



2001 National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings

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INTRODUCTION

Each year gun violence in America causes a large number of deaths and injuries and guns are used in a enormous number of murders and other serious crimes. For example...

- In 1991-1999, 29,000-39,500 deaths annually were caused by firearms (“Firearm Deaths...,” 2001).
- The rate of gun deaths from homicides and suicides is much higher in the United States than in any other developed country in the world (Krug, Powell, and Dahlberg, 1998; Killias, 1993a and 1993b).
- The disparity is particularly great in regards to children. The rate of firearm deaths to children 14 and under is 12-times greater in the US than the average of 25 other high-income countries (Div. of Violence Prevention, 1997).
- In recent years gunshots have been the second leading cause of deaths for people 10-24 and the third leading cause of death for persons 25-34 (National Center, 1997; “Current Trends,” 1994). In 1994-1997 the death rate from firearms was over twice as high among those 20-24 as among all ages (“Overall...,” 1999).
- The death rate from firearms in 1997 for all males 15-24 was 38.9 deaths per 100,000 and for black males 15-24 it was 119.9 per 100,000 (National Center for Health Statistics, 1999).
- In 1993-1998, an average of 115,000 firearm injuries occurred annually (Gotsch, et al., 2001).
- Annually between 1993 and 1998 65-70% of all murders were committed with a firearm and in 1994-98 93% of law enforcement officers feloniously killed died from gunshots (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2000).
- Since 1993 guns have been used in about 350,000-600,000 murders, robberies, and aggravated assaults annually (“Crimes Committed...,” 2001).
- In 2000 a gun was used in 26-41% of all robberies (Rennison, 2001; “Crimes Committed...,” 2001).
- In 1997 approximately 203,800 prisoners used a gun when they committed the crime for which they were then serving time (Harlow, 2001).

To explore public opinion on measures dealing with the gun violence problem, this report examines 1) the public’s views on the regulation of firearms including attitudes towards a) general gun-control measures, b) measures aimed at promoting gun safety, c) guns and criminals, and d) the enforcement of gun-control laws, 2) people’s views on carrying concealed firearms, 3) how attitudes have changed over time; 4) gun ownership and use including a) the prevalence and distribution of firearms, b) trends in gun ownership, c) gun carrying, and d) having a gun stolen; 5) the connection between gun ownership and attitudes towards firearms; 6) socio-demographic differences in attitudes towards firearms; 7) non-demographic differences in attitudes towards firearms; 8) anti-crime precautions, 9) the perceived safety that guns provide when kept at home and when carried away from home, and 10) gun-carrying behaviors and characteristics.

This report primarily utilizes data from 1) the 2001 National Gun Policy Survey (NGPS-01), 2) the 1999 National Gun Policy Survey (NGPS-99), 3) the 1998 National Gun Policy Survey (NGPS-98), 4) the 1997-98 National Gun Policy Survey (NGPS-97), 5) the 1996 National Gun Policy Survey (NGPS-96), and 6) the 1972-2000 General Social Survey (GSS) conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago. The NGPSs were designed by NORC in collaboration with the Center for Gun Policy and Research of Johns Hopkