used...

- To kill 5 children and wound 29 others in a Stockton, CA schoolyard in 1989. The AK-47 held 75 – that's right, 75 – bullets.
- To kill 8 people and 6 others at a San Francisco law firm in 1993. Two TEC-9's with 50-round magazines were used in the massacre.
- To kill 2 CIA employees and wound three others outside Langley, VA headquarters in 1993
- To kill 4 ATF special agents and wound 16 others with an arsenal of assault weapons at the Branch Davidian compound in Waco, TX, when the officers were attempting to serve warrants on the cult in 1993
- Although assault weapons comprised only 1% of privately-owned guns in America, they accounted for 8.4% of all guns traced to crime in 1988-91.

## THE LAWS

The new California assault weapon ban is a model for the nation. Every military-style gun designed for hunting humans, rather than animals, will be banned from further manufacture or sale in California, and existing weapons must be registered.

The 1994 Federal law prohibited the manufacture of semi-automatic firearms that accept a detachable magazine with more than two of the following assault weapons features:

### Rifle

Folding or telescoping stock;  
Protruding pistol grip;

bayonet mount;  
threaded muzzle or flash suppressor;  
grenade launcher;

### **Pistols**

Magazine Outside Grip  
Threaded muzzle  
Barrel Shroud  
Unloaded Weight of 50 ounces or more  
Semi-Automatic Version of a fully Automatic Weapon

### **Shotguns**

Folding/Telescoping Stock  
Protruding Pistol Grip  
Detachable Magazine Capacity  
Fixed Magazine Capacity Greater than 5 rounds.

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# Issue Brief

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### PREVENTING CRIME AND PROSECUTING CRIMINALS

#### What Prevents Gun Crimes?

The NRA likes to pass off the old cliché that “guns aren’t the problem, it’s the criminals who use guns who are the problem.” Gun laws don’t work, they argue. The real problem, they say, is not proliferation and easy accessibility of guns through loopholes in existing law, but that prosecution of gun crimes are down and existing laws are not being enforced. As usual, this is not the case. And as usual, the NRA only offers “get tough” punishments for criminals who have already committed gun crimes, without even considering how to keep guns away from criminals (or children) in the first place.

While Handgun Control and the NRA are frequently on the opposite sides of the debate on guns, we do agree on one issue: we should vigorously enforce the gun laws already on the books and punish criminals who use guns. The NRA supports Project Exile, a program pioneered in Richmond that increases federal prosecution of gun crime. Guess what? So does Handgun Control – and so do most gun control advocates, who see no contradiction between tough prevention and tough punishment. Unfortunately, the NRA offers punishment **INSTEAD** of prevention as their only argument. We believe that the fight against gun violence requires a comprehensive approach that includes getting tough on criminals who use guns, strictly enforcing existing gun laws **AND** enacting new laws to prevent first-time gun crimes and violence.

#### Handgun Control Supports Preventing Gun Crimes Before They Happen

On March 24, 1998, firing from woods overlooking their school, 13-year-old Andrew Golden and 11-year-old Mitchell Johnson shot and killed four middle school students and a teacher and injured ten other students in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The two boys had a semiautomatic M-1 carbine with a large ammunition magazine, two other rifles, seven handguns and more than 500 rounds of ammunition which they took from the home of one of the boy’s grandfather, who had a large arsenal of weapons left unsecured. Officers arrested the two boys as they ran through the wooded area near the school, and they were convicted on five counts of capital murder and ten counts of first-degree battery in September 1998.

Andrew Golden and Mitchell Johnson will be held at a juvenile detention facility until they turn 21 years old. Despite the fact that these two boys will be in prison for many years of their young lives, four children and a teacher are dead,

their families' lives have been shattered forever and a community -- and the rest of the nation -- have been torn apart. But we must ask ourselves, could something have been done to keep these boys from getting the guns in the first place?

Gun control laws help stop crimes before they happen. For example, background checks, required by the Brady Act, have helped prevent potentially dangerous people from owning guns. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, since the Brady Law went into effect, background checks nationwide have stopped approximately 400,000 felons and other prohibited purchasers from buying handguns over-the-counter from federally licensed firearm dealers. What does this mean? Thousands of murders, spousal abusers, gun traffickers and fugitives from justice have been denied purchase of handguns and apprehended because of the background check required by the Brady Law.

In addition, control measures, like Child Access Prevention (CAP) laws, go a long way toward keeping guns out of the hands of children. CAP laws generally require adults to either store loaded guns in a place that is reasonably inaccessible to children, or use a device to lock the gun. If a child obtains an improperly stored, loaded gun, the adult owner is criminally liable.

Likewise, many of the tragedies that we read about every day can be prevented with stronger gun laws that make it tougher for kids and criminals to get guns. Although gun control legislation has succeeded in helping limit illegal firearm purchases, decrease gun-related crimes, deter criminal gun trafficking and reduce overall gun violence, gaping loopholes make our current laws inadequate for keeping guns away from children and criminals. Prosecutors and law enforcement nationwide have called for the closing of loopholes that allow guns to flow to children or criminals. Handgun Control supports new, common-sense legislation to build upon the success of the Brady Law and to strengthen our existing laws to keep guns from juveniles, convicted felons and other prohibited purchasers. To do this, we must close the loopholes that continue to allow the wrong people to get guns.

### **The Truth about Enforcement of Gun Laws and Prosecution of Criminals**

The NRA complains that the laws on the books aren't being enforced. Wrong. Gun laws are enforced more vigorously today than five years ago, and overall firearms prosecutions are up. Prosecutions are more frequent than ever before; sentences are longer; and the number of inmates in prison on gun offenses is at a record level. The NRA's criticisms of federal prosecution statistics ignore the basic fact that both federal and state authorities prosecute gun cases, and federal authorities typically focus on the most serious type of offenders. Since more criminals who use guns are going to jail for longer sentences, it's clear that the gun lobby's attack on federal law enforcement efforts are meant to dodge a subject that they don't want to talk about -- namely, gun control works to help reduce gun violence and stop children and criminals from getting guns in the first place.

### **Key Facts: Firearms Prosecutions in America**

- Since 1992, the total number of federal and state prosecutions has increased sharply -- about 25 percent more criminals are sent to prison for

state and federal weapon offenses than in 1992 (from 20,681 to 25,186)

- The number of higher-level offenders (those sentenced to five or more years) has gone up nearly 30 percent (from 1049 to 1345) in five years.
- The number of inmates in federal prison on firearm or arson charges (the two are counted together) increased 51 percent from 1993 to 1998, to a total of 8,979.
- In 1998, the Bureau of Alcohol Tobacco and Firearms brought 3,619 criminal cases involving 5,620 defendants to justice.
- 

### **What the NRA *Doesn't Want You to Know* About Enforcement**

- The NRA has for years successfully blocked the computerization by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) of gun sale records from out-of-business gun dealers. Thanks to the NRA-imposed restrictions, when a gun is traced as part of a criminal investigation, the files must often be retrieved manually from warehouses where the records are kept. As a result, hours or even days are added to the time needed to complete the successful trace of a crime gun. As a result, criminals avoid detection and criminal investigations are impeded.
- The NRA has maintained its steadfast opposition to waiting periods for handgun purchases, despite the need for a "cooling off" period to prevent impulse crimes and suicides. Because of NRA lobbyists, the waiting period included in the original Brady law expired in 1998, and the gun lobby is fighting efforts to reinstate it in 1999.
- The NRA likes to talk tough when it comes to criminals. But just this year, the NRA spent over \$3.7 million to try to pass a referendum in Missouri, Proposition B, which would have allowed almost anyone, even convicted criminals with misdemeanor records, to carry a concealed weapon almost anywhere in the state. The referendum would have even permitted people convicted of stalking and child molestation the ability to carry a hidden handgun into bars, stadiums, parks, school yards and other public places. Fortunately, Missouri voters rejected Proposition B and the NRA's intense lobbying effort to put more guns on our streets.
- At every opportunity, the NRA has sought to decrease or eliminate the funding of the ATF, the law enforcement agency whose mission it is to oversee gun crimes and trace the guns used in the commission of crimes. Because of NRA-sponsored legislation, investigators seeking to trace the path of the guns used in the Littleton school massacre were forced to plod through paper records stretching among numerous states, culminating in a dead end at Colorado gun shows. Only through legwork and luck were investigators able to piece together how the four weapons ended up in the hands of the teenage shooters. The NRA continues to vociferously oppose any gun registration system that would allow law enforcement to retain records so as to easily trace guns used in crime.

- In 1986, the NRA got legislation passed which restricts ATF inspection of gun dealers once a year. Even dealers who are the source for hundreds of crime guns cannot be routinely inspected more than once a year without a special court warrant. Of course, this is consistent with the NRA letter describing ATF as "jack-booted thugs," which caused former president George Bush to publicly resign his NRA membership in protest.
- As of April 1999, there were more than 100,000 federally licensed firearm dealers (FFL's) in America -- more licensed gun dealers than there are McDonald's franchises. Yet there were only 1,783 ATF agents to police them; many of those agents are detailed by law to only investigate crimes involving explosives.

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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## CONCEALED WEAPONS, CONCEALED RISK

### *Do you feel safer sitting next to someone carrying a gun?*

Many people say no to that question, and for many valid reasons. Most people who have permits to carry concealed weapons -- people who are not law enforcement officials -- **have limited training and undergo less testing than even the most basic police recruit.** Yet they are led to believe that given a dangerous situation, they will use deadly force with the same care and consideration that police officers will. Once a bullet leaves a gun, who is to say that it will stop only a criminal? Yet the National Rifle Association at every opportunity uses the fear of crime to promote the need for ordinary citizens to pack a gun.

### THE HISTORY

The carrying of concealed weapons (CCW) was **prohibited or severely limited in most states prior to the mid-1990's.** After its stunning losses on the Brady Bill and the assault weapon ban in 1993-94, the NRA needed a win -- and turned to their traditional strongholds in state legislatures. By 1995, the **NRA made the radical liberalization of CCW laws at the state level their top political priority,** arguing that ordinary people carrying hidden handguns would actually reduce the nation's soaring crime rates. Their not-so-hidden agenda: increasing gun ownership in general and increasing the sales of concealable handguns -- at a time when gun sales had gone flat -- in particular. In the first year of their new campaign, the gun lobby was successful, and many states changed their laws to allow the widespread carrying of concealed weapons.

Since 1996, however, the gun lobby has failed to convince even one state legislature to weaken concealed-carry laws. Despite the claims of the gun lobby's pro-CCW "expert," economist John Lott, who attempts to link liberal CCW laws with lower crime rates, several eminent criminologists have now published peer-reviewed studies debunking this flawed research. ([See John Lott Q&A](#)). And, in what may be the decade's conclusive refutation of pro-CCW propaganda, in April, 1999 Missouri citizens voted against liberalizing that state's CCW laws in the first-ever state referendum on the issue, although the NRA spent almost \$4 million to win what it called 'the last great gun battle of the 20th century.' Following the Missouri vote, Kansas, Michigan and Colorado legislatures all dropped NRA-sponsored drives to weaken those states' CCW laws. **Clearly, the tide has turned against hidden handguns.**

## CCW: WHY OR WHY NOT?

- The number of crime victims who successfully use firearms to defend themselves is quite small. Out of 34,040 American firearms deaths in 1996, only 212 *were justifiable homicides* by private citizens with firearms. ([See 1996 Firearms Deaths](#))
- More guns = more crime – or at least a much smaller reduction in the crime rate. A 1999 study by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, based on FBI crime statistics, demonstrates that liberalizing CCW laws may have an adverse effect on a state's crime rate. Between 1992 and 1997, the violent crime rate in states which kept strict CCW laws fell by an average of 24.8%. The 29 states that bought the NRA line that hidden handguns make them safer saw their violent crime rates drop by only 11.4%. Nationally, violent crime declined by 19.4% in that five year period. ([Click here to see the study, "Concealed Truth"](#))
- The gun lobby claims that only law-abiding citizens get CCW permits. But a recent study by the Violence Policy Center demonstrated that in the first six months of 1997, the weapon-related offense rate among Texas concealed handgun license holders was more than twice as high as that of the general population of Texas. We know that CCW holders are committing crimes – 946 of them in Texas in that six-month period – but because the gun lobby ensures that lists of CCW licensees in most states are not publicly obtainable, the full story has not yet been told.
- Even law-abiding citizens with the best intentions underestimate how hard it is to use a gun for successful self-defense. Even highly-trained police officers frequently lose control of their weapons; according to the National Institute of Justice, an average of 16% of all police officers killed in the line of duty are killed by an adversary with the officer's firearm. And police officers know that the very sight of a gun can escalate a situation, so that instead of losing your wallet, you lose your life. That's why almost every major law enforcement organization, including the International Brotherhood of Police Officers and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, opposes the liberalization of CCW laws. ([See Law Enforcement](#))
- An armed society is an at-risk society. Many permit holders have been stripped of their permits for criminal behavior...and even law-abiding people get angry, get confused, make mistakes, and escalate ordinary arguments into gun-play. ([For more information, see The Incident File](#))

## THE LAWS

Carrying-concealed-weapons (CCW) laws **have nothing to do with private firearms ownership in the home.** They relate solely to allowing individuals to **carry their concealed guns almost anywhere in the community.**

Much of the CCW debate is couched in somewhat obscure language. Pro-gun forces favor "shall issue" laws, which means that law enforcement shall issue a permit allowing the carrying of hidden weapons to anyone who meets that state's requirements. In many states, these requirements are minimal and do not go much beyond the federal Brady Law requirements for purchasing firearms – meaning that some licensees are eligible despite criminal convictions for violent or drug-related misdemeanors. Training requirements are extremely

lax in most states and do not even include proof that a licensee knows how to load, fire or store a firearm. And, although some states do forbid the carrying of concealed weapons in certain government buildings, most shall-issue states allow concealed weapons in bars, daycare centers, sports stadiums and other public places where firearms should clearly be prohibited. Utah and Montana even permit their licensees to carry guns on school grounds, and Kentucky amended its already lax law to permit guns in churches and other places of worship.

Handgun Control supports the seven states which flatly prohibit the carrying of concealed weapons. However, fourteen other states with "may-issue" systems – meaning that law enforcement may issue a permit depending upon the needs and circumstances of the applicant – do allow police to deny permits to applicants who clearly should not be carrying firearms. New Jersey, for example, issues a very small number of permits, and almost all go to citizens like security guards with an occupational requirement. "May-issue" systems like New Jersey's enable law enforcement to retain discretion over the serious and dangerous privilege of carrying a concealed weapon in public, and are supported by almost every major law enforcement organization.

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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### **THE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS....AND BEYOND**

#### **Kids and Guns in America**

It shouldn't take a Columbine, a Jonesboro or an inner-city drive-by shooting to make us realize that American children are more at risk from firearms than the children of any other industrialized nation. In one year, firearms killed no children in Japan, 19 in Great Britain, 57 in Germany, 109 in France, 153 in Canada, and 5,285 in the United States.

In the United States, young children die or are badly injured because their parents or other gunowners don't store their firearms properly, and children find loaded guns and use them unintentionally on themselves or other children. Older children are more at risk from horseplay with available guns, while teenagers use guns for impulse suicides and for crime. All are vulnerable to getting caught in the crossfire from guns used in domestic violence and in crime. Meanwhile, the gun lobby opposes every common-sense measure to reduce the accessibility of firearms to kids, from Child Access Prevention laws to the mandatory sale of trigger-locks or childproof, "personalized" guns. Although the NRA insists that the entertainment industry bears responsibility for exposing children to violent images, it refuses to accept responsibility for providing children with both the means and the ideology to hurt themselves and other people.

#### **THE PROBLEM**

As the rate of American gun violence dramatically increased over the last fifteen years, American children paid the price. >From 1984 to 1994 the firearm death rate for 15-19 year olds increased 222 percent while the non-firearm homicide death rate decreased almost 13%. Within five years, firearms are expected to overtake motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death among American children.

Cars do kill children: so do poorly-made toys and swimming pools and dozens of common household items. But of all the thousands of products with which children have contact, only one – firearms – are completely exempt from consumer protection regulations. Back in 1972, when the Consumer Product Safety Commission was created, the gun lobby's political power ensured that the one product that children live with that is specifically designed to cause death and injury remained exempt. Thus, most handguns have so little trigger resistance that they can be fired by a three-year old, while many guns fire when dropped on the floor. Many popular semi-automatic handguns lack magazine safety disconnects or load indicators, meaning that children have no way of

knowing that a gun that appears unloaded actually has a bullet in the chamber.

Our government recalls or bans hundreds of products when even a few children are killed or injured by a flawed design. Recently, some schools have created "peanut-free zones" in their cafeterias because of the tiny number of children who are highly allergic to peanut products, and in 1999 major car manufacturers installed inside-trunk latches on new cars because of the 11 children who died last year by suffocating in locked car trunks. For years, the gun industry has made their products more and more lethal, instead of devoting any of their considerable profits to the development of a childproof gun, and the industry is absolutely immune to government intervention for their actions. (See Gun Industry Reform)

The gun industry and their mouthpieces at the NRA have fought every reasonable effort to protect children from guns by legislation. At the state and federal level, the gun lobby fights child access prevention (CAP) laws which hold gunowners responsible when children access their guns and hurt themselves or someone else. They fight laws that mandate the sale – not the use, just the sale – of trigger locks with new firearms. Although 18- and 19-year olds commit more crimes than any other age groups, they oppose raising the age for handgun possession to 21 – the same age at which we permit young people to drink.

And by coaxing hundreds of local governments, schools and youth groups to support their Eddie Eagle program, the NRA ensures that thousands of kids get the message that they shouldn't touch guns, which are for grownups. What Eddie Eagle really does is put responsibility on young children not to touch or play with guns – rather than on grownups for keeping the guns inaccessible. Eddie Eagle also ensures that children learn that using guns is an adult behavior to aspire to – creating new generations of gun-owners and gun purchasers. Not for nothing has Eddie Eagle been called "Joe Camel with Feathers," but the NRA insists that this public relations program alone will solve the problem of kids and guns.

## KIDS AND GUNS: KEY FACTS

- For every child killed with a gun, four are wounded. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of firearm death of children 0-14 years old is nearly **twelve times** higher in the U.S. than in 25 other industrialized nations combined.
- Over **6,000 students were expelled in 1996-97** for bringing guns to school. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that between 36% and 50% of male eleventh graders believe they could easily get a gun if they wanted one.
- Guns do kill people, especially when wielded by children. More than **800 Americans, young and old, die each year from guns** shot by children under the age of 19.
- In 1996, more than **1300 children aged 10-19 committed suicide with firearms**. Unlike suicide attempts using other methods, suicide attempts with gun are nearly always fatal, meaning a temporarily depressed

teenager will never get a second chance at life. Two-thirds of all completed teenage suicides involve a firearm.

- The firearm injury epidemic, due largely to handgun injuries, is **ten times larger than the polio epidemic** of the first half of this century.

## THE LAWS

There are very few laws governing children's access to guns. The Brady Law made it illegal for children under age 21 to purchase handguns from licensed dealers, although a loophole still permits 18-21 year olds to purchase handguns from private or unlicensed individuals. (The Columbine shooters used four guns purchased at gun-shows, three of which were bought by an eighteen-year-old friend.)

Each state has different laws governing the transfer and possession of guns to and by juveniles. Most states permit teenagers to possess long guns, including assault weapons grandfathered by the 1994 assault weapon ban, without adult supervision.

Child Access Prevention laws have been passed by 17 states. These states hold gunowners criminally liable if children access their loaded weapons to hurt themselves or someone else. Research demonstrates that in the 12 states which had passed CAP laws by 1997, accidental deaths of children from firearms decreased 23% in the two years after the laws went into effect.

For information on the laws affecting children and guns in your state, see State Laws.

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# FIREARM FACTS

***Firearms are so pervasive in America that sometimes we forget the price we pay for all-too-easy access to guns. Consider some basic facts...***

There are approximately 192 million privately owned firearms in the U.S. -- 65 million of which are handguns.

In 1997, 10,369 people were murdered with firearms in this country.

In 1996, firearms were used in 2 out of 3 murders committed in the U.S. Handguns were used in 54% of all murders.

In 1996, 8 out of 10 of those murdered with firearms were murdered with handguns.

In 1997, there were only 190 justifiable handgun homicides by private citizens in the United States.

***Thinking of buying a gun to protect your home? You may want to remember that...***

Guns kept in the home for self-protection are 22 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than to kill in self-defense.

The presence of a gun in the home triples the risk of homicide in the home.

The presence of a gun in the home increases the risk of suicide fivefold.

***Guns are a blight upon our young people. For instance...***

In 1994, firearms were the number two killer of men and women 10-24 years of age -- second only to motor vehicle crashes.

In 1994, the firearm injury death rate among males 15-24 years of age was 32% higher than the motor vehicle traffic injury death rate.

In 1994, firearm homicide was the leading cause of death for black males ages 15-34.

In 1997, over 11 children and teens, ages 19 and under, were killed with guns every day in this country.

***Surprised? You shouldn't be, because...***

*In 1997 alone, 32,436 Americans were killed with firearms, in homicides, suicides, and accidents. In comparison, 33,651 Americans were killed in the Korean War and 58,148 Americans were killed in the Vietnam War.*

Licensed firearms dealers sell an estimated 7.5 *million* guns every year, of which 3.5 million are handguns.

Of all accidental fatalities involving firearms, 71% involve handguns.

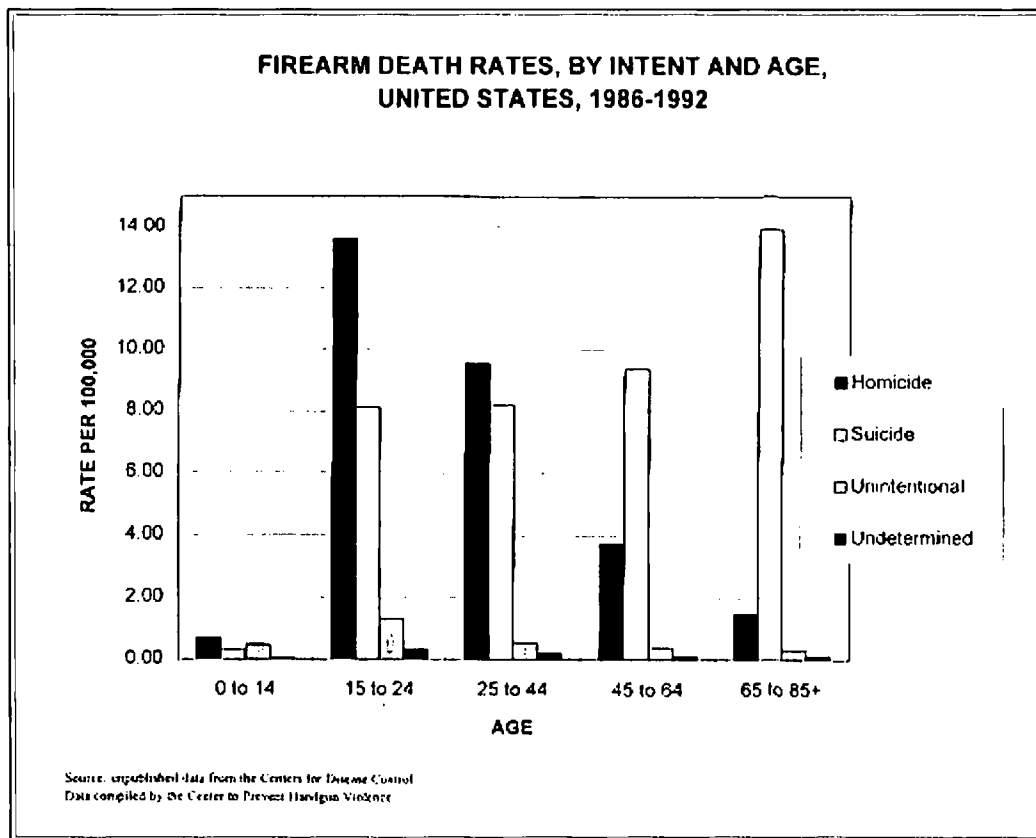
***Finally, you may want to consider one more statistic...***

In 1996, handguns were used to murder 2 people in New Zealand, 15 in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, 213 in Germany and 9,390 *in the United States*.

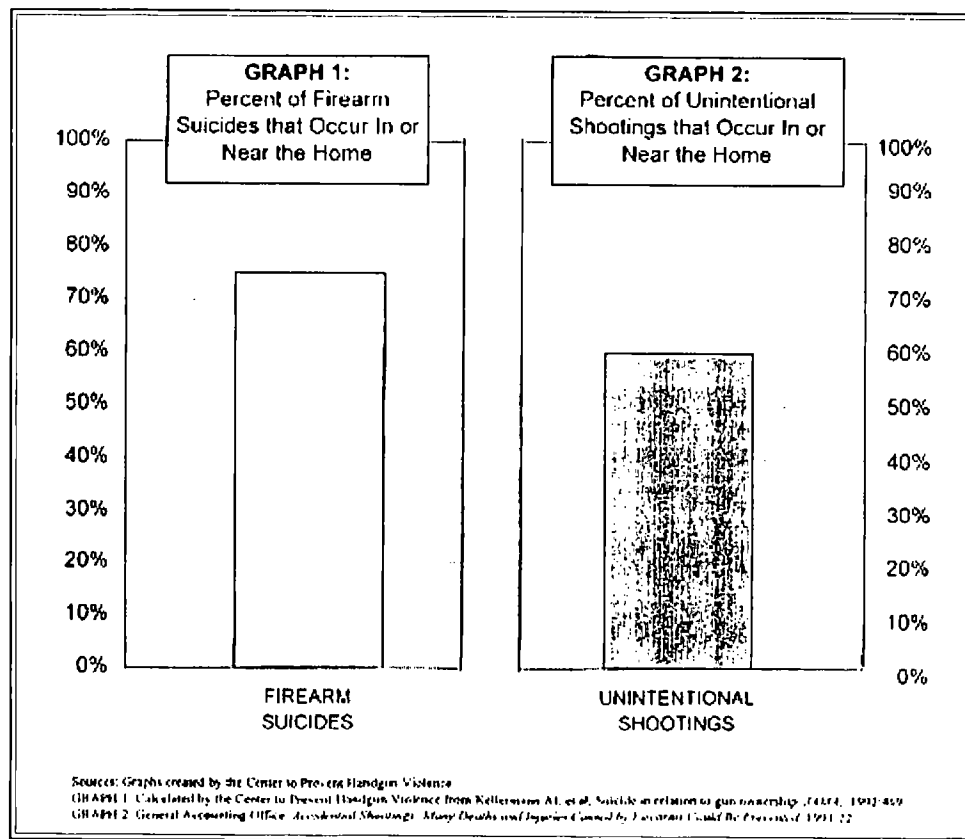
Last updated:9/16/99

# Number of Firearm Deaths and Firearm Death Rates by Intent and Age

United States, 1986-1992



| Number of Firearm Deaths |                 |                |                      |                     |
|--------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                          | <i>Homicide</i> | <i>Suicide</i> | <i>Unintentional</i> | <i>Undetermined</i> |
| <i>0 to 14</i>           | 2533            | 1034           | 1710                 | 132                 |
| <i>15 to 24</i>          | 35896           | 21397          | 3419                 | 877                 |
| <i>25 to 44</i>          | 53159           | 45585          | 3074                 | 1108                |
| <i>45 to 64</i>          | 12068           | 30266          | 1230                 | 407                 |
| <i>65 to 85+</i>         | 3211            | 299061         | 7031                 | 264                 |
| <i>unknown</i>           | 252             | 28             | 121                  | 10                  |



| <b>Firearm Death Rates.....</b> |                 |                |                      |                     |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
|                                 | <i>Homicide</i> | <i>Suicide</i> | <i>Unintentional</i> | <i>Undetermined</i> |
| <i>0 to 14</i>                  | 0.681           | 0.281          | 0.46                 | 0.04                |
| <i>15 to 24</i>                 | 13.62           | 8.12           | 1.301                | 0.33                |
| <i>25 to 44</i>                 | 9.57            | 8.21           | 0.551                | 0.20                |
| <i>45 to 64</i>                 | 3.751           | 9.401          | 0.381                | 0.13                |
| <i>65 to 85+</i>                | 1.501           | 13.941         | 0.331                | 0.1                 |
| <i>unknown</i>                  | n/a             | n/a            | n/a                  | n/a                 |

Source: Unpublished data from the Centers for Disease Control: Data compiled by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence



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### Firearm Facts

1) In 1995, nearly 35,000 Americans died by gunfire. Among all consumer products, only motor vehicles outpace guns as a cause of fatal injury, and guns will pass them by 2003.

2) Contrary to popular perception, most homicides do not occur as the result of an attack by a stranger but stem from an argument between people who know each other and are often related. For murders in 1995, almost half of the victims were either related to (11 percent) or acquainted with (34 percent) their killers. Only 15 percent were killed by strangers. Of female victims, 26 percent were killed by their husbands or boyfriends.

3) A gun is far more likely to be used in suicide, murder, or fatal accident than to kill a criminal. Using federal government figures, for every time a citizen used a firearm in 1995 in a justifiable homicide, 131 lives were ended in firearm murders, suicides, and unintentional shootings.

4) Homicide is the leading cause of death among both African-American males and females 15 to 34 years of age. Tallying up murders, suicides, and unintentional shootings, the firearm death rate among teenagers aged 15 to 19 increased 59 percent from 1988 through 1993, reaching 27.8 deaths per 100,000—the highest level ever.

5) For all our fear and fascination with guns and murder, the fact remains that most gun deaths in America are not the result of murder (15,456 for 1994), but suicide (20,540 for 1994). It is estimated that only about 10 percent of suicides by firearms are committed with firearms purchased specifically for the act.

6) The wholesale value of firearms manufactured in the United States in 1994 totaled more than \$1.4 billion. The value of handguns manufactured that year totaled \$668 million, while the value of rifles and shotguns totaled \$737 million. The value of ammunition manufactured totaled \$680 million. The combined wholesale value of both manufactured firearms and ammunition in 1994 was more than \$2 billion.

7) In 1980 pistols—semi-automatic handguns—accounted for only 32 percent of the 2.3 million handguns produced in the United States. The majority was revolvers. By 1994 this ratio had reversed itself; pistols accounted for 77 percent of the 2.6 million handguns produced that year.

8) To counteract the sales slump of the 1980s, gun makers began to expand the market with niche marketing campaigns aimed at women and youth. And they began to redesign and expand their product line focusing on firepower (assault weapons,

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a new generation of high-powered Saturday Night Specials, and higher caliber weapons), and technology (laser sights, caseless ammunition, and the increased use of plastics).

9) It is estimated that in 1990 the lifetime economic cost of firearms violence totaled \$20.4 billion.

10) Prior to the Violent Crime Control Law Enforcement Act of 1994 the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) estimated that the majority of America's quarter million gun dealers did not operate businesses such as gun stores or sporting goods outlets, but out of their homes. An unknown number of these "kitchen-table" dealers were involved in high-volume, criminal gun trafficking. Due to changes contained in the 1994 law, as of February 1996, the number of illegitimate dealers has dropped by more than 100,000. The number of illegitimate dealers continues to drop by 150 a day.

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## About The Second Amendment

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The statement "I believe in gun responsibility so long as it does not infringe on Second Amendment rights" as mouthed by our elected officials can no longer be allowed to stall or stonewall discussion of the gun violence epidemic that we are currently suffering. We must challenge the mistaken and wrong perception that safety legislation that creates appropriate guidelines and regulations of firearms offends or undercuts our Federal Constitution and Bill of Rights.

The Second Amendment reads, "A well regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed". In *United States v. Miller* 307 U.S. 174, the Supreme Court discusses the purposes and the limit of the Second Amendment and tells us that the "obvious purpose" of the Amendment was "to assure the continuation and render possible the effectiveness" of our state militia forces (our present day National Guard). The right to bear arms was not extended to each and every individual, but rather was expressly limited to maintaining effective state militia. The N.R.A.'s continuous omission of the militia language in its literature speaks volumes and prompted former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger to comment that the N.R.A. has perpetrated a "fraud on the American public."

Also, to continue to allow this incorrect usage of the Second Amendment as an excuse to avoid discussing the health and safety risks associated with gun violence clearly infringes upon our First Amendment right to freedom of speech. It is interesting to note that in comparing the First and Second Amendment rights that we all recognize that freedom of speech, as broadly as it is interpreted, still has conditions. For example, we are not allowed to yell "fire" in a crowded theater when none exists. However, if we are to believe the N.R.A., the Second Amendment grants an unconditional right to individuals to possess arms. This pathetic form of analysis by the N.R.A. is clearly wrong and it cries out for challenge and correction.

History tells us that the Second Amendment is based upon the colonist's fear that the military forces composed of professional soldiers, such as those used by King George III to compel obedience to cruel and burdensome laws and taxes, were simply not to be trusted. Federalist James Madison drafted a Bill of Rights for presentation at the first Congress. His draft of the Second Amendment was ultimately restructured into the present form in order to place greater emphasis on the militia purpose in dealing with the right to keep and bear arms. The New Hampshire convention suggested far broader language - that being: "Congress shall never disarm any citizen unless such as are or have been in actual rebellion". Our first Congress had available language that would have created a broad individual right to bear arms separate from a state military purpose. It is indeed significant that they chose to bypass this broad language in order to adopt the surviving version.

Finally, our federal courts, in interpreting the application of our Second Amendment have created a well settled principle of law, that being that the Second Amendment does not guarantee an individual the right to own a handgun or to bear arms. The federal courts have been unanimous in refusing to apply the Second Amendment to state regulation of firearms.

We start with the *Miller* decision (cited earlier) that a firearms statute is unconstitutional only if it adversely affects a state's ability to maintain a militia and we move on to numerous cases upholding laws that regulate private ownership of firearms, such as *Eckert v. City of Philadelphia* 477 F 2d 610 ... "The right to keep and bear arms is not a right given by the United States Constitution"; *Stevens v. United States*, 440 F 2d 144..."There can be no serious claim to any express constitutional right of an individual to possess a firearm", and *Ouilici v. The Village of Morton Grove* 695 F 2d 270, wherein the N.R.A. attempted to challenge a handgun ban and the U.S. Supreme Court, by refusing to hear the case, allowed to let stand a lower ruling that stated: "There is no individual right to keep and bear

arms under the Second Amendment". The Second Amendment is simply not a threat to any law affecting the private possession of firearms.

It is patently absurd to continue to allow our law makers to avoid enacting (or for that matter even discussing) common sense consumer product health and safety regulation of firearms on the pretense that in some "mystical manner" it may offend our Second Amendment.

We experience tragedy upon inexcusable tragedy, but fail to recognize firearms as the lethal consumer products that they are. We allow the gun industry to continuously foil any attempt to create reasonable product safety guidelines. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms has no warrant to regulate firearm safety and is not empowered to protect us from the dangers of firearm use. The Consumer Product Safety Commission, the agency charged with overseeing the use and manufacture of most household products, is specifically prohibited from regulating firearms in any way. Safety guidelines have made automobiles safer for all of us; why should the gun industry continue to be a deadly exception?

We need to deal with gun violence as a true health epidemic that is costing us tens of thousands of American lives yearly. We need to move beyond the criminal justice system and the Second Amendment so that we may focus on the overall preventability of gun violence rather than continuously lamenting its deadly results.

Respectfully submitted.

Charles L. Blek, Jr., J.D.

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**ORANGE COUNTY**  
**GUN-INVOLVED INJURY, FATALITY and CRIME DATE for 1994**

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Homicide in Orange County increased 78% in the decade from 1984 to 1993, faster than any other cause of death in the County. Orange County Health Care Agency 11/95

|                                                         |        |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| (Total Homicides)                                       | 171    |
| (Total Homicides by juveniles)                          | 27     |
| Handgun Known - Homicides                               | 115    |
| All Other Firearms Known - Homicides*                   | 8      |
| Guns - Intentional Homicide**                           | 128    |
| Guns - Hospitalized Nonfatal Assault Injuries***        | 312    |
| Guns - Suicide**                                        | 140    |
| Guns - Hospitalized Nonfatal Self-inflicted injuries*** | 19     |
| Guns - Unintentional Fatal Injuries**                   | 6      |
| Guns - Hospitalized Unintentional Nonfatal Injuries***  | 129    |
| Firearms - Robbery*                                     | 2,633  |
| Firearms - Aggravated Assault*                          | 1,678  |
| Handgun Sales****                                       | 39,813 |

Sources:

Health Care Agency of Orange County, California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement, Law Enforcement Center,

\*California Criminal Justice Profile 1994(Statewide and by County) California Department of Health Services, Emergency Preparedness and Injury Control Program.

\*\*Injury Deaths and Rates by County and Mechanism of Injury (California 1994)

\*\*\*Hospitalized Nonfatal Injuries and Rates by County and Mechanism of Injury (California 1994)

\*\*\*\* California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement.

A special thank you to Women Against Gun Violence for compiling California Data.

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## Views on Handgun Policy Options: Los Angeles County And Orange County

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| <b>Handgun Policy Options</b>                          | <b>Los Angeles<br/>County Voters</b> | <b>Los Angeles<br/>County Gun<br/>Owners</b> | <b>Oange<br/>County<br/>Voters</b> | <b>Orange County<br/>Gun Owners</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Support Ban on Home Gun Dealers                        | 60%                                  | 48%                                          | 55%                                | 53%                                 |
| Oppose Liberalizing Concealed Weapons Permits Law      | 73%                                  | 58%                                          | 73%                                | 60%                                 |
| Support Ban on "Saturday Night Specials"               | 71%                                  | 63%                                          | 71%                                | 65%                                 |
| Support City Ban on "Saturday Night Specials"          | 88%                                  | 81%                                          | 87%                                | 83%                                 |
| Support Federal Regulation to Include Safety Standards | 85%                                  | 79%                                          | 90%                                | 86%                                 |

Resource: *Passion and Policy: As Facts Replace Feelings in the Handgun Debate, More Voters Support Efforts to Reduce Access to Handguns, Los Angeles County and Orange County*, EDK Associates, Inc., April 1996

68TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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The National Journal

June 5, 1999

SECTION: WHITE HOUSE; Pg. 1539; Vol. 31, No. 23

LENGTH: 1763 words

HEADLINE: First Posturing, Then Honest Talk

BYLINE: Carl M. Cannon

BODY:

Violent crime is a subject that has historically defied rational discourse--at least among Washington politicians. The issue is so emotional and complex that the temptation to demagogue usually proves too great, especially during campaign season. Good-faith efforts at finding solutions just do not fit neatly into a 30-second soundbite.

But something momentous may have happened in the wake of the April 20 massacre at Columbine High School. Perhaps it is only temporary, but the killings of so many young people in Littleton, Colo., seems to have diminished the public's tolerance for political posturing and created a demand for honest talk--and action--on the chilling issues of school shootings in particular and youth violence in general.

Such a discourse inevitably hinges on whether Republican and Democratic leaders are willing to buck favored interests, notably the gun lobby, for Republicans, and the entertainment industry, for Democrats. The answer to that question appears to be a tentative yes. Having ascertained the public's mood--and it took them several weeks--the nation's elected officials have attempted to be responsive. Fittingly, this response is being orchestrated, as it must in modern politics, by the White House.

"As a nation, we've reacted to the shootings at Columbine High School like almost no other event . . . in recent memory. It has literally pierced the heart of America," first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said at a Rose Garden event on June 1. "Yet . . . I've heard less talk about people feeling helpless or hopeless and more about a growing consensus that finger-pointing doesn't lead to solutions and that we have to move forward together to take steps to end the violence, not only in our schools but in our broader community."

At the Rose Garden session, Mrs. Clinton was joined by the President, Attorney General Janet Reno, Federal Trade Commission Chairman Robert Pitofsky, and a poised nine-year-old boy from Seattle. All of them spoke pointedly about the legal and moral requirements of those who produce violent movies,

The National Journal, June 5, 1999

television shows, and video games, and market them to children, who have impressionable young minds. When it came his turn to speak, the President read some of the advertisements for grisly computer games and called for an 18-month, \$ 1 million federal inquiry into the entertainment industry's marketing of violent movies, music, and video games to young people.

Presidential aides, pointing to Clinton's support for the v-chip and his sporadic admonitions to Hollywood about violent programming, insisted that Clinton was being consistent. In truth, the President's embrace of the inquiry, first proposed in legislation by Sen. Sam Brownback, R-Kan., represents a significant expansion in focus for this Administration--and it startled executives in the entertainment industry.

In the first days following the carnage in Littleton, things didn't start out this way. Instead, the usual suspects behaved in the usual ways.

Leaders of the Religious Right blamed Hollywood, the Internet, and liberal policies that made public schools officially secular. Liberals and Democrats--including Clinton--took aim at the gun lobby and its conservative allies in Congress. National Rifle Association President Charlton Heston pointed to the schools and hinted at the need for more guns, suggesting that if they'd had an armed deputy at Columbine, the youthful shooters could have been stopped. Colorado officials, defensive about the uncertain actions of the cops (for one thing, there was an armed deputy at the school), cast aspersions on the parents of the two young killers. And so it went.

On May 10, Clinton's aides cobbled together a White House conference on youth violence that brought a concession from gun manufacturers that the minimum age for purchasing a handgun should be 21, not 18. But the meeting, held behind closed doors, had a politics-as-usual air about it. The NRA was not even invited--and the nation's studio heads did not attend.

Meanwhile, the White House trotted out some recycled gun control measures that had been languishing in Congress. In support of that legislation, Clinton gave a May 12 speech that rather spectacularly mischaracterized the state of crime control in the United States. In a campaignlike event, in which Clinton was surrounded by a sea of blue police uniforms, the President recited the impressive decline in nationwide violent crime statistics. "Police chiefs, politicians, and people on the street all agree that the most important factor has been community policing," the President asserted. "Where police officers . . . used to cruise anonymously through the streets, now community police officers walk the beat and know the people in the neighborhoods, becoming involved in the lives of the people they protect and involving them in the fight against crime. Community policing has worked miracles in many of our cities."

The National Journal, June 5, 1999

Actually, experts in law enforcement say that the feel-good approach to law enforcement Clinton terms "community policing" has had, at best, a marginal effect on the violent crime rate. What appears to have worked in the decade of the 1990s is a far-more-aggressive approach known in law enforcement circles as "proactive policing." This is the method pioneered in New York City under police commissioner William Bratton and emulated in much of the rest of the nation. Using computer grids and a top-down command structure, Bratton made his precinct captains and watch commanders personally accountable for crime in their sectors. The face of proactive policing is not epitomized by smiling officers on bicycles, but by grim-faced squads of special detectives who target high-crime areas and routinely frisk the young toughs who make those neighborhoods so dangerous.

In New York City, however, aggressive police techniques have also brought a spate of complaints about police brutality, including two horrific cases that reverberated far beyond the city limits. In confusing the two approaches, Clinton missed an opportunity to shape the national debate on how police can be effective without being abusive.

In the summer of 1995, Clinton went to Chicago to dramatize the need to ban "cop-killer" bullets in handguns. The President cited the name of a slain policeman, Daniel Doffyn, to dramatize his point and needled the NRA by adding, "I have never seen a deer, a duck, or a wild turkey wearing a Kevlar vest in my life. Nobody is interfering with your right to hunt."

The event made for some great campaign footage, but not much else. For starters, consider Clinton's line about Kevlar vests on deer. Bullets from the typical hunting rifle will penetrate soft body armor--and always have. Such armor is intended to protect officers from handguns. But cop-killer bullets have never been sold--or even invented yet--a fact that Clinton's domestic policy advisers freely admit in private. Chicago police officer Doffyn was, indeed, shot in the chest while wearing soft body armor, but either the vest was unzipped or the bullet that entered his torso traveled up the sleeve. There was no bullet hole in the vest.

Nonetheless, Clinton cheerfully used the cop-killer bullet theme, complete with Kevlar-clad deer, throughout the 1996 campaign. Nor was the other side much better. Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole clamored for more prison cells, never mentioning his senatorial vote against the massive 1995 crime bill, with its \$ 8 billion for prison construction. Dole also said he favored instant computer checks for handguns, neglecting to note that as a Senator, he voted against the Brady Bill, which allowed states to implement instant checks in lieu of a five-day waiting period.

Columbine High School made grim headlines just as another national election season is getting under way, one in which a Bush, a Dole, and even a Clinton are all contemplating a run at

The National Journal, June 5, 1999

high office. And though old habits die hard, the Littleton tragedy touched a nerve that no astute politician could ignore. "This was a defining moment for the country," says White House adviser Bruce N. Reed. "It strips away the politics. People realize these were real kids, they could have been our kids, and we should do everything we can." Clinton himself has been markedly more focused, one aide said, since May 20, when he attended a memorial service in Littleton and parents of the slain students implored him personally not to let their kids have died in vain.

Republican leaders in the Senate, deluged with protests after they initially bottled up legislation to ban more types of assault weapons and to tighten the gun-show loophole for handgun purchases, brought the bill back up for a vote--and watched passively as Vice President Al Gore broke the tie. Out on the campaign trail, GOP presidential hopeful Elizabeth Dole has volunteered that guns are a part of the discussion of crime control. Her doing so in front of conservative audiences in pro-gun states demonstrates the independent thinking needed to get a handle on this issue.

For their part, Hollywood executives unleashed their typical "witch-hunt" quotes in response to the impending FTC study into their marketing techniques, but they have been meeting in private to discuss the same issues. And even some of the Internet's most dedicated libertines have had second thoughts. When Michael Brown, the channel manager of Gamecenter.com, a Web page devoted to video games, suggested on his site that mental illness, not computer games, was to blame for the suffering at Columbine High School, he was inundated with responses from fellow computer gamers, many of whom disagreed. Brown responded by conceding he'd been "simplistic" and by printing a cross section of the replies he'd received, which he called "the most articulate" letters he'd ever seen.

In the Rose Garden this week, President Clinton put it this way: "We've got to quit fooling around with this. We've got a chance. Our hearts are open, our ears are open, our heads are thinking."

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HEADLINE: SMOKING GUNS;  
WHAT THE GUN CONTROL MOVEMENT CAN LEARN FROM THE ANTI-TOBACCO CAMPAIGN

BYLINE: BY DAVID C. ANDERSON

BODY:

The street guy told the dealer he needed some guns to replace one he had lost the previous Saturday. The dealer was sympathetic. Were you caught with the gun? he wanted to know. No, the man said. He had run and hadn't been caught, but along the way he ditched the gun and the cops got it. Now he wanted new guns because he had figured out who had "ratted me out" to the police, he said, and he had to "settle up." They agreed on replacement guns and the dealer said to come back in a few days to pick them up.

This was a disturbing episode of retailing, certainly -- and all the more disturbing because it did not take place on an inner-city street corner or a booth in a bikers' bar, but over the counter of a store in a Chicago suburb. The customer was an undercover officer, part of a sting operation mounted by Chicago police to support the city's lawsuit against firearms manufacturers and distributors.

The Chicago suit, part of a fast-growing legal trend, suggests the potential for litigation to open a new front in the decades-old war of attrition between promoters of gun control and the gun lobby. Some experts still dismiss the suits as grandstanding. Others, citing a recent New York case, see them as in line with emerging legal trends.

#### MAKING A KILLING

America remains one of the world's leading gun markets. Private citizens are believed to own 200 million firearms, a third of them handguns, and the industry, with revenues estimated between \$ 1.4 billion and \$ 2.5 billion annually, distributes several million new guns each year. Even so, gun makers fret over flagging sales. Guns are durable, and most of the people interested in buying one for legitimate reasons have already done so. Recent surveys now find guns present in about 35 to 40 percent of American households, a decline from earlier estimates of 50 percent.

As Tom Diaz documents in a new book, Making a Killing, the need to sustain sales has taken the industry in troubling directions: appeals to macho fantasy and efforts to exploit a criminal market that developed rapidly in the 1980s and 1990s as a by-product of the boom in crack cocaine. More precisely, the industry attracts potential customers by pitching a new gun's ability to kill better than an old one. "Lethality is the nicotine of the gun industry," Diaz writes. "Time and time again, the gun industry has injected into the civilian market new guns that are specifically designed to be better at killing -- guns

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with greater ammunition capacity, higher firepower in the form of bigger caliber or power, increased concealability, or all three."

Apparently calculating that gun buyers who begin early remain buyers for life, gun marketers appeal shamelessly to kids. Diaz quotes appalling copy from the voyeuristic "gun press" -- magazines that promote the industry. It "is one mean looking dude," says a Guns & Ammo review of an assault weapon, "considered cool and Ramboish by the teenage crowd; to a man they love the AP9 at first sight. Stuffed to the brim with Nyclad hollow points, the pistol is about as wicked a piece as you can keep by your pillow. . . . Take a look at one. And let your teenage son tag along. Ask him what he thinks."

Most recently, the industry has bet on "pocket rockets" -- guns that combine higher caliber with smaller size. "The concealability and firepower of these guns make them among the most lethal weapons America's streets have ever seen," Diaz writes. They also coincide with a national movement to reduce the authorities' discretion in denying permits to carry concealed weapons. Diaz quotes Shooting Industry magazine: "Two bright rays of sunshine gleam through the dark clouds of the slump in the firearms market. One is the landslide of 'shall issue' concealed carry reform legislation around the country. The other is the emergence of a new generation of compact handguns."

Such marketing imposes huge social costs. Guns killed about 34,000 people in the United States in 1996 and were second only to automobiles as a nonnatural cause of death. (The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that by 2003, guns will surpass cars.) The shooting deaths included 14,300 homicides, or 68 percent of all homicides committed that year. The other fatal shootings included 18,100 suicides and 1,100 accidents. (Circumstances of the rest weren't clear.) A study based on 1992 data found that about 99,000 people were treated in hospitals each year for nonfatal gun wounds, about 20,000 the result of accidents.

Recent studies of the surge in crime that accompanied aggressive marketing of crack in the late 1980s and early 1990s blame most of the violence on guns in the hands of young people. The number of homicides committed by juveniles with guns nearly tripled between 1986 and 1993, while the number of killings with other weapons remained unchanged.

The burden for an innocent public is financial as well as emotional. Medical treatment of a single serious gunshot wound may easily exceed \$ 100,000; a medical journal article in 1995 estimated the cost for treating gun injuries nationwide that year at \$ 4 billion. Taxpayers pay most of these bills. A 1996 California study, for example, found that 81 percent of hospitalized gunshot victims did not have medical insurance.

Costs of emergency medical, law enforcement, and other public services mount quickly: Philadelphia estimates that nonmedical expenses of gun violence cost the city \$ 72.2 million per year. Chicago estimates \$ 78.1 million in 1997 for gun-related police and emergency medical service and for prosecution of gun violations. A 1997 study calculated \$ 2.8 million in direct and indirect costs (lost productivity, pain and suffering, quality of life) for a single gun fatality. For nonfatal wounds, the figures were \$ 249,000 for those admitted to hospitals and \$ 73,000 for those who required only emergency treatment. Overall, the study estimated total costs of U.S. gun violence at \$ 126 billion per year. The idea that an industry reliant on perverse appeals to immature

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judgment should impose that level of grief and fiscal burden makes the case for serious regulation seem obvious, yet it has eluded legislatures for years.

#### HOW THE GUN LOBBY DOES IT

The modern era of federal gun control began in the 1960s with laws passed after the assassinations of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, Jr. These laws banned mail-order gun sales and required buyers to attest to their sobriety, sanity, and lack of a felony record. They also restricted purchases to the buyer's state of residence.

Subsequent laws banned importation of cheap handguns ("Saturday night specials") and sales of assault weapons and imposed a waiting period between purchase and delivery of a gun so that police could scrutinize the buyer. (Congress recently allowed that requirement to expire, substituting a procedure that requires dealers to check a buyer's identity against databases of criminal records.)

While leaders of the National Rifle Association denounce all such regulation in apoplectic terms, it is remarkable for its laxity. In addition to fending off more serious gun control, the gun lobby over the years has carved out remarkable exemptions for its constituents. For example:

- \* A law specifically prohibits the Consumer Product Safety Commission -- whose role it is to judge the fitness for market of everything from lawn-mowers to baby cribs -- from testing or ruling on guns.

- \* Congress bars the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms from assembling gun data in a centralized electronic database. Tracing ownership of a gun recovered at a crime scene requires a call to the manufacturer, who may or may not be able to say what wholesaler sold it to which retail shop, then a call to the retail shop where clerks may or may not have records of the gun's last sale on file.

- \* In many states, virtually nothing regulates sales of guns between private individuals. Nearly every weekend in America, tens of thousands of people interested in buying and selling guns gather at "gun shows," where many are able to carry on private transactions beyond any official scrutiny.

#### NEGLIGENT MARKETING

Real gun control would impose the level of sensible regulation long accepted for automobiles: universal registration of firearms and licensing of gun owners based on gun handling skills and knowledge of gun safety and gun law. It might also impose a liability insurance requirement and limit gun purchases to one per month. These measures, financed by licensing and registration fees, could do much to inhibit flows of guns to criminals and kids, limit panic buying of guns in the wake of riots or media-inflamed "crime waves," and elevate the general level of gun safety.

It is a measure of the gun lobby's effectiveness that such an idea seems radical even in the wake of national soul-searching over this spring's school shootings in Colorado and Georgia. All the White House could push through the Senate, with a vote from Vice President Gore required to break a tie, were relatively modest measures, like requiring background checks of buyers at gun

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shows and including child safety devices with sales of new guns. When an interviewer challenged President Clinton, saying he should have pressed for more, he responded in anger.

"Let's join the real world here," he said, pointing out that he was the first president ever to stand up to the gun lobby. "Should we do more? Should people ought to have to register guns like they register their cars? Do I think that? Of course I do. . . . But I tell you, the American people may have one opinion, but they elected the Congress, and the Congress doesn't have that opinion." As he spoke, a version of the mild Senate bill was being weakened in the House.

Could lawsuits circumvent the legislative stalemate? Skepticism abounds. Authorities like Franklin Zimring, the Berkeley law professor who has written extensively on gun policy, reflect the view of many who assert that the legal issues remain hopelessly complicated by the fact that in most cases an "intervening agent" -- the criminal -- shares responsibility for harm to the plaintiff. And low barriers to entry in the gun business may limit the effectiveness of any legal victories. As suits force some producers to settle or fold, others can easily replace them.

Even so, the results of litigation so far are intriguing. Until recently, tort claims against gun producers and dealers based on gun injuries were considered unlikely so long as guns remain legal to buy and sell. Whatever the suffering of gunshot victims, they couldn't very well argue the product that injured them was defective. And judges shrugged off assertions that people selling guns should be held responsible for how customers use them.

This began to change in the 1990s when lawsuits against the tobacco industry demonstrated that persistent, muscular lawyering could force an industry to account for negligent product design and marketing. In addition, juries were finding drug companies and other defendants liable based on proof of general negligent business conduct rather than specific harm to a specific person.

A group of lawyers who had helped with the tobacco effort worked with the city of New Orleans to file one of the first gun suits. Mayor Daley of Chicago ordered his police department to develop an elaborate sting, "Operation Gunsmoke," that produced startling evidence of suburban gun shops helping to supply inner-city street criminals and gangs. In New York, meanwhile, a lone legal practitioner named Elisa Barnes produced a surprising early win, persuading a jury to find several gun makers collectively liable for "negligent marketing."

To date, 21 cities and counties have filed suits against scores of gun manufacturers, wholesalers, retailers, and their trade organizations. The suits raise different issues, depending on the laws in states where they are filed. The New Orleans, Miami, Atlanta, and Cleveland suits focus on "negligent design," asserting that guns are inherently dangerous and that the industry should be held liable for neglecting to make them safer. They argue, for example, that the industry failed to develop guns that can be fired only by their owners, when technology exists to make this possible.

Suits filed by Bridgeport, Detroit, Cincinnati, and St. Louis raise issues of "negligent distribution." "Defendant dealers have sold and continue to sell handguns even when they know or should know that the handguns will be used illegally in the City of Bridgeport. . . ." A similar claim by Los Angeles

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and San Francisco engages a California business practices law. Courts have ruled that it may be violated by otherwise legal conduct that undercuts established public policy and inflicts economic damage or physical harm on society. Lawyers for the cities point to a California Supreme Court decision holding it an unfair business practice for tobacco companies to advertise and promote cigarettes to minors, even though it was otherwise legal for them to do so.

#### OPERATION GUNSMOKE

The Chicago suit elaborates on these themes with support from the undercover operation in which police officers posing as gang members and other suspicious people easily bought guns. The suit cites examples of guns purchased at suburban stores later used in gang shootings, armed robberies, and a number of murders, including one of a police officer.

The complaint points out that 57 percent of firearms recovered after illegal use in Chicago were first sold only three years before they were recovered, a percentage of new guns that exceeds figures for the rest of Illinois and the United States as a whole. Only 10.5 percent of guns recovered by Chicago police were reported stolen.

The complaint also documents a more chilling development: legitimate gun dealers who cultivate business and close sales by acting as weapons consultants to criminals, bending the rules on waiting periods and record keeping when they threaten to get in the way of a customer's street business. Some excerpts:

\* Officer 1 quietly asked the sales clerk to recommend a 'throw-away' 9mm or .380 caliber firearm. [A throw-away is a cheap gun likely to be ditched by a person, like a drug lookout, with a high risk of apprehension.] The sales clerk told him that one should not buy a 'throw-away' gun from a gun store. Instead, he said, one should buy one from a second party, such as a friend, so that if it is recovered and ATF questions the friend from whom you bought it, then the friend can call and let you know that you will soon be approached by the ATF.

\* On August 19, Officer 2 returned . . . with Officer 3. Officer 2 told the same sales clerk with whom he had dealt on August 14 that Officer 6 owed him money and was likely on the run. Officer 2 stated that Officer 6 had to be dealt with before he left town, and said he needed to 'get a Tec for his ass.' Officer 3 agreed that they had to 'take care of business today.' The sales clerk recommended an Intratec 9mm assault weapon that could fire 100 rounds per load, telling them, 'You made a good choice. It will take care of business.' The sales clerk then added the Intratec 9mm assault weapon Officer 2 had just selected to the purchase order he had created for August 14.

The Chicago complaint argues that the industry creates a public nuisance by flooding these suburban stores with far more guns than the legal market can absorb, and by selling them to people who appear likely to use them for crime. The complaint requests monetary damages of \$ 433 million and a list of injunctions that would require the industry to enforce restrictive practices: limiting purchases to one gun per person per month, requiring customers who are Chicago residents to show proof of a legal place to keep a gun outside the city, requiring manufacturers and distributors to monitor dealers and terminate shipments to those who sell guns to people "whom the dealer has noticed will not use them lawfully and responsibly."

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How likely is the suit to succeed? The manufacturers and the dealers that were subjects of the undercover operation have not responded yet, and they could come up with ways to challenge the police officer's testimony. The suit might also be challenged on civil liberties grounds, because asking dealers to assess the possible criminal intent of customers invites racial profiling.

Even so, says David Strauss, of the University of Chicago Law School, "The idea that [the sale of guns to likely criminals] is a public nuisance is actually mainstream and straightforward. One way to think about it would be to suppose that Chicago had an antipollution ordinance and someone set up a factory right on the outskirts of the city and operated in a way that polluted Chicago air. There would be no problem suing them to get them to stop. This is the same thing, if you accept the factual allegations."

The city can already claim a small victory. In April, one dealer, Bob's Sports Headquarters, Inc., signed a consent decree. In exchange for dismissal of damage claims, Bob's agreed to give testimony against the industry and either go out of business or accept strict conditions on the way it sells guns.

Chicago and other cities pursuing the negligent distribution/public nuisance strategy can also look for encouragement to the lawsuit Elisa Barnes brought in federal court in New York. A lawyer who specializes in product liability, Barnes sued 25 gun manufacturers to recover damages for the families of six people killed by gunfire and for a young man who survived a shooting but remains permanently disabled. She presented the shooting victims as the inevitable consequence of the industry's irresponsible distribution practices.

At the trial, Barnes paraded families of victims with tales of grief along with experts on youth violence and marketing of dangerous products. She also used information forced from the manufacturers in discovery to document the idea of negligent distribution. Specifically, she alleged that the manufacturers and distributors were selling far more guns in states with weak gun-control laws than the legitimate users in those states could be expected to purchase, and that the excess guns wound up in the hands of criminals in New York.

To demonstrate this, she hired a team of economists who combined the manufacturers' data with ATF reports and other sources to document trafficking between New York and states with weaker gun laws. The defense hired its own economists to rebut the plaintiff's assertions, sometimes leading the argument into the arcana of statistical regression analysis.

After a turbulent deliberation, the jurors found 15 of the 25 defendants liable and ordered three of them to pay damages of \$ 522,000 to the surviving gunshot victim, Stephen Fox. This was stunning: the gun used to shoot Fox was never recovered. All police found at the scene was a spent .25 caliber shell casing. The jury, acting on a theory of "collective liability," awarded damages against manufacturers with no proof that any of them had distributed the gun that caused the injury.

A few days after the verdict, the Wall Street Journal published an account of the deliberation based on interviews with jurors and attorneys. It depicted an irrational process -- an adamant juror who favored the plaintiffs buffaloed others sympathetic to the industry into a compromise. In May, however, District Judge Jack B. Weinstein, who had presided over the case, filed a 113-page memorandum that provided a different spin.

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The judge dismissed the complaint against the 12 manufacturers who escaped damage payments, ruling that "finding of liability requires proof of damages." But he also cited with approval a modern legal trend to find collective liability when a plaintiff cannot identify a precise defendant for reasons beyond anyone's control. He pointed to litigation over DES, the synthetic estrogen blamed for cancer in adult daughters of women who used it during pregnancy. DES raised "unique problems of proof" because much time had elapsed between the time mothers ingested the drug and the development of cancer in their children. Many could not identify who had actually produced the drugs their mothers took. Courts reluctant to deny the victims any remedy "eliminated the identification requirement, predicating liability instead on defendants' creation of risk through participation in the DES market."

In the gun suit, Judge Weinstein acknowledged the plaintiff's argument that "it is the underground market itself, created and stocked by the defendants' negligence -- rather than any one manufacturer's product -- which the plaintiffs regard as the cause of their injuries." The language he used suggested the idea of public nuisance as well: "Apt is the analogy to a stream polluted by many manufacturers at once, overwhelming the water's ability to purify itself by the huge influx of the many polluters."

A jury considering a case where the type of product is known but the manufacturer is not may assign damages according to the market share of manufacturers found to market the product negligently -- the "market share" version of collective liability. That is what the jurors did in the case of Stephen Fox, awarding him damages from defendants who manufactured .25 caliber guns, prorated according to their market share.

#### LITIGATION MAY WORK

Extending such liability to the marketing of guns intensifies the heady atmosphere surrounding the other lawsuits; the industry, at least, is no longer willing to dismiss the litigation as frivolous. If nothing else, the suits have strained relations between industry trade groups willing to consider a settlement and the National Rifle Association, which puts the convenience of gun owners first.

Appeals courts might still cause all this to implode, of course. But in the meantime, the suits will have put invaluable new information on the public record. Elisa Barnes now regularly receives reporters and other interested parties who want to rummage through the boxes of trial transcripts, statistical analysis, depositions, and other documents stacked up in a room of her financial district office. In addition to the extensively argued clash of economists on the question of interstate trafficking, they will find:

- \* The testimony of David Stewart, a University of Southern California professor of marketing, who points out that industry-wide agreements are common to reduce the risks products create to consumers or to society. Producers of fertilizer and herbicides make sure they are sold only by people trained to instruct customers in their proper use. Producers of spray paint, concerned about graffiti, make sure retailers keep the spray cans in locked cabinets and don't sell them to minors. He offers a list of similar steps gun manufacturers might take, should they decide to reduce the risk their products create.

\* The testimony of Jeffrey Fagan, a professor of public health at Columbia University who compiles interviews with young men about episodes of violence in their lives. He discusses the pervasiveness of guns on the streets and the "vicious cultural dynamic" they generate.

\* The testimony of Robert Hass, former senior vice president for marketing and sales for Smith & Wesson. He asserts that "the company and the industry as a whole are fully aware of the extent of the criminal misuse of handguns. . . . In spite of their knowledge, however, the industry's position has consistently been to take no independent action to insure responsible distribution practices."

Lawyers for the cities are likely to extract more damning statements as they depose more executives and otherwise assemble information in discovery. Each new revelation generates new publicity, adding to the pressure on legislatures to act and the industry to settle. The train, in other words, is leaving the station. Once rolling, it could be hard to stop.

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#### BODY:

In 1976, we elected our first born-again president and John Travolta was practicing the hustle. Now we have the Christian Coalition practicing politics and Travolta reborn as a symbol of irony. In the following pages, we look at 20 other big changes. Before you take a look, make a list of your own--and let us know what we missed.

It's been like a class reunion. School newspaper veterans that we are, we wandered around the room--in the '90s we suppose you'd call it a virtual room--with our tape recorders, notepads, and PowerBooks, asking old classmates what they've been up to. Our lead question for some 40 scholars, journalists, curmudgeons, and poets was: "What has been the most important change in the past 20 years?"

Mostly we talked to friends, but we also spoke with longtime adversaries, who, like adversaries sometimes do, reminded us of some things we may have always shared--in this case a passionate concern about where we're all headed. Reviewing our notes the next morning (virtual time, remember), we added up their ideas and got 20 of them--a nice, round number, don't you think?

One: The world is smaller

Computers and other technologies have generated unprecedented international interconnectedness. New data--whether collected from 1,000-year-old Mayan hieroglyphs or from today's Singapore stock market--are instantly relayed via satellite and the Internet. This knowledge of each other has become critical to our survival and inseparable from our evolution as a species. Will this new global consciousness catalyze a new global conscience?

\* Estimated Number of Internet hosts worldwide in 1988: 5,089

\* Estimated Number of Internet hosts in 1995: 6.6 million

\* Increase since 1976 in americans with pagers: 3,000 percent

Mother Jones January, 1996

- \* U.S. long-distance phone service revenues in 1976: \$ 17.5 billion
- \* Estimated long-distance revenues for 1996: \$ 71.8 billion
- \* Number of satellites orbiting earth in 1976: 9,645
- \* Number orbiting in 1995: 23,691

Walter Truett Anderson is the author of the forthcoming book, *Evolution Isn't What it Used to Be*.

The really profound event of our time is not that technologies are converging: It's that we are converging with our technologies. Our minds are augmented by computers and other devices, and our bodies are augmented by a wide range of evolutionary inventions, from vaccines to artificial organs. Meanwhile, the world is becoming a bionic planet--networked by information systems that monitor its health, forecast its future, and govern its ecosystems. And the world is not separable from those information systems. What you get when you put them together is a true evolutionary transition. Governments make policy decisions about the world's climate and atmosphere. Businesses succeed or fail on the basis of what they do about fast-breaking changes in medicine and agriculture. Individuals and families have new choices, new powers, and new ways to solve problems. The transition also presents pressing ethical issues and enormous equity issues, because there is reason to fear that the amazing new devices that augment human life are being distributed even less fairly than more ordinary goods like food and shelter.

Two: Business jumped the border

Large capital, aided by technology, has zoomed past national regulators. Competition among American-based computer companies is heightened by using skilled, cheap labor in Thailand. A German mutual fund boosts the retirement savings of an American war veteran, but his daughter is laid off when her factory moves to a Mexican maquiladora. Capital goes where it wants, creating dynamic economic change but also new risks when borrowers, such as Orange County, California, can't pay investors back. With every economy competing internationally, there is also increased anxiety about just how precarious a place each of us occupies in the global pecking order.

- \* Number of merchant locations worldwide accepting the Visa card in 1976: 1.9 million
- \* Number of merchant locations in 1995: 12 million
- \* Number of multinational corporations in 1976: 10,373
- \* Number of multinational corporations in 1990: 35,000

Economist Paul Erdman, author of *Zero Coupon*, believes U.S. businesses have remained the most successful in mastering the new global economy.

Pessimism about the future of the United States began developing 20 years ago and should be dispelled. Lester Thurow's thesis was that America had peaked economically and was in decline compared to Japan and Germany. He was dead wrong. Japan is in a banking crisis. Germany totally miscalculated the

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economic costs of reunification, and all of Europe's unemployment is around 11 percent while ours is under 6 percent.

Wealth is created by venture capital and innovation. We do those best. We are destined to remain the most powerful economic and military power in the world.

Uruguayan historian and writer Eduardo Galeano says globalized capital has further isolated the world's poor.

In the nations of the South, the deification of the market and the demonization of the forces of change have resulted in the concentration of wealth, the multiplication of poverty, and the devastation of nature. The triumphal religion of the market acts not only on economic, social, and political realities, but also on our consciences. Twenty years ago, poverty was the result of injustice. Today, it is the punishment inefficiency deserves.

More than ever, the countries of the Southern Hemisphere are submitted to the dictatorship of an international market which lends with one hand what it steals with the other. This world of inequality is also a world of solitude. It won't be saved by giving the marketplace a "social dimension." Not even Mother Teresa as secretary for economic affairs would be capable of such a miracle.

Three: East Asia rocked

American economic hegemony ended, and the most advanced economies regionalized into three orbits--North America, Europe, and East Asia. The latter was the most dynamic. Exponential growth in China, Taiwan, Korea, and other East Asian nations followed on the heels of Japan's earlier success, one that for a time gave Americans an inferiority complex. World cultural and political change is likely to speed along the path of this economic boom for some time to come.

- \* Total value of China's exports to the United States in 1976: \$ 201 million
- \* Total value in 1994: \$ 38.8 billion
- \* Ratio of ATMs per person in Japan: 1 to 1,021
- \* Ratio of ATMs per person in the United States: 1 to 2,312

Alice H. Amsden is the Richards Professor of Political Economy at MIT. Her books on East Asia discuss its differences from Western-style capitalism.

Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Indonesia--all of these countries have transformed in an extraordinary way. South Korea in 1960 had a per capita income of less than \$ 100--now it is \$ 10,000. These countries have urbanized and life expectancies have increased. After World War II, virtually all of them adopted policies to take the high road to industrial development instead of trying to compete internationally on the basis of low wages and cheap raw materials.

Clearly the East Asian countries have done better than countries like Mexico, India, and Brazil, and you have to ask why. In most developing countries, subsidies are allocated under the principle of giveaway. In East Asia, governments never gave anything away. Subsidies were tied to concrete standards, especially export targets, and companies couldn't indulge in capital flight to other countries. They could have employees work long hours, but they had to

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give them training and wage increases.

Many Asian countries are under pressure from the West to adopt a Western style of capitalism, but I don't see much economic evidence of that happening. However, people are simply fed up with authoritarianism. One can't deny the connection between authoritarianism and rapid economic development in these countries, but I don't think that a shift to democracy will threaten further development. They have moved beyond that now.

Orville Schell, author of *Mandate of Heaven: The Legacy of Tiananmen Square and the Next Generation of China's Leaders*, urged President Clinton to take a more active role promoting democracy in China (excerpted from "Go to China," *Mother Jones*, Jan./Feb. 1993).

A society that denies its people their basic rights for an extended time often explodes into chaos, leaving a wake of global economic and political instability, which can be far more damaging to U.S. interests than any passing antagonisms over human rights standards.

Four: Stalin finally died

The 20th century is a graveyard for utopian dreams that degenerated into repressive tyrannies. A bureaucratic command economy, food shortages, and the disastrous Afghan invasion finally toppled seven decades of Soviet communist dictatorship, and a half century of Cold War certainty expired with it. With the global nuclear threat diminished, militaries were left scrambling for ways to sustain their budgets. Meanwhile, democratic governments replaced both capitalist and communist dictatorships throughout the world--in Spain and Portugal, in at least 12 Latin American countries, in East Asia, in Eastern Europe, and finally in South Africa in 1994.

- \* Decrease in worldwide nuclear arsenal since 1976: 32 percent

- \* Increase in amount of nuclear waste since 1976: 1,406 percent

- \* Increase in total number of nations worldwide since 1976: 41

Adam Hochschild is a founding editor of *Mother Jones*. He is also author of *The Unquiet Ghost: Russians Remember Stalin*.

When I went to Russia in the late 1970s to interview Andrei Sakharov, customs guards confiscated copies of *Mother Jones* in my luggage because of an article on the plight of Soviet Jews by Jeffrey Klein.

A few years later, copies I tried to take into East Germany were seized at the Berlin Wall. To be found subversive by regimes like that was an honor. Today, happily, Russians can read what they want, watch what they want on TV, and can travel the earth if they can afford it.

However, justice and democracy don't come easily to a country that has known neither--before the Russian Revolution or after. Russia's electoral system is shaky.

A huge chunk of the economy, both untaxed and unregulated, is now run by organized crime. Civic and labor organizations are weak. The gap between rich

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and poor is widening cruelly, as old former Communist Party bureaucrats cheerfully privatize factories into their own hands. And, ironically, a new Russian law makes it impossible for the majority of a company's directors to be employees--a far steeper barrier to cooperatives and employee ownership than anything in the United States or Western Europe.

#### Five: Tribes raised their flags

The collapse of the bipolar world unleashed terrifying ethnic and racial wars. The success of Lithuania and the other Baltic states in 1990-92 alerted every separatist from Kazakhstan to Quebec to the advantages of a state of one's own. Opportunistic politicians, usually looking for economic gain, have been willing to stir up old ethnic rivalries--as in Croatia's separation from poorer states in Yugoslavia--with frequently bloody results.

- \* Civil wars in which more than 1,000 were killed in 1976: 16

- \* Civil wars in which more than 1,000 were killed in 1994: 34

- \* Increase in United Nations' operating expenditures for peacekeeping since 1976: 2,379 percent

In "The Balkan Tribe" (Mother Jones, Jan./Feb. 1993), writer Frank Viviano described the Serbs who had captured him for violating a new national boundary he didn't know existed.

Shortly after midnight, I was released. The commandant offered a toast to Magic Johnson who had just led the U.S. basketball team to victory over the Croats in the Barcelona Olympics.

The tribal map is being reasserted and the tribal soldiers are wearing Levi's. They are moving away from the nation-state--backward toward the tribal dawn and forward toward the 21st century all at once. "The first thing we will do when our country is recognized," the Serbian commandant had told me, "will be to apply for membership in the European Community."

I asked him why. "So we can then do the second thing--arrange the banking connections that will allow us to have satellite television," he answered. His dream, the commandant said, was to watch the NBA playoffs in a country of his own.

#### Six: Mother Earth developed a weight problem

Explosive population growth in the nations of the South accelerated ecological degradation and massive rural migrations to cities, from Mexico City to Lagos. Population and environmental pressures also increased in the North, where consumer lifestyles--beamed out through the world's televisions--disproportionately strain the earth's resources.

- \* Chances that a human was a refugee in 1976: 1 in 1,485

- \* Chances in 1994: 1 in 245

- \* Increase in world population since 1976: 36 percent

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\* Number of immigrants to U.S. in 1976: 398,613

\* Number of immigrants in 1993: 904,292

In an essay published by Mother Jones (Sept./Oct. 1995), population experts Paul Ehrlich, Anne Ehrlich, and Gretchen Daily argue that improving women's lives could significantly aid population control.

In nearly all developing regions, there is a strong connection between education of women and lower fertility. Even with a few years of schooling, a woman may apply her education to better manage her family's well-being. she learns to obtain pur water, use sanitary practices, and choose more nutritious foods; as more children survive, she becomes more receptive to birth control....Societies in which women have substantial rights also have relatively low fertility rates. In particular, women who work outside the home and earn some income of their own consistently tend to have fewer children.

Donella Meadows, co-author of the 1972 bestseller Limits to Growth and its 1992 sequel Beyond the Limits, is concerned that we have not yet fully comprehended the finitude of the planet.

Twenty years is roughly the doubling time of the world economy. That means twice the number of cars and twice the tons of coal burned. World population is doubling slower than every 20 years, but other things are doubling faster. If we don't do anything, 20 years from now there will be twice as much pollution and drawdown of resources. I am very disheartened to hear the political debate just talk about growth, growth, growth. We've had 250 years of industrial growth. Poverty is still with us. How much will it take?

Seven: The '50s ended

Ever since America's astounding postwar productivity slowed in the '70s, the rich have gotten much richer, the poor poorer, and most everyone in the middle squeezed.

\* Top-Rated TV show in 1976: "Happy Days"

\* Top-Rated TV show in 1995: "ER"

\* Number of hours average U.S. worker works per year: 2,000

\* Number of additional hours since 1976 that average U.S. worker must work to purchase a home in 1994: 10,000

\* Odds that a U.S. worker was in a union in 1976: 1 in 3

\* Odds in 1994: 1 in 6

Stanford University economist Paul Krugman is the author of Peddling Prosperity.

By the early 1970s, throughout Western Europe and to a large extent in the United States, we had managed to produce societies with relatively equal income, relatively little poverty, and all sorts of opportunities for upward financial mobility. While we were a long way from Utopia, you could look around the

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Western world and say, "These are the most decent societies the world has ever seen." There are no longer any societies that fit that description.

The current best story for this decline is that technological progress threw us a curve ball. Technology continues to make us richer, but very much devalues the work of people who are not exceptionally talented, and greatly increases the income of a very few. The United States is responding with a flat hostility to the welfare state.

At some point, people will realize just how well-off the well-off actually are, and I don't think they can continue to blame our decline on government programs. I'm not saying we should instead blame the rich; I'm just saying we should soak them.

Edward Wolff, a professor of economics at New York University who has drawn fire from conservative economists for his extensive studies of wealth inequality, says government intervention will be needed to reverse the trend.

In the past 20 years, we've seen a growing inequality of wealth, by which I mean savings, assets, home values, etc. Only the top 20 percent of American families are enjoying any real increase in income. This has put lots of pressure on middle-income families, and has shown up in declining savings rates. Financial assets--the kinds of things people call on in an emergency--have dwindled for middle-income families.

The safety net has been tearing, and people are misconstruing their financial troubles as the government's fault. In fact, I think the government can do quite a bit to fix things: index the minimum wage to inflation, get welfare benefits up to where they used to be, get unemployment coverage up to 60 or 70 percent, and have a tax on wealth, as most Western European countries do.

American labor unions have undergone a precipitous decline--from 28 percent of the workforce to only 16 percent--in the past 20 years. The AFL-CIO's new president, John Sweeney, was elected on a platform of aggressive grassroots organizing and increased confrontation with management. Richard Trumka of the United Mine Workers is Sweeney's secretary-treasurer.

American workers have seen their hours increase while their wages decrease. We've seen that translate to a lower standard of living, and that's tragic.

The good news is that we are about to see a rejuvenated AFL-CIO. We want to organize the mid-level managers who take it on the chin every time during these "mergers." You'll see us becoming more geared toward the rank and file, toward grassroots activism and less toward Washington, D.C., and the state capitals. We have to help workers help themselves.

Eight: Reagan got his revenge

When Ronald Reagan came to office, he liked to illustrate the trillion-dollar national debt as a stack of \$ 1,000 bills reaching 67 miles high; his legacy was a stack reaching 313 miles high. The debt's increase, brought about by tax cuts, increased military spending, and growth in entitlement programs, choked government's ability to fund programs. Many argue it was done intentionally. Yet even as programs targeted to middle- and lower-class families lost funding, money was found to bail out S&L gamblers.

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\* Change since 1976 in value of minimum wage, measured in current dollars: -\$1.70

\* Number of times federal debt has doubled since 1976: 2

Laura D'Andrea Tyson is chairperson of the National Economic Council.

The simplest way to characterize the most significant event of the last 20 years is to say "Reaganomics." By that I mean a series of decisions were made to reduce revenue flows and increase spending in a way that was not sustainable over time and could only increase the debt of the nation. We borrowed a lot from the rest of the world and now we're paying interest and dividends out of the country on a net basis.

All some people seem to care about is that we get rid of the deficit, not how we get rid of it. The danger of going too fast is primarily the pain that you have to inflict to programs that are important to the economy. In the long run, it doesn't matter if you take a couple of more years to bring the budget into balance. But draconian cuts in spending in order to balance the budget too quickly will matter a lot. We have to regain fiscal responsibility. It's a matter of how we do it.

Nine: The Great Society slumped

Federal programs failed to heal our racial wounds, guarantee a good education for our kids, or protect us from factory closures. Watergate-style disclosures and lobbyist corruption have combined with Great Society failure to cause much of the public to lose faith in the government's competence--and its ability to act on behalf of ordinary Americans. The Republican Party capitalized on this anti-government sentiment and routed the party of Roosevelt.

\* Number of political action committees in U.S. in 1974: 608

\* Number in 1995: 3,954

\* Amount spent by Jimmy Carter in his successful 1976 presidential campaign: \$ 11.3 million

\* Estimated amount to be spent by the successful 1996 presidential candidate: \$ 44.7 million

\* Percentage of Americans in 1976 who said they had "a great deal" of confidence in the president: 13

\* Percentage in 1995: 9

Lewis Lapham, editor of Harper's Magazine, believes Americans need a new public narrative.

The big shift in the last 20 years has been from the public to the private sector. The word "public" has become a synonym for corruption and futility. All things bright and beautiful flow forth from the clear stream of the private sector.

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Politics was a public thing; the state was something we held in common. Now it's everyone's favorite enemy--including those in Washington. The public sector is not a living presence protecting, animating, and inspiring, but has become a dead carcass, a beached whale we Eskimos are going to strip of all its blubber.

It's a shocking change. Common thought and ideas have declined. I think democracy is over as it was conceived in Philadelphia. We don't know what the narrative is. That's why we hate the public. Whose public? Who is the "we"? The times demand a writer or writers who can write the new American narrative.

Howard Gardner, professor of education at Harvard and author of *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership*, suggests what a new American story might be.

From the 1940s to the 1970s, there was a bipartisan consensus that government had a legitimate role in most spheres of life. In the past 20 years, that consensus has eroded. There are three possible outcomes of this trend. One is that the current shift in the political spectrum will self-destruct because the Gingrichites are moving faster than the public wants them to. The second is that this is a sea change as great as the New Deal, and that means that the sea won't change back in my lifetime.

The third is that there will be a new story created. Leaders change people's minds by telling a story and embodying that story in their own lives, so that you look at this person and say, "It makes sense for that person, and it makes sense for me." There has not yet been a counterstory to the pro-market story of Newt Gingrich.

I don't think people want extreme answers. Somebody like Colin Powell might have been able to come out with an appealing new story. He's seen as pro-business and pro-entrepreneur, but he also has a history in government and supports it. He's family-oriented and appreciates the values of the past, but he is also very comfortable with the technologies of the future.

Ten: Big media got bigger

By 1993, 50 percent of the nation's newspapers, magazines, and television stations were owned by only 20 corporations. Today, these companies, like the newly merged Capital Cities/Disney group, are vertically integrated to control both the "hardware" (TV stations, publishing houses) and "software" (copyrights to movies, books, etc.). While media conglomerates have responded to the public's desire to know more about the powerful--a growing trend since Watergate--they have generally delivered exposes heavier on prurience than probity.

\* Percent of americans who had a "great deal" of confidence in the media in 1976: 18

\* Percent of Americans in 1995: 6

\* Number of evening newspapers in 1975: 1,436

\* Number of evening newspapers in 1994: 947

Bob Woodward first gained fame as part of the Washington Post team that broke Watergate.

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The legacy of Vietnam and Watergate still lives. People say to the politicians and the media: "Don't let that happen again." So this is the age of full disclosure. That is, by and large, very good. But it creates a feeding-frenzy, gotcha environment. Look at the inconsistency, the inadequacy, the corruption. In the age of disclosure, political life becomes harder. It's not even a searchlight. It's a proctoscopic exam.

Bottom line: It's real, inevitable, and generally leads in the right direction, but people will live in continuing discomfort because of it. While there's not a direct line between personal character and the public role, there is a line people understand. But there's not going to be a limit, because you don't know when connections will bring about knowledge. My headline: The Age of Disclosure Is Here to Stay. Ouch!

Eleven: Nerds ruled

Phenomenal technological growth, especially in personal computers and biotech, has improved medical testing, created new industries and conveniences, sped up international communication--and made Mother Jones available online to Web surfers. Computers and robots have also displaced middle-class manufacturing jobs, and threatened a new class gulf between the technological haves and have-nots. A significant challenge for the next century will be how to create a business/government partnership that can spread the benefits of new technologies.

\* Number of domestic shipments of PCs in 1976: 53,100

\* Estimated number of shipments in 1996: 18,467,000

\* Number of in vitro fertilizations in the U.S. in 1976: 0

\* Number in the U.S. in 1993: 31,900

\* Number of Disney artists, animators, and technicians required to make a feature-length cartoon in 1976: 100

\* Number required in 1995: 600

Stewart Brand, creator of the Whole Earth Catalog and author of How Buildings Learn, is optimistic.

Intel founder Gordon Moore came forward with a law in 1975 that the number of transistors on a chip would double every 18 months. He was right. Computers became faster, more efficient, cheaper, and smarter every generation, and there's no end in sight. The hacker's dream that everyone would be a hacker has made education even more essential.

Is the tool good or bad? In the early '70s, when word processors were coming, the secretarial and clerk unions were trying to ban them at Stanford. It was ridiculous.

Mother Jones' namesake Mary Harris Jones was a union organizer. Would she use a personal computer and consider it right and useful? If she was as bright and bold as we think, then she'd say, "Wow!"

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Gary Chapman, of the 21st Century Project at the University of Texas, says new technologies will end work as we know it.

Shoshana Zuboff's *In the Age of the Smart Machine* tells of pulp-mill workers who once assessed whether wood pulp was ready to move from one process to another by sticking their fingers in the batch and "tasting" it. Once their plants were automated, they moved to a glass booth filled with computers and instead watched numbers and bar graphs. This seems symbolic of the change--a radical transformation from somatic knowledge to abstract knowledge, from tangible experience to mediation of experience by numbers, data, and images. If you work at a machine you don't really understand, it takes a toll on your ability to grasp how the world works and how it affects you, including the political system.

Whether you call it "post-scarcity" (the optimistic view) or the "jobless future" (the pessimistic view), we'll eventually have a world economy in

which most people will not have to work, and work will not be available for them. This will continue to expand over the next 100 years, as profound an alteration of human experience as moving from a superstitious and divine view of the world to a scientific one.

Neil Postman, author of *Technopoly*, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, and, most recently, *The End of Education*, believes that information is no substitute for human values.

We already have enough knowledge to feed everyone on the planet. If there is crime rampant on the streets of a big city, that has nothing to do with information. As you go through and look at our most serious problems, you'll see they have very little to do with information. They are not amenable to technological solutions. There is an audience out there waiting to be organized to make sure that we think a little more clearly on these matters. Parents are wondering about television. They're wondering whether they should be paying money to have their kids sit in front of computers for hours and never go out on the street and talk to anyone.

Twelve: Schools got scary

Public schools are funded by local property taxes such that schools in poor neighborhoods are scrambling for textbooks and working toilets, while wealthier schools are creating their own Web sites. And while the nation still recognizes schools as the first building block of the American dream, support for public education is declining. The disparity in opportunity grows at the university level. With the disappearance of good-paying, blue-collar jobs, a college degree is now the price of admission to a middle-class life in the Information Age.

\* Increase in suicides among 10 to 14 year olds in the u.s. between 1980 and 1992: 120 percent

\* High School seniors in the U.S. who reported being threatened with a weapon in 1976: 27.7 percent

\* High School seniors who reported being threatened in 1993: 37.3 percent

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Henry M. Levin is director of the Accelerated Schools Project at Stanford University. Now in over 800 elementary and middle schools, the project has had remarkable success in turning around poor schools by viewing all students as gifted.

What happens in education is heavily determined by political events. In an age of civil rights and affirmative action in employment, the schools will set priorities that reinforce these areas. In an age of conservatism, budget restraint, coddling the religious right, and economic uncertainty, the schools are pushed toward basic skills rather than critical thinking.

If schools become starved for resources as more at-risk students are deposited on their doorsteps, middle-class parents, worried about the futures of their children, increasingly may look for alternatives to public schools. If, however, a priority is put on defusing conflict through educational systems that work for everyone, transformative schools can build on what we have learned about good teaching and learning, good teacher preparation, appropriate use of technology, and connecting schools with the lives of children and their families. Educators are increasingly well positioned to respond if this happens.

David Osborne is author of Laboratories of Democracy. He makes the case for school choice (Mother Jones Sept/Oct. 1993), arguing that to revive public schools we should give them real incentives to perform.

What would happen under school choice? Kids would leave those awful inner-city schools/ That's good for those kids. Under a real competitive system, what would a school board do if a school lost 40 percent of its students and 40 percent of its money? They'd give the principal a year to turn the damn place around or get out the door. There would finally be a reason why somebody had to care about these schools. It would work for the kids left behind even more than for the kids who move.

Thirteen: Man beat nature. Not.

As the globe heats up and species die out at a rate not seen since the Jurassic Age, the kind of arrogant science that gave us CFCs and nuclear weapons is beginning to feel as outdated as a Soviet steel plant. But there are also scientists who have been sounding alarms about global warming and bacterial resistance to antibiotics. There is promise in this new science that proceeds out of respect for nature, rather than the expectation of conquering it.

\* Total energy generated by wind power in 1980, measured in megawatts: 10

\* Estimated Total in 1994: 3,710

\* Average worldwide temperature in 1976, measured in degrees fahrenheit: 58.62

\* Average worldwide temperature in 1994: 59.57

David Brower has been at the forefront of the environmental movement for the past five decades. His new book is Let the Mountains Talk, Let the Rivers Run.

We can't keep thinking we can outguess God and nature. That's the philosophical lesson. I'm not against civilization, technology, or science. I

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just want us to use them well. We haven't learned to do that yet.

We're good at taking things apart. We need to learn how to put them together. If you think you can't make money in restoration, [just] take your car into the shop or your body to the doctor.

We need a cost-benefit analysis of growth. What's a tree worth? The marketplace tells us about pulp and two-by-fours, not about locking up carbon and releasing oxygen and moving the flow of water and being part of the ecosystem. We need to make an effort to start finding out.

Jeremy Rifkin is the author of *The End of Work* and president of the Foundation on Economic Trends.

We've been laboring under the Baconian concept of science based on detached power over nature. We could develop a new approach based on connection and community--technology that maintains rather than chains the environment. Take the old approach: Build a Sears Tower--isolated, detached, and expressing power. A new one would want a passive solar building based on the science of connection and community. Is that any less scientific?

We've seen the shadow side of science and technology, Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, for example. But a realistic diagnosis doesn't preclude hope for the future. Grim determination to look at the problems is a necessary beginning for restoration.

Francis Fukuyama is the neoconservative author of *The End of History & The Last Man*.

There's a broad recognition that our real problems can't be addressed by top-down social engineering. Trying to master nature through big engineering projects doesn't work because of environmental and social consequences. TVA was not only a big electricity project, it flattened towns and broke up communities. The consequences were not benign.

My hopeful interpretation is that we're coming to recognize the principle of subsidiarity, that one ought not handle a problem at a higher level that can be handled at a lower level.

Author Jane Smiley wrote the Pulitzer Prize-winning *A Thousand Acres* and teaches at Iowa State University.

The last 20 years have seen the end of the family farm with hardly even a yelp from anyone in the media. If a society chooses mechanized, exploitive, giant-scale agriculture, an agriculture based on the ideal of genetic and economic uniformity, then their relationship to nature is systematically lost. If the relationship to nature is lost, then their relationship to the delicacy and complexity of what's around them, and who they are, is also lost.

Fourteen: Band-Aids got more expensive

Health care costs in the U.S., driven by a number of factors, rose an eye-popping 575 percent between 1975 and 1993. The high-stakes battle, most recently focused on Medicare, led health care lobbies to pour an unprecedented \$ 21 million on legislators between 1979 and 1994. While insurers would prefer

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to insure the healthiest and wealthiest segments of the population, much of the public would prefer the security of universal coverage and a choice of doctors.

\* Increase in U.S. per capita health expenditures between 1975 and 1991: 384 percent

\* Average hospital stay in 1978, measured in days: 7.2

\* Average stay in 1993: 6.2

Marc Roberts is a professor of political economy at Harvard University and author of *Your Money or Your Life: The Health Care Crisis Explained*.

Health care costs are so high--even exceeding corporate profits--that corporations engage in every conceivable stunt to get out of paying them. They reduce full-time staff and hire temporary workers. As recently as two years ago, health care costs were the major cause of labor disputes.

One reason costs are going up is the aging population, in part due to the success of the health care system. As we keep people alive, they use health care more--a failure of success. Preventive medicine generally doesn't save money, either. If people stop smoking, health care costs rise, because smoking tends to kill people with inexpensive diseases at an earlier age. If they live, it costs that much more to care for them.

However, costs have to be viewed not in terms of saving money, but in terms of saving lives. In many cases we ought to provide cost-increasing care.

Part of the problem is Americans have unrealistic expectations. They think death is optional for holders of U.S. passports. Another problem is that hospitals are still building stuff, even though we have excess capacity. It's an arms race.

The one way to limit health care costs in the long run is to set a budget and say, "This is all we can afford." Unless--and until--we do that, we'll never bring costs under control.

In "Restoring Public Trust" (Mother Jones, Nov./Dec. 1995), well-known pollster and political analyst Daniel Yankelovich wrote that, for a health plan to be successful, it must appeal above all to the public's sense of what is right and practical.

The president's announcement of the health care plan in September 1993 won acclaim across the land. The idea of providing health insurance to all Americans, including the 41 million uninsured, struck the majority of voters as morally sound, and the idea of controlling costs by cutting waste and greed appealed to them on both moral and practical grounds.

As the debate unfolded, however, the Clinton plan progressively lost credibility. The mechanisms for saving money seemed unrealistic and overly complex, and the addition of costly new entitlements and the massive effort to fix those parts of the system that, in the public mind, were not broken, failed both tests--practical and moral.

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Fifteen: Women marched ahead

Modern feminism has transformed our workplaces, homes, and civic life. Susan Faludi's book Backlash (excerpted in Mother Jones, Sept./Oct. 1991) described the conservative reaction to feminism, but it is clear that most of the movement's gains are here to stay.

\* Number by which men exceeded women in earning a bachelor's degree in the U.S. in 1976: 84,104

\* Estimated number by which women will exceed men in 1996: 71,000

\* Increase of women in the workforce since 1976: 59 percent

Betty Friedan helped inaugurate modern feminism with her 1963 classic, The Feminine Mystique.

The last 30 years have transformed the consciousness of women. The majority of women are taking a place in society and are working in every field and profession. Women have reclaimed control over their own reproduction, their own sexuality. We're not only beginning to make decisions but actually beginning to define the rules as only men had done before.

What I see next is a new vision of community that creates jobs for everyone. We need a shorter workweek and protection of benefits for contract workers, in order to provide more jobs, more time with family, and to allow older people to stay in the productive mainstream.

Patricia Ireland is president of the National Organization for Women.

Twenty years ago we were on a roll. [But] 1975 was also the beginning of the politicizing of the religious conservatives. There's great frustration now, but our work is a continuum from one generation to another. Our foremothers fought for 72 years to get the vote. We, too, need to learn vigilance and patience. We need to keep the outside-advocacy, community-group pressure campaigns on politics and have more of us on the inside. I think of my mother and my grandmother and what they had, and what I have by contrast, and I feel hope.

Deborah Tannen, author of Talking From Nine to Five.

In the last 20 years we've learned men and women can work together as equals and have different relationships on an equal basis. We have a whole new way of being in the world. Similar points could be made about ethnic and culture differences. I'm hopeful about gender, and there's reason to be hopeful about race, too. We've learned that women and men can live together and work together on a somewhat equal footing but that we aren't the same.

Sixteen: Families took heat

The rates of teen pregnancy and single-parent homes have risen dramatically. While the left has emphasized economic factors and a lack of government support for programs like daycare, the right claims "family values" or moral codes have declined. Regardless of the cause, increasing impoverishment of children and the social problems associated with children of single-parent households have taken on greater urgency.

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\* Increase in children living below the poverty level from 1976 to 1992: 42 percent

\* Increase in children living with one parent from 1970 to 1992: 118 percent

Robert Reich is the U.S. secretary of Labor.

The most significant thing we've seen is the steady decline in median wages of male workers when you adjust for inflation. This has had cataclysmic consequences on the family, the economy, politics. It meant women fled into the workforce. I wish I could say women were in the workforce for the wonderful opportunities there are for women today, but actually most women went to work in the 1970s due to declining family incomes. Families also had fewer kids in the 1980s, not because they wanted fewer, but because they couldn't afford more. Americans went into record levels of debt in the 1980s and, last, a growing number of workers have become disillusioned and detached from the political process.

Four steps can be taken: First, make education and job skills easier to attain throughout people's lifetimes. Second, ensure that people can join unions without losing their jobs. Third, create incentives for people to keep their workers, upgrade their skills, and share profits with them. Instead of tax breaks for investments in equipment, provide tax breaks for investments in people. Fourth, raise the minimum wage and expand the economy.

Author and commentator William F. Buckley Jr. thinks we must revive a public ethos.

We have to revive an ethos that's pretty dead and explore a civic penalty for creating a baby which you have no intention to bring up. A man once boasted to Bill Moyers of fathering six children with six different women with the intention of continuing. Shouldn't he lose the right to vote or his driver's license, or be required to do 20 hours a week of social work or have his income garnisheed?

Charles Murray, author of The Bell Curve, thinks we need to stop looking after the poor economically, but I'm not sure stopping dependency is the answer. I'd like more creative thinking on this because it's the great problem of the future. And so is our problem with the aged, who live too long and exhaust us economically. We need a national corporate commitment to public service to help look after them. We aren't able to provide the resources unless the young pay something for their patrimony through public service. I sound like a goddamned socialist!

Seventeen: We still have a dream

If the voices of separatists have been raised in the aftermath of the Simpson trial, integration is, as historian Eric Foner recently wrote, "still a very radical idea." There has been significant progress, especially the growth of the black middle class, and the integration of schools and workplaces. The persistence of problems associated with the large number of poor among minorities, however, has given politicians from Louis Farrakhan to Pete Wilson fuel to stoke ethnic resentments. Moreover, racial solutions are no longer black and white, especially with the recent wave of immigrants from Asia and Central America.

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\* Increase in number of whites with a high school education since 1976: 17 percent

\* Increase in number of blacks: 28 percent

\* Increase in number of hispanics: 15 percent

In "Mixed Paint" (Mother Jones, March/April 1995), Louis Menand says the sense that there is more friction between cultures is because we are more, not less, integrated.

The cultural antagonisms that look like a new and dangerous tribalism are simply the epiphenomena, the shaking out, of an irreversible process of integration in American life. Contrary to most assertions, American society has become much less like a mosaic and much more like a can of mixed paint. The life-paths of men and women, and to a lesser extent, of black and white Americans, are much more likely to be congruent than at any time in history.

Anthony Lewis, a New York Times columnist, insists we must not give up on integration.

The optimism I felt about our race problem turned out to be fatuous. Politics in the South has been transformed but the essential enmity between us is ongoing. We ended official segregation but did not, as Ike said, change the hearts of men. We are obligated to keep trying. Our self-interest of living together should be paramount. The notion that we will solve all our problems through individualism is absurd.

Lani Guinier teaches law at the University of Pennsylvania.

There is at least the appearance of increased diversity on college campuses, legislatures, city councils, school boards, and on TV. On the other hand, much of that is cosmetic, and temporary. People may work in a multiracial environment but live in a very homogenous neighborhood.

I am actually optimistic. I heard about a study in Boston asking parents: What do you want for your kids? And the first thing these parents--who crossed ethnic and class lines--said they wanted their kids to do was learn how to swim. Second, they wanted their kids to do better than they had in terms of education. Third, they wanted their kids to learn how to get along with people who are different, because it was a skill the parents did not have.

Eighteen: We arm the children, we arm the world

The American formula of combining ubiquitous guns with ubiquitous imagery of gore and mayhem has yielded the most violent culture in the industrialized world. And we've become the largest exporter of the formula--in the form of weapons and movies--to everyone else.

\* Percent of americans who favored the death penalty for a convicted murderer in 1976: 66

\* Percent in 1995: 77

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\* Increase in reported violent crime since 1976: 92 percent

Mother Jones interviewed then-Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders (Jan./Feb. 1994) on the subject of gun violence.

Homicide is the leading cause of death for young black men and the second-leading cause of death for all people aged 15 to 24. That makes it the leading health issue, particularly when guns are used in combination with drugs and alcohol. Guns kill more teenagers than the other big killers--heart disease, cancer, and AIDS--combined. We can begin to address the issue of guns by teaching our young people how to deal with situations in nonviolent ways. Someone said to me the other day, "What our adolescents need is not so much health care, but healthy caring."

Nineteen: "Me" battled "Us"

The late '60s mantra "Do your own thing" blossomed into the "Me Decade" before provoking a counterreaction. American Demographics magazine calls individualism the "master trend of our time," stronger even in the younger generation than in their baby boomer parents. But the associated loss of a sense of personal responsibility has alarmed everyone from environmentalists--who associate it with rampant consumerism and corporate arrogance--to the religious right's Promise Keepers, who are nostalgic for traditional forms of authority.

\* Odds that an american man attended a religious right "Promise keepers" convention in 1995: 1 in 184

\* Number of california cars with vanity plates in 1976: 312,000

\* Number in 1994: 1.4 million

Cultural critic Camille Paglia wants a critique of '60s values.

I would say the great lesson of the last 20 years is the tragic story of the '60s generation. We had enormous ideals about society but also suffered from overweening arrogance. The progressive ideals of the '60s were real and we deserve credit for trying. But lived life is less easy and less glamorous than we thought. We rebelled and didn't realize that our rebellion was predicated on peace and a minimum level of prosperity. There was incredible cant and arrogance, rabid talk against capitalism and the industrial society--from people from comfortable homes in places like Long Island who had stereo systems, televisions, and magazines. Capitalism produced the culture, and it produced feminism.

The Dionysian '60s went too far against the Apollonian '50s and so we've swung back again. Our ideals were too simplistic for political realities and we got out of touch, which made Republicans become the voice of the people. We need to regroup psychologically and be honest about where we screwed up without renouncing the ideals of the '60s--toleration of nonconformity (including gayrights), racial, and gender equity.

Bill McKibben, the author of The End of Nature and Hope, Human and Wild, calls for a different pursuit of happiness.

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The market forces pushing convenience, individualism, and comfort are still stronger than the attraction of community, fellowship, and connection with the natural world. What we call the environmental crisis is really a crisis of desire. We're losing the battle to offer people an alternative set of things to desire. It's Disney and GM who are creating our desires. Our task over the next 20 years is to demonstrate that to live simply is more elegant and pleasurable than consumer society. It's important not to say that TV will rot your brain, but that it's satisfying to take a walk in the moonlight instead. If consumer society has one Achilles' heel, it's not that it is going to destroy the earth (although it is). The Achilles' heel is that consumer society doesn't make us unbelievably happy.

Colorado Congresswoman Patricia Schroeder thinks we must re-create an active civic life.

Consumerism shouldn't dictate to us. If we aren't allowed in the marketplace of ideas, then where is our freedom? Wal-Mart pulled T-shirts saying a woman could be president because it bothered their "family values." How could they keep that from consumers? People need to stand up passionately for what we're for. In other words, where are our Mother Jones people? Where is the give-and-take of democracy and respect for minority views that comes from living in a community? If there are town meetings and forums, almost nobody comes. The challenge of the next 20 years is how to find community and civilized discourse.

Twenty: We looked for each other

Rapid change and the uprooting or discrediting of traditional structures of social support have left a well of insecurity and loneliness at the center of modern life. As a result, many Americans are trying to rebuild forms of community and create stronger relationships to nature or God--from traditional worship to New Age quests, from the Million Man March to support groups on the Web.

- \* Number of Americans interested in New Age ideas in 1976: 500,000
- \* Number interested IN 1995: 20 million
- \* Americans who believed in God or a Universal spirit in 1976: 94 percent
- \* Americans who believed IN 1994: 96 percent

Gary Snyder, a California poet and ecologist, suggests we settle down and discover meaning where we live.

Frederick Jackson Turner's thesis was that the frontier ended at the end of the 19th century, which was literally true in that homesteading stopped and the remaining unsettled lands of the West became public lands. But, psychologically speaking, the frontier is only ending now. We're finally getting past--as an immigrant population--that we're in a new place, that resources are always available and so is mobility.

The old story is over. The new story is discovering your neighbors and getting real about your community. Turn around the lesson of mobility. Kids are returning home because they can't afford to live on their own. Families have to block up and share resources. This is an age of limits. We can learn to live

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and work together.

Turn around the lesson of mobility. Kids are returning home because they can't afford to live on their own. Families have to block up and share resources. This is an age of limits. We can learn to live and work together.

Poet and author Maya Angelou says we must act on our beliefs. Her books include *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* and *A Brave and Startling Truth*.

The lesson of the last 20 years is that there are lessons to be learned. Oftimes when a person or persons come up with a great idea - like uniting the nations or the laser beam or starting Mother Jones or civil rights for all - as soon as the idea comes out of the great unknown, many begin to feel it is a fait accompli. Our intellect informs us that we have learned lessons, but we have not.

To know and not to do is in fact not to know. We need to be active instruments against evil. We need to do. Let us, then, be up and doing.

RELATED ARTICLE: A Robust, Confident Movement

What happened to the movement that integrated America, stopped the costly war in Vietnam and opened workplace doors for women? Several commentators offer opinions on where the left went wrong and where it should go.

Noam Chomsky is a professor of linguistics at MIT and author of the upcoming *Powers and Prospects*.

American society is now remarkably atomized. Political organizations have collapsed. In fact, it seems like even bowling leagues are collapsing. The left has a lot to answer for here. There's been a drift toward very fragmenting tendencies among left groups, toward this sort of identity politics.

People here should do what they did in the Haitian slums, where it was possible to construct grassroots organizations that enabled the democratic system to function. They forged a very lively and vibrant civil society. To talk about our bringing democracy to Haiti is a joke. We should look there and find out how it worked. It works when people get organized and are willing to work together and have a sense of solidarity and are willing to put aside their own immediate personal issues for a broader concern.

Pete Hamill is author of the forthcoming book, *Piecework*.

[A lot of what's wrong with politics] started with Vietnam. The government got arrogant and lost its authority by waging a stupid war that they wouldn't even declare. That started to unravel our sense of civility around political discourse. The left began to demonize its opponents, like LBJ, which the right has now really picked up on.

A lot of good things happened in the '60s. But the left wore itself out by the time of Watergate. People were just tired of all the confrontationalism and overblown rhetoric, which just played into the hands of the right. The left became a compendium of grievances instead of a great, robust, healthy, confident movement to change the world.

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Todd Gitlin is a sociologist and author of The Twilight of Common Dreams.

John Mitchell was right when he said, "This country is going to move so far to the right you aren't going to recognize it." The right took seriously the project of coming to power. Meanwhile, the left was tangled in knots. How did we lose? The main project of the left was perfecting differences. America is a bigger place than the Bay Area or lower Manhattan, and you can't do serious politics by opening up divisions of race, gender, and sexuality.

Unless the setting is conducive to overall equality, the right can accentuate the zero-sum game where the proverbial white guys don't see anything in it for them--and there are too many of them. What do people have in common? If it's just about fighting for scraps at the bottom of the table then we all lose.

Robert Scheer is a columnist and a Los Angeles Times contributing editor.

We leaned too hard on the center. Going back to the '60s and '70s, we, on the left, felt mainstream liberals--Rockefeller and Eisenhower by today's standards--were centrist. We thought domestically that we'd up the ante. These leaders collapsed. The Republican moderates collapsed too. Who'd have thought we'd have to fight about teaching Darwin? It's rearguard and dispiriting...but we'll win.

#### THE INTERVIEWS

Walter Truett Anderson Eduardo Galeano Donella Meadows Paul Krugman Edward Wolff Laura D'Andrea Tyson Lewis Lapham Howard Gardner Bob Woodward Stewart Brand Neil Postman David Brower Jeremy Rifkin Francis Fukuyama Betty Friedan Patricia Ireland Deborah Tannen Robert Reich William F. Buckley Anthony Lewis Lani Guinier Camille Paglia Bill McKibben Patricia Schroeder Gary Snyder Maya Angelou Paul Erdman Alice H. Amsden Orville Schell Adam Hochschild Frank Viviano Paul Ehrlich, Anne Ehrlich, and Gretchen Daily Richard Trumka Gary Chapman Henry M. Levin David Osborne Jane Smiley Marc Roberts Daniel Yankelovich Louis Menand Joycelyn Elders

#### Celebrating Hellraisers:

Paul Wellstone Gary Delgado Barbara Dudley Winona LaDuke

#### What's Left:

Noam Chomsky Pete Hamill Todd Gitlin Robert Scheer

#### RELATED ARTICLE: CELEBRATING HELLRAISERS: BARBARA DUDLEY

Barbara Dudley's resume reads like a guided tour of activist highlights from the past quarter-century: the anti-war movement; the Berkeley Tenants Organization Committee; the socialist-feminist movement; the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board; a move to New York to become president of the National Lawyers Guild; and then director of the Veatch Program, one of the nation's major funders of progressive political causes. Finally, three years ago, she moved to Washington, D.C., to become executive director of Greenpeace U.S.A.

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Looking back at more than two decades of political involvement, Dudley takes some solace in remembering that this isn't the first time things appeared bleak. "In 1976, I was downright discouraged. Everyone had gotten really pure about politics. What brought down the socialist-feminist movement, for instance, was the debate about which oppression was more primary--race or class or gender. That's like asking how many angels dance on the head of a pin.

"The left had an uneasiness about power," she recalls. "We were afraid of being corrupted, which can happen with power. So we didn't even try."

Dudley points to the overwhelmingly upper-middle-class background of New Left activists--mostly kids radicalized at private universities--as the reason for such squeamishness. "We could all be very pure by being very radical as individuals. But if you're going to live that way, you can't get down and dirty and do real politics.

"The primary lesson we need to learn," she observes, "is not to pick each other to death. Look at the Christian Coalition. They know how to compromise."

Noting that the Christian Coalition might be perceiving the same problems as the left, Dudley envisions a world in which Pentecostal deacons might be important organizers for economic justice and in which new Greenpeace members come from the current ranks of the Wise Use movement.

"I wouldn't start with the left. It would be a much broader group of people, and I'd invite the left to join. I'm not sure they would even call this progressive. But it would be people interested in a way of community that precedes global capitalism. It's called local self-reliance."

Dudley speculates that critics will say this new movement will ruin the economy. "That's hogwash. This would create all sorts of jobs. And it's easy to talk to people about these things. A lot of people share a suspicion of both big government and big business. You could talk about this in any fundamentalist church and people would agree with you. They don't want to live in a Wal-Mart world."

#### RELATED ARTICLE: CELEBRATING HELLRAISERS: GARY DELGADO

A founder of both the Center for Third World Organizing and the Applied Research Center (ARC), Gary Delgado has spent the past 25 years paying attention to conservative movements. Specifically, he organizes minority communities against them. Even so, he says he is awed by the right's current political muscle--flexed most recently during the 1994 elections. "If you look at the right over the last five years," he explains, "you'll see they've opened up over 200 research institutes. They've built a number of grassroots organizations that use the same techniques we used in the 1960s. Look at their infrastructure, their ability to do research and develop new leaders, their ability to place people in key positions."

Part of the right's success can be blamed, Delgado believes, on the left's unwillingness to take firm political stands. "I was trained in the 'go do it' tradition of community organizing and believed one should not be ideologically attached. That was a mistake," he says, "because when right-wing groups blow onto the scene with a clear message, they look visionary."

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Delgado points to the 1994 passage of California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187. "I think any community can be disrupted by the intrusion of an issue that's been defined by the right and not discussed in community organizations."

After seeing how effective proponents of Proposition 187 were in pitching the anti-immigrant message, even among immigrant communities, Delgado's Oakland-based group led workshops to broaden the discussion to include economic, racial, and political perspectives.

It's just a part of what Delgado has accomplished since 1981, when he founded ARC to help grassroots groups develop an educational infrastructure of their own. Like many think tanks on the right, ARC distills the latest academic and political research into a usable form for activists.

Delgado criticizes mainstream research groups for failing to focus on grassroots policy education. "We are going to have to get public universities accountable....Right now they do not provide information that helps a community understand how a particular policy proposal is going to affect their lives."

Delgado would like to see universities and other research groups sharing and developing policy with community groups. "We need the benefit of not only the best thinking of the people in the community, but also information from the experts about the economic and political impact of certain kinds of decisions."

#### RELATED ARTICLE: CELEBRATING HELLRAISERS: PAUL WELLSTONE

Twenty years ago Paul Wellstone was a young college professor in rural Minnesota, always rushing between faculty meetings, a household with three kids, and rallies in support of family farmers or low-income people. Now, he's just as busy, scrambling across the floor of the U.S. Senate to build political support for family farmers, low-income people, and the simple idea that government should be a tool to improve opportunities for all Americans, not just defense contractors and brokerage firms. The mere fact of his election to the Senate seat gives Wellstone a streak of optimism about the future.

"The pressure for change--progressive change--is almost always external," he says, noting that it often comes from outside Congress, city hall, or a state legislature. "In the last 20 years the most positive changes have come as a result of really good grassroots organizing. And it's critically important because right now that is what's really absent."

When the Senate debated the telecommunications bill, Wellstone says, Capitol Hill was crammed with delegations from communications companies. But when the Senate debated education or social services bills, "there was almost a complete lack of people to fight for these causes."

According to Wellstone, the success of the Christian right should remind us of a lesson or two about politics. "I have a real respect for people who do phone trees, call-in radio shows, who write letters to the editor, run candidates for school board, do voter registration, turn people out to vote. I think to a certain extent that a good many of us in the progressive community have forgotten the importance of good grassroots organizing. We're going to have to do it over again."

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That was the secret of Wellstone's victory in 1990, when almost no one gave him even the slightest chance of winning against well-heeled, two-term incumbent Rudy Boschwitz. Environmentalists, rural activists, union members, and legions of his former students at Carleton College hit the streets and the phone lines on his behalf. He won with 52 percent of the vote.

"I spend a lot of time just saying to people in the progressive community, 'This is no time to become depressed or walk away from all of this.' This is one of those moments in the history of this country where I think a tremendous amount is at stake. I hear Newt Gingrich say this is the future. I don't agree.

"My own view is that people in this country are in a populist mood, not a right-wing one. That ought to be the kind of politics we thrust forward."

RELATED ARTICLE: CELEBRATING HELLRAISERS: WINONA LADUKE

In 1982, after graduating from Harvard with a degree in native economic development, Winona LaDuke packed her bags and moved to White Earth, the ancestral lands of the Anishinabeg (Ojibwe) people, located in a poor rural county of northern Minnesota. "The thing about being an Indian person," explains LaDuke, who grew up on the West Coast with her Anishinabekwe father and Jewish mother, "is that you feel most at home with your own people."

LaDuke took a job as principal of the local reservation high school, but quickly found herself involved with a lawsuit to recover lands promised to the Anishinabeg people by an 1867 federal treaty. When the case was dismissed four years later, she founded the White Earth Land Recovery Project to continue efforts to regain lost lands. Over 90 percent of the original 837,000 acres are in the hands of non-Indians. Using grants and a \$ 20,000 human rights prize from Reebok, the group so far has bought back 1,000 acres and hopes to acquire 30,000 more in the next 15 years.

Still, LaDuke, 36, has encountered local resistance. When people from the Land Recovery Project recently blockaded a lumber truck used in clear-cutting, the tribal council let the driver use reservation roads to get out.

Although the tribal chairman and two other tribal officials are now facing 44 separate federal indictments for election fraud, mail fraud, embezzlement, and bribery, LaDuke doesn't ignore them. "I need to deal with them because it affects other people where I live." It's the same with the power structure in any community, she says. "You've got to take them on and change them. You've also got to build an alternative to show people."

What keeps her going, in part, is the intergenerational nature of Native American organizing. "We tell our stories to the children. It's incumbent on us to offer oral history because no one else will," says LaDuke, the mother of two. "We make sure the kids are part of everything. In most of America, it seems you don't matter if you're not between 25 and 50."

Traditional Anishinabekwe religion is LaDuke's other source of power and sustenance. "Spirituality is the foundation of all my political work. In many of the progressive movements in this country, religion carries a lot of baggage. But I think that's changing. You can't dismiss the significance of Eastern religions, earth-based religions, and Western religions on political work today. What we all need to do is find the wellspring that keeps us going, that gives

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us the strength and patience to keep up this struggle for a long time."

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HEADLINE: A profile of rural Texas adolescents who carry handguns to school.

BYLINE: Kingery, Paul M.; Pruitt, B.E.; Heuberger, Greg

**AUTHOR-ABSTRACT:**

Students in randomly selected eighth and 10th grade English classrooms (n = 1,072) in central Texas schools were surveyed in fall 1994 regarding carrying weapons to school and associated risk factors. Students who carried a handgun to school one or more times during the preceding 12 months were compared to those who had not done so, using discriminant analysis and chi-square. Gun carrying at school increased 138% from seven years earlier in the same area using the same survey procedures. Most students reported they carried a gun out of fear or anger. Those who carried a gun at school had extremely elevated rates of repeated victimization of several types during the previous year: 589% higher for attack at school, 552% higher for attack outside school supervision, 576% higher for attempts to force sex at school, and 216% higher for rape. They also were more likely to enter dangerous situations repeatedly, were 17 times more likely to have used crack cocaine, had less instruction on preventing violence, less knowledge about means of avoiding fighting, and felt an obligation to fight under a wide variety of situations. Study variables accurately classified 78.4% of gun carriers as such. Researchers concluded that efforts at prevention of handgun violence in schools should include interventions to increase the safety of a select group of vulnerable students, while providing psychological counseling to assist them in overcoming emotional effects of victimization as part of larger violence prevention efforts. (J Sch Health. 1996;66(1):18-22)

**BODY:**

Guns continue to present an array of problems for schools. However, the problem is not limited to schools, since school-aged youth increasingly carry guns wherever they go. The Youth Risk Behavior Survey for 1990 found that 31.5% of male students and 8.1% of female students in U.S. schools grades 9-12 reported they carried a weapon at least once during the 30 days preceding the survey.[1] The murder by firearm rate among those ages 15-19 in the United States was 15.36 per 100,000 in 1993, up 272% from 10 years earlier.[2] The rate among children ages 10-14 (1.52 per 100,000) in 1993, while low in relation to older children, more than tripled over the past decade.

The proportion of gun-related incidents which occur in schools versus elsewhere in the community is rather small, but a major cause for concern. According to the U.S. Justice Dept., 135,000 students carry guns to school every day.[3] Between 1986-1990, U.S. newspapers reported an average of 51 cases per

year involving murder or severe injury at school inflicted by students carrying handguns.[4] Males usually were the offenders (93%) and victims (76%), most often between ages 14-17. Incidents were reported in every area of the country. Most were intentional shootings (65%). Reasons given included drug or gang-related activities (18%), long-standing disagreements (15%), playing with or cleaning guns (13%), romantic disagreements (12%), and fights over material possessions (10%).

These events are traumatic for victims, witnesses, and their families. Emotional consequences of the events are wide-reaching and long-lasting, including Post-Traumatic Stress disorder and reduced learning.[5-6] In the shock felt following such an event, many search for an understanding of the assailants, gradually building a profile of their characteristics, living circumstances, relationships, and anything else which may be used to comprehend the event.

Few systematic attempts have described common features of adolescents who carry guns to school. Some examined gun-carrying without distinguishing whether the gun was carried at school or elsewhere. Webster and others,[8] for example, found that among male inner-city junior high school students, gun carrying was high (25%), and was associated with highly aggressive delinquency, having been arrested, knowing more victims of violence, starting fights, and being willing to justify shooting someone. Others examined weapon-carrying in school without distinguishing between guns and other weapons. In one example, a larger percentage of assailants than anticipated (37%) exhibited moderate to severe conduct disorders. Most resided in neighborhoods with high crime rates and were products of single-parent homes with multiple siblings.[9] Most families were subsidized by public assistance. The median age was 15.4 years. Students were of average intelligence, but underachieving by approximately two years below grade level and deficient in critical thinking skills. Researchers hypothesized that youth who carry weapons feel vulnerable and powerless.[8] how do students who carry guns at school differ from these more generic profiles?

While often dismissed as an intractable inner city problem, guns at school has emerged in rural communities as well.[10] Investigating the problems in rural settings forces greater attention to the real issues, forcing new answers. The focus shifts from minority youth to White youth, from crumbling cities to idyllic communities and the countryside, and from large crowded schools to small community schools. If race, urban blight, and failing schools are not the causes of youth carrying guns to schools, then what are the causes?

While research specific to carrying guns in urban schools is scant, it is nonexistent for rural schools. In the absence of nationwide surveys on the issue, regional surveys gain greater importance, such as an on-going study of central Texas students, now in its seventh year. Published accounts from previous surveys did not examine the issue of gun-carrying in depth.[10-12] Data collected in the most recent administration during fall 1994 are the subject of this study. Researchers were particularly interested in noting differences in victimization rates, attitudes regarding conflict, knowledge and instruction on means of avoiding fighting, frequency of entering dangerous situations, and cocaine use in discriminating between students who carry guns to school and those who do not.

#### METHODS

Students in randomly selected English classes in the Texas Region VI Cooperative participated in the study. Only one school declined to participate, and two additional schools that initially agreed to participate did not return the surveys in time to be included in the study, resulting in a response rate of 95%. The sample of 1,072 students (6.2% of those in the Cooperative) was composed of 249 eighth grade girls (23.2%), 215 eighth grade boys (20.1%), 295 10th grade girls (27.5%), and 313 10th grade boys (29.2%). Most participants were White (70%), although African-Americans (17%) and other racial groups (13.2%) were represented. The Region VI Cooperative is composed of 71.6% Whites, 16.0% African-Americans, and 12.0% Other.

The instrument used involved a revision of two existing instruments. The major source for survey items was the instrument originally devised for use in the National Adolescent Student Health Survey (NASHS), a comprehensive investigation of the behavior, knowledge, and attitudes of American teens on health issues.[13] Other items were added by the authors. Test-retest reliability and internal consistency of scale composites for victimization at school, victimization outside school supervision, unsafe behaviors, and drug use were moderately high, and the readability was determined to be seventh grade using the Dale-Chall formula.[10]

Questionnaires were mailed directly to teachers to administer to students attending English classes. Teachers were given procedures to assure anonymity and privacy. Teachers read the instructions to the classes, and did not walk around the room while the students were working. The presence of a teacher may have affected accuracy of student responses, although students were assured that the teacher could not identify their responses. Teachers returned the questionnaires by mail.

## RESULTS

Students who carried a gun at school ( $n = 85$ ) were compared to those who had not ( $n = 794$ ). Sample size for the latter group reflects the elimination of 111 students with inconsistent responses from the analyses, or those who said they had not carried a gun at school yet reported a source for the gun or a reason for carrying it. The authors concluded that the group of 111 students either had carried a gun but were more inclined to admit it indirectly than directly, or they had not carried a gun but felt obliged not to leave blank the question about source or reason even if the question did not apply to them.

Prevalence of handgun carrying at school increased 138% over the seven-year period using the same instrument and the same methodology in the same region. Students who indicated they carried a handgun at school in the past 12 months ( $n = 85$ ) were asked three questions specific to where they acquired the gun, under what financial arrangements, and why they carried it to school. Results from these analyses are presented in Table 1. The most common source was a friend. Most commonly, guns were given to the student free of charge (42%). The most common reason for carrying a handgun at school was the student's anger with someone, and thinking about shooting that person (53%). Nearly as common was the reason that "it made me feel safer" (48%).

Table 1 Descriptive Data from Eighth and 10th Grade Texas Students who Had Carried a Handgun to School One or More Times in the Past 12 Months ( $n = 85$ )

8

Where did you get the handgun you carried at school

(mark all that apply):

|               |      |
|---------------|------|
| From a parent | 7.1  |
| From a friend | 48.2 |

How did you obtain the handgun you carried at school:

|                           |      |
|---------------------------|------|
| Bought                    | 26.9 |
| Rented                    | 2.6  |
| Borrowed                  | 14.1 |
| Through trading something | 14.1 |
| Given free                | 42.3 |

Why did you carry the handgun at school (mark all that apply):

|                                                                               |      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Someone forced me to                                                          | 8.2  |
| It made me feel safer                                                         | 48.2 |
| It made me more accepted by my friends                                        | 10.6 |
| It showed that I could get away with breaking school rules                    | 20.0 |
| It helped me get other students to do what I wanted them<br>to do             | 18.8 |
| Because I was angry with someone<br>and I was thinking about shooting him/her | 55.3 |

Students who carried a handgun to school were compared to those who had not. Results from the comparisons are presented in Table 2. All individual chi-square comparisons were significant with the exception of grade. Gun carriers were more likely to be Hispanic, and were less likely to be White. Males represented 86.2% of gun carriers, and 41.5% of noncarriers.

[TABULAR DATA NOT REPRODUCIBLE]

Students who carried a gun at school were more likely also to have carried a knife and some other type of weapon as well as a gun, to have been involved in repeated physical fighting involving fists or weapons than noncarriers in the past year, and to have been repeatedly victimized during the previous year. The risk of gun carriers, as compared to noncarriers, being attacked three or more times in the past year was 589% higher at school and 552% higher outside school supervision. Similarly, the risk of gun carriers having been the victim three or more times in the past year of someone trying to force them to have sex when they did not want to was 576% higher than that of noncarriers at school, and 362% higher than that of noncarriers outside of school supervision. Gun carriers had 216% elevation in risk of actually being raped, regardless of location of the victimization, 116% greater risk of being the victim of three or more robberies involving threat of personal harm at school, and 175% greater risk of experiencing three or more robberies involving threats outside school supervision as compared to noncarriers.

Increased risk of victimization for gun carriers was with someone they hardly knew, nearly 19 times more likely to have repeatedly hitchhiked with a stranger, 19 times more likely to have repeatedly ridden on empty buses or train cars, and 15 times more likely to have talked repeatedly to strangers who tried to keep them from going on their way. Similarly, gun carriers were nearly seven times more likely to have gone out alone repeatedly to sell items door-to-door and more than seven times more likely to have walked alone repeatedly through unsafe neighborhoods.

Cocaine and crack involvement were much higher in students who had carried a gun to school in the past year, compared to those who had not (Table 2). Gun carriers were more than 13 times more likely than noncarriers to have used cocaine in any form in their lifetime, and nearly 17 times more likely to have used crack cocaine. Carriers were nearly 40 times more likely to have first used forms of cocaine others than crack before seventh grade, as compared to noncarriers, and more than 25 times more likely to have used crack cocaine before seventh grade. Some 45% of gun carriers had used cocaine in some form in their lifetime, and 38% had used crack.

Gun carriers were more prone to fighting than noncarriers, were less likely to report having received instruction on ways to avoid fighting and violence since seventh grade, and were less knowledgeable concerning ways to avoid fighting and violence (Table 2).

Only 40% of gun carriers, compared to 65% of noncarriers, reported they received (or remembered receiving) instruction in school on ways to avoid fighting and violence since the beginning of seventh grade. A parallel discrepancy was observed in knowledge levels for the two groups (Table 2). For each of 11 items testing knowledge of effective ways to avoid fighting, gun carriers were much less knowledgeable as a group, compared to noncarriers. Some 84.5% of gun carriers, as compared to only 35.4% of noncarriers, knew that carrying a weapon was an ineffective way to avoid fighting.

Discriminant analysis was performed to compared gun carriers to noncarriers. The 22 specific variables from the few broader categories of risk factors were examined as potential discriminators, of which 18 were significant. Results are presented in Table 3. Best predictors were frequency of walking along through unsafe neighborhoods, lifetime frequency of using cocaine in any form, frequency in involvement in physical fighting in the past year, and frequency of riding

on empty buses or train cars during the past year. Race was one of the least of the significant discriminators. Significant variables accurately classified 95.4% of 497 noncarriers as such, and 78.4% of 51 gun carriers as such, for a total classification accuracy of 93.8%.

Table 3 Discriminant Analysis of the Factors Associated with Carrying a Gun to School (One or More Times During the Past 12 Months)

| Variable                                                                                                                                      | Wilk's Lambda |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| During the past year, how often did you walk alone through unsafe neighborhoods?                                                              | .78           |
| On how many occasions in your lifetime (in any), have you used cocaine in any form?                                                           | .69           |
| During the past year, how many times were you involved in a physical fight?                                                                   | .63           |
| During the past year, how many times did you ride on empty buses or train cars?                                                               | .59           |
| Is carrying a weapon an effective way to avoid fighting?                                                                                      | .56           |
| In which grade did you first try crack cocaine?                                                                                               | .55           |
| While at school or on the school bus during the past 12 months, how often did someone attack you?                                             | .54           |
| During the past year, how many times did you go out alone to sell items door-to-door?                                                         | .54           |
| While outside of school supervision during the past 12 months, how many times did someone threaten to hurt you but did not actually hurt you? | .53           |
| In the past 12 months, were you forced to have sex when you did not want to?                                                                  | .53           |
| What is your sex?                                                                                                                             | .52           |
| On how many occasions in your lifetime, have you used "crack" (cocaine in chunk or rock form)?                                                | .52           |

|                                                                                                                                                                        |     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Is joining a gang an effective way to avoid fighting?                                                                                                                  | .52 |
| What grade are you in?                                                                                                                                                 | .52 |
| While outside of school supervision during the past 12 months,<br>how many times did someone take something from you<br>by force or threatening to hurt you?           | .51 |
| Since the beginning of seventh grade, have you received<br>instruction in school on ways to avoid fighting and violence?                                               | .51 |
| How would you describe yourself (White versus other race)?                                                                                                             | .51 |
| While at school or on the school bus during the past 12 months,<br>how many times did someone threaten to hurt you but did not<br>actually hurt you?                   | .51 |
| In which grade did you first try any other form of cocaine?                                                                                                            | ns  |
| Is threatening to use a weapon an effective way to avoid<br>fighting?                                                                                                  | ns  |
| While outside of school supervision during the past 12 months,<br>how many times did someone attack you?                                                               | ns  |
| While at school or on the school bus during the past 12 months,<br>how many times did someone take something from you by using<br>force or by threatening to hurt you? | ns  |

These variables accurately classified 95.4% of 497 noncarriers as such and 78.4% of 51 gun carriers as such for a total classification accuracy of 93.8%

#### DISCUSSION

Students who carry guns to school are very different in many aspects from those who do not. Deprivations which may create these differences were not examined here. Nonetheless, more direct possible causes of weapon-carrying at school may be found in the differences between the two groups in terms of their levels of recent repeated victimization, exposure to dangerous places and situations, exposure to cocaine, attitudes about self-defense, knowledge of effective ways to avoid fighting, and reported exposure to violence prevention education. Students who find themselves in dangerous situations more often, and who are more often victimized in those settings as well as in school settings, when lacking the requisite knowledge and skills to prevent such, may be taking

direct action to defend themselves by carrying handguns.

The introduction of guns into schoolyard disputes has turned an endemic problem (characterized by minor scrapes and bruises) into a public health epidemic (characterized by fatal or debilitating wounds). Adolescents are likely to take the greatest firepower they can find to school when they feel their life is in danger. Adolescents who carry guns live under violent circumstances, and might be expected to take action to protect themselves by whatever means they judge most effective. One may have difficulty convincing gun-carrying adolescent students to disarm, when they know potential foes are fully armed, even at school. Convincing adolescents who believe they should fight at the slightest provocation to walk away or take appropriate action to resolve the dispute by other means may be equally difficult. Both are needed. But perhaps one should first take steps to increase their physical safety and to reduce their feelings of vulnerability.

Achieving this goal will not reduce a student's risk of victimization while outside of school supervision. Yet, children can be taught at school how to avoid situations which occur outside of school supervision, and how to deal with situations that unexpectedly arise. Schools may never be the safe havens that law requires them to be, but they can be safer places, and they can provide skills that are effective both inside and outside school supervision.

Use of cocaine by students represents a threat to this orderly process. Those addicted to cocaine lose touch with their feelings for themselves and others. Drug prevention efforts must continue, with a special focus on reduction in cocaine, if school violence is to be reduced. If empathy and respect for the person and property of others is lacking, it should be infused. These are more specific objectives than simply infusing "social skills" or "communication skills." Peer mediation and conflict resolution training may not be adequate if empathy is not increased simultaneously in a context of increased safety.

The finding that gun carriers were less likely to recall classroom instruction on ways to avoid fighting and violence received since the beginning of seventh grade is puzzling. Several possibilities exist, but no clear answer emerges from the survey. One would expect this finding if either gun-carrying students who receive less violence prevention education, or noncarrying students who received more violence prevention education, had been more represented among transfer students who came primarily from nearby Houston. Another possibility is that gun-carrying students were less attentive to the instruction they received, and so do not remember it or will not admit remembering it ("No one told me not to carry a gun so it was okay"). Similarly, noncarriers might have received instruction from parents or other sources, and yet attributed it to the classroom in the absence of clear recall on the matter. This finding is worthy of further study.

#### CONCLUSION

The increase in gun carrying, particularly among younger adolescents, presents a cause for concern among physicians and educators alike, as it is for parents. Why are students armed? Are their safety and security needs unmet? Preliminary findings, such as those presented here, answer an unequivocal "yes." They are at risk of repeated violent assaults of all types, and have received little help against real dangers.

A prevailing sentiment suggest schools need to be protected from "fun-toting trouble-makers." Stiffer security measures in schools, and stiffer penalties for violent crime, have been immediate responses of the public. Both approaches ignore a real problem: the needs of a particular segment of youth for enhanced personal security. Some balance must be sought in helping youth overcome their problems and victimization action in their own interests and in the interest of others.

One might expect that any child repeatedly victimized may lose some concern for the person and property of others, particularly those who use cocaine. Teaching skills for conflict resolution and peer mediation may or may not help youth develop a greater appreciation for the needs of others, but it does not address the fundamental needs of the adolescent for psychological assistance and increased personal security in their efforts to overcome emotional difficulties arising from repeated victimization. A broader violence prevention approach is needed which addresses these more fundamental needs.

These results are preliminary, and require validation in larger samples. Prospective study designs will allow a clearer picture of how gun carrying follows victimization. It also is important to consider several critical elements in each study, including weapon carrying, violent behavior, victimization, childhood deprivations, and attitudes and vulnerability. Further research may reveal that perceived vulnerability operates as central mechanism in the decision of adolescents to carry a handgun or other weapon.

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GRAPHIC: Table; Illustration

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ABA Journal

September, 1998

84 A.B.A.J. 81

LENGTH: 668 words

SECTION: Washington Report

TITLE: Locked and Loaded: ABA supports efforts to include childproof safety devices on firearms

AUTHOR: Rhonda McMillion

Rhonda McMillion is editor of Washington Letter, an ABA Governmental Affairs Office publication.

TEXT:

The ABA is urging Congress to take action this year on legislation to limit children's access to guns, increase the legal responsibility of adult gun owners, and prevent and prosecute illegal gun trafficking.

The issues have come to the forefront following several incidents of gun violence at schools, prompting members of Congress and the Clinton administration to revive efforts to keep firearms out of the reach of children.

Lax Laws Criticized

"Because of lax laws and little enforcement, children often have nearly unfettered access to unsecured firearms in their own homes and in the homes of other family members, friends and neighbors," said Jerome J. Shestack, immediate-past ABA president.

"The tragic result of this is that nearly 500 children and teens die each year in the United States from accidental discharge of a firearm, and more than 4,500 die in firearms homicides and suicides."

The association is supporting legislation unveiled in June by Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass. Their bills, H.R. 4073 and S. 2185, would:

- . Impose criminal penalties on gun owners if a child gains access to a loaded firearm or uses the gun in an act of violence.

- . Require gun owners to put safety devices on their weapons or store them in a secure place.

- . Require safety features such as gun locks and load indicators on handguns that are imported into or made in the United States.

- . Authorize funding to collect information on children's firearm injuries, including the type of weapon used and the circumstances of the shooting, and to identify and prosecute individuals who illegally sell guns to youths.

. Authorize funding for children's firearm education programs in schools.

The ABA is joined in its support for the legislation by numerous groups, including Handgun Control Inc., chaired by Sarah Brady; the National Education Association; the International Brotherhood of Police Officers; the Police Executive Research Forum; and the American Public Health Association.

At a White House briefing in July, President Clinton recognized a federal role in preventing children's access to firearms and expressed his support for S. 1917, narrower legislation proposed by Sens. John H. Chafee, R-R.I., and Richard J. Durbin, D-Ill.

Their bill, patterned after child access prevention laws in 15 states, would impose criminal penalties on an adult whose gun is used by a child to harm another person if the gun was not safely stored or did not have a safety lock.

The president also announced that the administration will require federally licensed gun dealers to post signs and issue warnings concerning possession of handguns by juveniles.

In addition, the administration intends to work with the state of Maryland to trace every gun seized within its borders that is used in a crime, the first state to institute such a program.

Earlier efforts to enact child safety measures failed last year when both the House and Senate judiciary committees rejected attempts to attach an amendment to juvenile justice legislation.

The legislation -- which was supported by the Clinton administration and the ABA -- would have required that handguns sold to nondealers be accompanied by child safety locking devices.

In pushing for the child safety lock provision, the president issued an executive order in March 1997 requiring federal agencies to distribute safety locks with all firearms issued to federal law enforcement agents.

#### Marketplace Joins Effort

In August of last year, Smith & Wesson, the world's largest manufacturer of handguns, announced a partnership with the Master Lock Co. to provide a child safety lock with every handgun sold for commercial use. Other major manufacturers have joined in a voluntary commitment to provide a lock with each handgun sold.

Amid growing concern about school safety and strong bipartisan support for a solution, there could soon be a legislative breakthrough on child safety and firearms.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

GRAPHIC: Photo, Proposed bills follow a rash of gun violence at schools, such as in Oregon where Kipland Kinkel (center) is accused of four killings.

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Post Graduate Medicine

May 15, 1999

SECTION: GUEST EDITORIAL; Vol. 105, No. 6; Pg. 9

LENGTH: 2286 words

HEADLINE: The epidemic of violence in America

BYLINE: Marjorie J. Hogan, MD; Marjorie J. Hogan, MDDr Hogan is assistant professor of pediatrics, University of Minnesota, and staff pediatrician and pediatric medical education director, Hennepin County Medical Center, Minneapolis. Correspondence: Marjorie J. Hogan, MD, Hennepin County Medical Center, Department of Pediatrics, 701 Park Av S, Minneapolis, MN 55415.

HIGHLIGHT:

What can we do about this public health emergency?

BODY:

Across America, countless newspaper headlines, TV news programs, and popular songs tell tragic tales of violence in the lives of young people -- as victims, witnesses, and perpetrators. At the same time, we hear that violent crime rates are declining in many parts of the United States. But, in this case, the decline does not mean the problem is being solved. It represents only a very small step in a marathon effort we all need to support. What can we, as physicians, do to change the course of this enormous public health problem?

The sheer numbers of young people involved in violent activity in America and the devastating outcomes for these children demand our attention. Violence touches the lives of all of us, whether directly through personal injury, grief, loss, and anger or indirectly through the perpetuation of the cycle of violence and loss of trust and security. We are sadly misguided and dangerously deluded if we believe violence is not one of our nation's most serious public health emergencies. Intensive education, commitment, and intervention are imperative.

The statistics about youth violence paint a frightening picture. The United States has the highest youth suicide and homicide rate among the 26 wealthiest nations and one of the highest rates worldwide.<sup>1-5</sup> (Reference) Homicide is the leading cause of death for young African Americans and the second leading cause for young white men.<sup>6</sup> (Reference) More than 10 million children witness domestic abuse in their homes each year.<sup>7</sup> (Reference) Every 2 hours, a child is killed by someone using a firearm,<sup>4,8</sup> (Reference) and millions of young people carry weapons to school each year.<sup>2</sup> (Reference) A recent study in Washington, DC,<sup>7</sup> (Reference) showed that 45% of first graders had witnessed assault or murder with a deadly weapon. And not surprisingly, the average American child sees more than 200,000 violent acts on television before age 15.<sup>9</sup> (Reference)

Domains of violence A young person growing up in the United States today faces complex "domains of risk" for violence. Among them are child abuse and neglect, violence at home or school, media violence, access to firearms, use of illegal drugs, socioeconomic inequality, and discrimination. The question

experts struggle with is, Why are some children resilient enough to cope with risks while others are not?

The first domain of risk for children is our American culture. As a nation, we are entertained and fascinated by violence. Physical punishment is still widely used and approved by many parents and professionals. In fact, corporal punishment is still legal in schools in many states.<sup>10,11</sup> (Reference) We are unable to regulate and protect ourselves from people toting guns, and children's rights tend to be the first to fall by the legal and legislative wayside. While perhaps not directly responsible for violence in America, society sets the stage and then closes its eyes to the tragedy.

Neighborhoods represent another important domain of risk. We hardly need research, although it does exist,<sup>3</sup> (Reference) to recognize that communities with impoverished families, isolation, unsafe streets, and few support or recreational services incubate violence through hopelessness, fear, and anger. These communities are described as lacking "social capital."<sup>2</sup> (Reference)

Schools with high dropout and absentee rates, little authority, low expectations, and lack of incentive to teach and learn also feed the risk for violence.<sup>8</sup> (Reference) Children often learn more about survival and aggression than about reading, writing, and arithmetic.

As every parent knows, peers exert powerful influence on children. A child with poor social skills or one experiencing bullying and rejection may choose inappropriate friends, just to "belong." Gangs or other antisocial groups almost always expose youngsters to alcohol, drugs, or weapons.<sup>3,7,12</sup> (Reference)

For many young people, violence is modeled at home -- perhaps the least safe place for many children and another powerful domain of risk.<sup>2,7,10,12</sup> (Reference) These children learn that abuse -- physical and verbal -- and violence are effective, inevitable, and part of a supposedly loving relationship. For them, the world is hostile and unsafe, home is an unpredictable, scary place, and children are vulnerable.

Then, of course, we have mass media as a teacher of violence.<sup>2,3,7,9,11</sup> (Reference) Young TV viewers are constantly bombarded by realistic, glorified, rewarded, and entertaining images of violence, often portrayed as being without consequence. For children living in unsafe homes and neighborhoods, these powerful images make violence even more real and inexorable. TV, in particular, all too often encourages aggressive behavior, desensitizes children to violence, and reinforces a belief that the world is a fearsome place.

The last domain of risk, individual factors, is complex but critically important. Adolescence itself is a veritable minefield of risks.<sup>2</sup> (Reference) Teens not only attempt to separate from authority figures but also are attracted to risky behaviors. Magical thinking ("I'm invincible!"), foolhardy choices, and an egocentric approach to life are compounded for youngsters who already carry heavy risks (table 1). In particular, research shows that experiencing violence at a young age is a powerful predictor of violent behavior in later life.<sup>2,8,14</sup> (Reference) Thus, child abuse and witnessing domestic violence must be considered major risk factors for perpetuation of violent behavior.

In short, violence in America is sanctioned by society, socially learned, and all too often reinforced in homes, schools, communities, and the media.

Social forces (ie, poverty, isolation) interact with the influences of early childhood to incubate violent behavior.

Why are some youngsters able to avoid the downward spiral into violent behavior, despite experiences and risks shared with violent youth? Research shows that several protective factors lead to resilience and help youngsters counter violent patterns of thought and behavior (table 2).10,13-16 (Reference)

Response to violence What can we, as caretakers of the public's health, do to stem the epidemic of violence? First, we can help increase public awareness of this identifiable and preventable problem. Violence prevention requires education, collaboration, and commitment on primary as well as secondary and tertiary levels.

Primary prevention is aimed at all of society, secondary prevention focuses on groups and individuals at high risk for violence, and tertiary prevention is directed toward persons already involved in violent behavior. Primary prevention looks first at defining, creating, and enhancing protective factors for all children. This means ensuring the presence of strong adults in the lives of all children, providing positive educational opportunities, promoting cultural and community connectedness, and teaching conflict resolution and conflict avoidance skills. Many sectors of society can become involved through mentoring, providing jobs, advocating, and teaching.

Secondary prevention can be creative -- and lifesaving. Community-based crisis nurseries offer safe havens for infants and children of stressed parents. Shelters for battered women, mentoring programs, substance abuse treatment, support groups for parents fearful of abusing children (eg, Parents Anonymous), and early childhood family education programs through school districts are other examples of successful interventions.

Tertiary prevention strategies try to stem further violence but often offer too little too late. These strategies include incarceration, education, training, and treatment for youth already involved in violence.

It's time to get involved Advocacy cannot be separated from prevention, and for the healthcare profession this means becoming involved in gun control, media education, improvement in economic opportunities for inner cities, and juvenile justice reform, among other initiatives.

Because parents and guardians are at the heart of violence prevention, the American Academy of Pediatrics and American Psychological Association offer a helpful brochure called "Raising Children to Resist Violence." The suggestions are worth sharing with any adult who cares for or works with children or young people (table 3 and box on page 11).

Finally, doctors, especially pediatricians and family physicians, play a key role in violence prevention. Not only can we collaborate with community and child advocacy groups to spread the message about violence prevention, but each of us has the potential to touch many lives within our clinic or office practice (table 4). We need to become acutely aware of the strong role we can play in preventing violence, one person at a time.

Summary Despite the specter of violence looming over us, we can and must maintain a sense of purpose and hopefulness. Violence is a learned and

reinforced set of behaviors and responses and can be unlearned by a society committed to nonviolent conflict resolution, fairness, and the opportunity for all children and adolescents to survive and thrive.

For copies of the brochure "Raising Children to Resist Violence," contact the American Academy of Pediatrics, Division of Publications, 141 Northwest Point Blvd, PO Box 747, Elk Grove, IL 60007. Phone 800-433-9016 or fax requests to 847-228-1281. Visit the AAP Web site at [www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org).

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Table 1. Individual risk factors for violent behavior

Poor verbal and reading skills  
 Attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)  
 History of serious trauma  
 Health problems  
     Poor prenatal care  
     Exposure to substances during pregnancy  
     Poor nutrition

- Lead exposure
- Early exposure to violence
- Unique patterns of thought
  - Lack of cognitive skill (problem-solving ability)
  - Content of thought favoring violence
  - Impulsive style of thought
- Difficult temperament

Table 2. Factors that protect children from violence

- Investment and opportunities in school
- Strong adult in the life of a child or adolescent
- Being well liked by peers
- Sense of hope about the future
- Belief that violence is not inevitable and will not solve problems; willingness to try conflict resolution or conflict avoidance
- Cultural identity and connectedness

Table 3. Suggestions for raising children to resist violence

- Give your child love and affection
- Model appropriate behaviors
- Supervise
- Do not hit
- Be consistent about rules and discipline
- Protect children from access to guns
- Try to prevent children seeing violence in the community
- Avoid media violence
- Teach children to avoid being victims
- Help children stand up against violence
- Be aware of warning signs

Table 4. What physicians can do to help prevent violence

- Commit to self-education about violence
- Be an advocate and activist to prevent violence
- Recognize risk factors
- Talk to children and teens
  - Identify children and teens at risk
  - Teach nonviolent beliefs and skills
  - Ensure follow-up and appropriate referrals
- Talk to parents about setting limits, appropriate discipline, risk factors, violence at home, early nurturing
- Know the resources for safe havens, shelters, substance abuse treatment, and support groups for parents

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HEADLINE: GUN DEATHS OF YOUNG CHILDREN CLIMB IN COUNTY;  
SAFETY: FIREARM FATALITIES DROP OVERALL BUT RISE FOR THOSE 14 AND YOUNGER. GROUP  
ISSUING STUDY CALLS FOR MORE GUN CONTROL, BUT EXPERT THINKS INCREASE IS  
STATISTICAL BLIP.

BYLINE: MITCHELL LANDSBERG, TIMES STAFF WRITER

BODY:

More young children in Los Angeles County were killed by firearms in 1998 than the year before, and one-fourth of them were slain by a parent who then committed suicide, according to a report being issued today by gun-control advocates.

The alarming figures cut against the grain of a sharp, overall decline in gun-related deaths in the county and nationwide. The executive director of Women Against Gun Violence, the group that issued the report, was at a loss to explain the reported 10% increase in gun-related deaths among children ages 14 and younger.

"We certainly don't know why," said Susan Shaw, "but it clearly shows that the kids of L.A. County are at risk and that we haven't done enough yet to prevent gun violence."

It was the third year running that the group has issued a report on gun-related deaths in the county based on an examination of death certificates. During that time, the overall news has been good: Such deaths declined 22%, from 1,398 in 1996 to 1,088 in 1998.

Among people ages 18 and under there was an impressive 33% decline in gun-related deaths in the three years since the group began issuing its report.

In 1998, gun-related deaths in this age group fell 16% from 1997. That still means 158 young people lost their lives last year to gunshots, either in a homicide, suicide or accident. Of those, 24 were age 14 or younger, the group registering the 10% increase. It was the second year in a row that firearm deaths rose in this age group.

Susan Sorenson, a professor of public health at UCLA who studies violence epidemiology, said the increase was probably nothing more than a "statistical blip," not evidence of a trend. Nationally, firearm-related deaths for those 14 and under continue to decline, she said. The L.A. County figures are based on such a small number of cases that they are not likely to be statistically

Los Angeles Times September 30, 1999, Thursday,

significant, she added.

Nevertheless, the two top officials of Women Against Gun Violence, Shaw and Chairwoman Ann Reiss Lane, said the increase points to the need for stronger gun-control laws.

Although they applauded the California Legislature for passing some of the nation's toughest new firearm laws in the past year, they said more restrictions are needed.

"I think it's time we joined other civilized societies that do not allow private persons to own handguns," Lane said.

A spokesman for the National Rifle Assn. agreed that more needs to be done to deter gun violence but said the fault lies in lax enforcement of existing gun laws.

"All of this occurred in one of the most restrictive counties in the country in terms of gun laws," said the NRA's national spokesman, Bill Powers. "So I think that should tell you something is not working. Throwing another little law on top of those in place doesn't seem to make sense."

The report showed that, once again, Latinos, the county's most populous ethnic group, suffered the highest number of firearm-related deaths.

African Americans suffered gun fatalities at a far higher rate, however. Although black people account for only 10% of the county's population, they constituted 24% of those killed in 1998 by firearms.

The increase in deaths among the very young came, in part, from three cases in which parents took their children's lives and then their own:

\* Sometime around Jan. 29, 1998, 25-year-old Sylvia Martinez of La Puente apparently used a semiautomatic handgun to kill her husband and their two children, Abigail Martinez-Gil, 6, and Alex Gil Martinez, 3. She then killed herself.

\* On Feb. 3, 1998, Gustavo Gonzalez, 29, allegedly killed his 20-month-old daughter, Gessica, with a shotgun and then turned the weapon on himself.

\* On Aug. 4, 1998, 40-year-old carpenter and painter Cesar Orantes, apparently using a .357-caliber magnum revolver, shot and killed his estranged wife and their three children, Douglas, 13; Jennifer, 10; and Cesar Jr., 4.

Figures from the county coroner's office confirm that firearms are far and away the weapon of choice for those who kill.

In 1988, there were 1,522 homicides in the county. Of those, 1,043, or 69%, were committed with a gun. Knives were the second most common weapon used.

In 1992, the peak year for violent death in the county, there were 2,116 homicides. Of those, 1,639, or 77%, involved a gun. Since then, homicides have declined sharply, while the percentage committed with a gun has stayed fairly constant.

19TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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September 21, 1999 Tuesday, CHICAGO SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION: COMMENTARY; Pg. 18; ZONE: N; Voice of the people (letter).

LENGTH: 530 words

HEADLINE: SEARCHING FOR MEANINGFUL GUN CONTROL

BYLINE: Joel L. Rubin, Executive director,; Lynne Sered, Legal director,  
American Jewish Congress Midwest Region.

DATELINE: CHICAGO

BODY:

On Sept. 14 the American Jewish Congress Midwest Region joined with our sister regions around the country in issuing a national call to action to gather a million signatures or more on petitions addressed to our legislators demanding meaningful gun control. We welcome the participation of like-minded private individuals, public officials, and both Jewish and non-Jewish organizations in this vital effort to make our voices heard over the din of the National Rifle Association and its adherents in the Senate and House of Representatives.

We know that gun control alone cannot end the crisis of violence and hate that is so pervasive in our society today. We also know, as Jews, that our texts teach that saving even a single life is to be valued as if we had saved the entire world. We cannot save the entire world, but we can and will save many lives with effective gun control legislation and enhanced gun safety.

We watch each new shooting tragedy unfold on our TV screens and in our newspapers with horror and fear. We realize that it all too easily could be our children. We believe, along with the vast majority of the American people, that meaningful legislation requiring registration, licensing, background checks and safety devices are necessary and responsible measures that must be taken by our elected officials and by gun manufacturers.

A study in the New England Journal of Medicine concluded that guns kept in the home for self-protection are 43 times more likely to kill someone the owner knows than to kill in self-defense. The risk of homicide in the home is tripled and the risk of suicide is quintupled in households with guns. And it is children who are the disproportionate victims. In 1995, out of 11,198 handgun murders in this country, nearly 3,300 victims were under the age of 19. That same year, more than 1,400 children and teenagers committed suicide with guns and 440 died in unintentional shootings--many shot by other children with their parents' weapons.

Most victims of gun violence do not die in high-profile incidents like the recent tragedies in Texas, Chicago, Atlanta, Los Angeles and Littleton. Most of them die outside the glare of the evening news, and they are not killed by friends or psychopaths. In fact, as Dr. Arthur Kellerman, the head of emergency medicine at Emory University, reports in a study he led of shootings in

Memphis, Galveston and Seattle: "The vast majority of shooting victims arrive at the hospital as a result of trivial altercations that turned deadly because the combatants could easily resort to weapons."

Both the mythology and reality of gun ownership are deeply embedded in American culture. We may look enviously at the statistics on fatal shooting of children in countries like Japan (0), Great Britain (19), France (109) or Canada (153) and compare those numbers to the 5,285 children killed in the United States in the same year, 1997. But we do not even presume to dream of a society where citizens simply cannot or do not own guns. We do dare to dream, however, of a society where the will of the people prevails over the deeply misguided and self-serving interests of the gun lobby.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 21, 1999

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August 8, 1999 Sunday, CHICAGOLAND FINAL EDITION

SECTION: COMMENTARY; Pg. 15; ZONE: C

LENGTH: 784 words

HEADLINE: BREAKING DOWN THE COST OF A BULLET WOUND;  
GUN SALES WERE \$2.2 BILLION IN 1997. IT IS NOT WORTH THE \$2.3 BILLION IN BLOOD  
AND MONEY AT THE TRAUMA CENTER

BYLINE: By Derrick Z. Jackson, The Boston Globe. Derrick Z. Jackson is a  
columnist for the Boston Globe.

BODY:

The Journal of the American Medical Association delivered the latest reason  
why gunmakers cost us more than they are worth.

In the last decade, annual gun sales have fluctuated between \$2.1 billion and  
\$3.5 billion. In this week's JAMA, a study found that the cost of treating  
gunshot wounds in 1994 was \$2.3 billion. Of that \$2.3 billion, \$1.1 billion was  
paid by American taxpayers.

"In addition to the enormous human toll of gun violence, the costs of  
treating these injuries imposes a financial burden on society," the study said.

The study, led by Philip Cook of Duke University's Sanford Institute of  
Public Policy, analyzed new hospital data from New York and Maryland as well as  
past studies. A round of bullets costs a few dollars. A single name-brand  
handgun costs a few hundred dollars. The cost of a non-fatal hospitalization and  
follow-up care for a gunshot injury is \$35,367 a year.

The cost for fatal wounds, obviously much less since there is no "follow-up,"  
was between \$12,000 and \$13,000. The average cost of all gunshot injuries was  
\$17,000.

The more expensive the injury, such as wounds to the spinal cord, the more  
likely the government has to pick up the costs. Only 18 percent of the cost of  
gunshot wounds is picked up by private insurance. Taxpayers pay 49 percent. The  
other 33 percent falls under a category called "self-pay." That is a dubious  
category, since so many gunshot victims are poor. The study cited data in  
Massachusetts that suggest that "self-pay" cases are nearly six times more  
unlikely than other cases to ever pay their medical bills and thus, increase  
charges for other patients.

The study said it was the first one of its kind to give a nationally  
representative estimate for the sources of payment for medical costs for gunshot  
wounds. Its overall numbers echo other studies. A study at Charity Hospital in  
New Orleans that was presented at the 1996 meeting of the American Academy of  
Orthopedic Surgeons found that the average cost of gun injuries was \$19,000.

At that hospital, gunshot victims took up one-third of the orthopedic beds and consumed 20 to 30 percent of hospital resources. Because 51 percent of gunshot victims were uninsured, the hospital had to eat \$6 million in costs in 1994.

"Treating gunshot wounds was probably the single biggest drain on our orthopedic resources," said study co-author Dr. Robert Barrack of Tulane University. "It is not elective whether the trauma center provides treatment."

If it is not elective to treat such costly gunshot victims, handguns should no longer be an optional purchase for Americans. The cost has become so great that it has spurred lawsuits from many cities, including Boston, which says gunshot injuries cost the city \$10 million a year. The cost has become so high in the hospitals that an editorial in *Orthopedics Today* in 1996 said:

"We can no longer afford to have the safety of our society, the costs to our society of health care and the prevention of mortality and morbidity of gunshot wounds dictated by groups such as the National Rifle Association . . . under the guise of civil rights and the 2nd Amendment. The risk of unregulated handguns far outweighs the occasional legitimate need for personal defense. The days of the Wild West are over. . . . As professionals whose time is spent caring for the victims of this social problem, whose responsibility it is to prevent epidemic disease, we must take a stand on gun control. There is no place for assault weapons and semiautomatic firearms on our streets or in our homes. Handguns must be regulated nationally or equally from state to state.

"We eliminated lead from paint because of the dangers to our children. We require air bags and restraints in our cars to prevent highway fatalities. We have created safety codes for the construction industry to reduce accidents in the home. But we are unable to control handguns even though it has been conclusively shown that they are responsible for increasing numbers of accidental injuries and deaths. Our legislators are unable to stand up and be counted because of the corrupting influence of powerful lobbies and special interest groups."

The concerns of *Orthopedics Today* are being played out in New Orleans. The city is suing the gun industry. But the NRA-backed Louisiana legislature and Gov. Mike Foster have passed a law that attempts to block the suit.

A gun costs no more than a television set. Bullets cost no more than a can of soda out of a machine. Their carnage has emergency rooms across the nation expending resources beyond reason. Gun sales were \$2.2 billion in 1997. It is not worth the \$2.3 billion in blood and money at the trauma center.

GRAPHIC: GRAPHICGRAPHIC: Illustration by Margaret Scott.

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June 30, 1999 Wednesday, NORTHWEST EDITION

SECTION: WOMAN NEWS; Pg. 7; ZONE: FNW; Opinion.

LENGTH: 683 words

HEADLINE: IT'S TIME TO TAKE REAL ACTION ON GUN CONTROL

BYLINE: By Rosa L. DeLauro. Special to the Tribune. Rep. Rosa L. DeLauro (D-Conn.) is Assistant to the Minority Leader and the highest-ranking Democratic woman in the House.

BODY:

Two months ago, when the shooting at Columbine High School was reported nationwide, the parents of this country shared a collective chill. Americans saw reality on TV: Youth violence has become a terrifying problem.

The statistics on youth violence are stunning. Thirteen young people are killed every single day by gunfire, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Compare that to the rate of death among police officers--one every other day--and it's more dangerous to be a kid in this country than a cop. For every child killed by a gun, four are wounded. Among homicide victims between the ages of 15 and 19, 90 percent are killed with firearms.

Youth violence is a complex problem that requires several approaches. Adolescence is a difficult time, and parents must maintain involvement in their children's lives. We must have safe schools, with classrooms small enough to maximize discipline and individual attention. Mental health services must be accessible and affordable. And we need to reduce the violence and bloodsport that have saturated movies and video games.

But we also must address the accessibility and safety of firearms. Two ways to do that are: 1) close the loophole on background checks at gun shows, and 2) require child-safety locks to be sold with every handgun.

Since the Brady Law was passed in 1993, background checks have prevented nearly 300,000 guns from falling into the hands of convicted criminals.

Unfortunately, the Brady Law has a giant loophole that allows criminals to buy guns without background checks if they make purchases at gun shows instead of gun stores.

Two weeks ago, a proposal to close this loophole was killed in Congress after an all-out lobbying campaign by the leadership of the National Rifle Association. Despite overwhelming public support for this sensible measure--more than three-quarters of voters support it--big money and backroom arm-twisting by the NRA prevented moderate reform.

Opponents to background checks argue that the checks are an inconvenience. An inconvenience? Ninety-five percent of gun buyers are cleared for purchase

Chicago Tribune, June 30, 1999

within two hours. It is only the other 5 percent of gun purchases that need to be checked against court records. How does that small inconvenience compare to the agony that parents suffer when a beloved child is the victim of gun violence? How does it compare to safer streets and communities for everyone?

Background checks are not an infringement of 2nd Amendment rights. Background checks keep guns out of the hands of convicted felons. They do not prevent law-abiding citizens from owning, collecting or legally using guns. Propaganda by the NRA not withstanding, no credible reading of the Constitution supports this argument.

Equally important, handguns should be sold with child-safety locks. According to a recent national survey, almost 90 percent of accidental shootings involving children are linked to easy-to-find, loaded handguns. The American Medical Association's Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine reports that more than 20 percent of American households keep at least one gun loaded and locked in the home. Child-safety locks are like seatbelts: While not everyone will use them, they are effective in saving lives. We go to great lengths to ensure that teddy bears, baby rattles, and even toy guns are safe for children. Handguns should be sold with child-safety locks, period.

The public must become engaged if Congress is to close the gun show loophole and make child-safety locks universal. While I believe the membership of the NRA is being poorly served by the NRA leadership, I have great respect and admiration for individual members of the NRA for making their voices heard in the debate. However, the majority of Americans support these modest measures, and should no longer be a silent majority. Mothers and fathers must send a clear message to Washington through letters, phone calls, e-mail and their votes.

If we have the will and determination, we can pass common-sense proposals that will keep more children out of harm's way.

GRAPHIC: PHOTOPHOTO: (Rosa L. DeLauro.)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: June 30, 1999

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June 27, 1999, Sunday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section 4; Page 17; Column 2; Editorial Desk

LENGTH: 693 words

HEADLINE: In America;  
America Is Ready

BYLINE: By BOB HERBERT

BODY:

In the introduction to his book "Making a Killing -- the Business of Guns in America," Tom Diaz writes:

"Since 1960, more than three-quarter of a million Americans have died in firearm suicides, homicides, and unintentional injuries. In 1995 alone, 35,957 Americans died by gunfire: 18,503 in firearm suicides, 15,835 in firearm homicides, 1,225 in unintentional shootings, and 394 in firearm deaths of unknown intent."

Multiply those ghastly figures by three and you get the approximate number of people treated in emergency rooms for nonfatal gun wounds. Gun violence is one of the great American pastimes. Children are far more familiar with its rituals than they are with, say, the rules of baseball or football.

A week and a half ago the House of Representatives, acting in the wake of the tragedy in Littleton, had a chance to take a tiny step toward reversing the pervasive slaughter of Americans by guns. But the Republican majority, led by the likes of Tom DeLay, made sure that didn't happen.

Mr. DeLay contends that "guns have little or nothing to do with juvenile violence."

What did pass the House was a patently unconstitutional measure allowing public schools to post the Ten Commandments on classroom walls. No wonder someone cried out during the gun debate, "This House is in a state of denial."

A better idea was offered by Bill Bradley, the former Senator who is running a quixotic campaign for President. Mr. Bradley said that if he makes it to the White House he will seek approval of a series of gun-control measures that go beyond anything the House considered in its debate.

He called for a complete ban on the manufacture, sale, distribution and possession of the cheap handguns known as Saturday-night specials. He called for all handguns to be registered and said potential gun owners should first be required to pass a safety course and obtain a license. He said all gun dealers should be banned from residential neighborhoods.

More than 750,000 Americans have been killed by guns since 1960, and yet these common-sense proposals, long sought by staunch advocates of gun control, are considered so radical they have no chance of getting a serious hearing in

The New York Times, June 27, 1999

Congress.

The Ten Commandments yes, gun control no.

Mr. Bradley denounced the National Rifle Association and the members of the House who refused to consider meaningful gun-control legislation. He suggested they were out of step with the majority of Americans, especially those mothers who fear that their children are endangered by the "unregulated flow" of guns.

"People think it's about time to stand up to the N.R.A.," said Mr. Bradley. "What I'm hearing out there is that there is this shift. People think that regulating who can own a gun, and that means no children and no felons, and regulating what guns are available, and that means no assault weapons or Saturday-night specials, are reasonable steps."

Mr. Bradley said he also supports proposals to limit the purchase of handguns by any one person anywhere in the country to one a month, to require background checks at gun shows, to require trigger locks on handguns and to substantially increase the license fees for gun dealers.

Vice President Al Gore, the front-runner for the Democratic Presidential nomination, is also a strong gun-control advocate, although his proposals have not as yet been as far-reaching as Mr. Bradley's. A spokesman for the Vice President said a strong pro-gun-control position would be spelled out by Mr. Gore this summer.

Mr. Bradley, in a speech he delivered in California this month, discussed the very real fear of violence that millions of American students feel each day when they go to school.

"A graduating high school senior today is less likely to have tried drugs and alcohol than 20 years ago," he said. "Today's senior is less likely to get pregnant while still a teen and more likely to believe in God. Our children are basically good children. . . . So why is it so difficult in this country to have a rational dialogue about reducing gun violence?"

Ask the leaders of the N.R.A. And their stooges in the majority party in Congress.

<http://www.nytimes.com>

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# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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### THE SCHOOL SHOOTINGS....AND BEYOND Kids and Guns in America

It shouldn't take a Columbine, a Jonesboro or an inner-city drive-by shooting to make us realize that American children are more at risk from firearms than the children of any other industrialized nation. In one year, firearms killed no children in Japan, 19 in Great Britain, 57 in Germany, 109 in France, 153 in Canada, and 5,285 in the United States.

In the United States, young children die or are badly injured because their parents or other gunowners don't store their firearms properly, and children find loaded guns and use them unintentionally on themselves or other children. Older children are more at risk from horseplay with available guns, while teenagers use guns for impulse suicides and for crime. All are vulnerable to getting caught in the crossfire from guns used in domestic violence and in crime. Meanwhile, the gun lobby opposes every common-sense measure to reduce the accessibility of firearms to kids, from Child Access Prevention laws to the mandatory sale of trigger-locks or childproof, "personalized" guns. Although the NRA insists that the entertainment industry bears responsibility for exposing children to violent images, it refuses to accept responsibility for providing children with both the means and the ideology to hurt themselves and other people.

#### THE PROBLEM

As the rate of American gun violence dramatically increased over the last fifteen years, American children paid the price. >From 1984 to 1994 the firearm death rate for 15-19 year olds increased 222 percent while the non-firearm homicide death rate decreased almost 13%. Within five years, firearms are expected to overtake motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of death among American children.

Cars do kill children: so do poorly-made toys and swimming pools and dozens of common household items. But of all the thousands of products with which children have contact, only one – firearms – are completely exempt from consumer protection regulations. Back in 1972, when the Consumer Product Safety Commission was created, the gun lobby's political power ensured that the one product that children live with that is specifically designed to cause death and injury remained exempt. Thus, most handguns have so little trigger resistance that they can be fired by a three-year old, while many guns fire when dropped on the floor. Many popular semi-automatic handguns lack magazine safety disconnects or load indicators, meaning that children have no way of knowing that a gun that appears unloaded actually has a bullet in the chamber.

Our government recalls or bans hundreds of products when even a few children

are killed or injured by a flawed design. Recently, some schools have created "peanut-free zones" in their cafeterias because of the tiny number of children who are highly allergic to peanut products, and in 1999 major car manufacturers installed inside-trunk latches on new cars because of the 11 children who died last year by suffocating in locked car trunks. For years, the gun industry has made their products more and more lethal, instead of devoting any of their considerable profits to the development of a childproof gun, and the industry is absolutely immune to government intervention for their actions. (See Gun Industry Reform)

The gun industry and their mouthpieces at the NRA have fought every reasonable effort to protect children from guns by legislation. At the state and federal level, the gun lobby fights child access prevention (CAP) laws which hold gunowners responsible when children access their guns and hurt themselves or someone else. They fight laws that mandate the sale – not the use, just the sale – of trigger locks with new firearms. Although 18- and 19-year olds commit more crimes than any other age groups, they oppose raising the age for handgun possession to 21 – the same age at which we permit young people to drink.

And by coaxing hundreds of local governments, schools and youth groups to support their Eddie Eagle program, the NRA ensures that thousands of kids get the message that they shouldn't touch guns, which are for grownups. What Eddie Eagle really does is put responsibility on young children not to touch or play with guns – rather than on grownups for keeping the guns inaccessible. Eddie Eagle also ensures that children learn that using guns is an adult behavior to aspire to – creating new generations of gun-owners and gun purchasers. Not for nothing has Eddie Eagle been called "Joe Camel with Feathers," but the NRA insists that this public relations program alone will solve the problem of kids and guns.

## KIDS AND GUNS: KEY FACTS

- For every child killed with a gun, four are wounded. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of firearm death of children 0-14 years old is nearly **twelve times** higher in the U.S. than in 25 other industrialized nations combined.
- Over **6,000 students were expelled in 1996-97** for bringing guns to school. The Journal of the American Medical Association reports that between 36% and 50% of male eleventh graders believe they could easily get a gun if they wanted one.
- Guns do kill people, especially when wielded by children. More than **800 Americans, young and old, die each year from guns** shot by children under the age of 19.
- In 1996, more than **1300 children aged 10-19 committed suicide with firearms**. Unlike suicide attempts using other methods, suicide attempts with gun are nearly always fatal, meaning a temporarily depressed teenager will never get a second chance at life. Two-thirds of all completed teenage suicides involve a firearm.
- The firearm injury epidemic, due largely to handgun injuries, is **ten times larger than the polio epidemic** of the first half of this century.

## THE LAWS

There are very few laws governing children's access to guns. The Brady Law made it illegal for children under age 21 to purchase handguns from licensed dealers, although a loophole still permits 18-21 year olds to purchase handguns from private or unlicensed individuals. (The Columbine shooters used four guns purchased at gun-shows, three of which were bought by an eighteen-year-old friend.)

Each state has different laws governing the transfer and possession of guns to and by juveniles. Most states permit teenagers to possess long guns, including assault weapons grandfathered by the 1994 assault weapon ban, without adult supervision.

Child Access Prevention laws have been passed by 17 states. These states hold gunowners criminally liable if children access their loaded weapons to hurt themselves or someone else. Research demonstrates that in the 12 states which had passed CAP laws by 1997, accidental deaths of children from firearms decreased 23% in the two years after the laws went into effect.

For information on the laws affecting children and guns in your state, see State Laws.

Click below for more information...





# Issue Brief

## Center to Prevent Handgun Violence

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## CONCEALED WEAPONS, CONCEALED RISK

### *Do you feel safer sitting next to someone carrying a gun?*

Many people say no to that question, and for many valid reasons. Most people who have permits to carry concealed weapons -- people who are not law enforcement officials -- **have limited training and undergo less testing than even the most basic police recruit.** Yet they are led to believe that given a dangerous situation, they will use deadly force with the same care and consideration that police officers will. Once a bullet leaves a gun, who is to say that it will stop only a criminal? Yet the National Rifle Association at every opportunity uses the fear of crime to promote the need for ordinary citizens to pack a gun.

### THE HISTORY

The carrying of concealed weapons (CCW) was **prohibited or severely limited in most states prior to the mid-1990's.** After its stunning losses on the Brady Bill and the assault weapon ban in 1993-94, the NRA needed a win -- and turned to their traditional strongholds in state legislatures. By 1995, the **NRA made the radical liberalization of CCW laws at the state level their top political priority,** arguing that ordinary people carrying hidden handguns would actually reduce the nation's soaring crime rates. Their not-so-hidden agenda: increasing gun ownership in general and increasing the sales of concealable handguns -- at a time when gun sales had gone flat -- in particular. In the first year of their new campaign, the gun lobby was successful, and many states changed their laws to allow the widespread carrying of concealed weapons.

Since 1996, however, the gun lobby has failed to convince even one state legislature to weaken concealed-carry laws. Despite the claims of the gun lobby's pro-CCW "expert," economist John Lott, who attempts to link liberal CCW laws with lower crime rates, several eminent criminologists have now published peer-reviewed studies debunking this flawed research. (See John Lott Q&A). And, in what may be the decade's conclusive refutation of pro-CCW propaganda, in April, 1999 Missouri citizens voted against liberalizing that state's CCW laws in the first-ever state referendum on the issue, although the NRA spent almost \$4 million to win what it called 'the last great gun battle of the 20th century.' Following the Missouri vote, Kansas, Michigan and Colorado legislatures all dropped NRA-sponsored drives to weaken those states' CCW laws. **Clearly, the tide has turned against hidden handguns.**

### CCW: WHY OR WHY NOT?

- The number of crime victims who successfully use firearms to defend themselves is quite small. Out of 34,040 American firearms deaths in 1996, only 212 were *justifiable homicides* by private citizens with firearms. (See 1996 Firearms Deaths)
- More guns = more crime – or at least a much smaller reduction in the crime rate. A 1999 study by the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence, based on FBI crime statistics, demonstrates that liberalizing CCW laws may have an adverse effect on a state's crime rate. Between 1992 and 1997, the violent crime rate in states which kept strict CCW laws fell by an average of 24.8%. The 29 states that bought the NRA line that hidden handguns make them safer saw their violent crime rates drop by only 11.4%. Nationally, violent crime declined by 19.4% in that five year period. (Click here to see the study, "Concealed Truth")
- The gun lobby claims that only law-abiding citizens get CCW permits. But a recent study by the Violence Policy Center demonstrated that in the first six months of 1997, the weapon-related offense rate among Texas concealed handgun license holders was more than twice as high as that of the general population of Texas. We know that CCW holders are committing crimes – 946 of them in Texas in that six-month period – but because the gun lobby ensures that lists of CCW licensees in most states are not publicly obtainable, the full story has not yet been told.
- Even law-abiding citizens with the best intentions underestimate how hard it is to use a gun for successful self-defense. Even highly-trained police officers frequently lose control of their weapons; according to the National Institute of Justice, an average of 16% of all police officers killed in the line of duty are killed by an adversary with the officer's firearm. And police officers know that the very sight of a gun can escalate a situation, so that instead of losing your wallet, you lose your life. That's why almost every major law enforcement organization, including the International Brotherhood of Police Officers and the International Association of Chiefs of Police, opposes the liberalization of CCW laws. (See Law Enforcement)
- An armed society is an at-risk society. Many permit holders have been stripped of their permits for criminal behavior...and even law-abiding people get angry, get confused, make mistakes, and escalate ordinary arguments into gun-play. (For more information, see The Incident File)

## THE LAWS

Carrying-concealed-weapons (CCW) laws **have nothing to do with private firearms ownership in the home**. They relate solely to allowing individuals to **carry their concealed guns almost anywhere in the community**.

Much of the CCW debate is couched in somewhat obscure language. Pro-gun forces favor "shall issue" laws, which means that law enforcement shall issue a permit allowing the carrying of hidden weapons to anyone who meets that state's requirements. In many states, these requirements are minimal and do not go much beyond the federal Brady Law requirements for purchasing firearms – meaning that some licensees are eligible despite criminal convictions for violent or drug-related misdemeanors. Training requirements are extremely lax in most states and do not even include proof that a licensee knows how to load, fire or store a firearm. And, although some states do forbid the carrying of concealed weapons in certain government buildings, most shall-issue states allow concealed

weapons in bars, daycare centers, sports stadiums and other public places where firearms should clearly be prohibited. Utah and Montana even permit their licensees to carry guns on school grounds, and Kentucky amended its already lax law to permit guns in churches and other places of worship.

Handgun Control supports the seven states which flatly prohibit the carrying of concealed weapons. However, fourteen other states with "may-issue" systems – meaning that law enforcement may issue a permit depending upon the needs and circumstances of the applicant – do allow police to deny permits to applicants who clearly should not be carrying firearms. New Jersey, for example, issues a very small number of permits, and almost all go to citizens like security guards with an occupational requirement. "May-issue" systems like New Jersey's enable law enforcement to retain discretion over the serious and dangerous privilege of carrying a concealed weapon in public, and are supported by almost every major law enforcement organization.

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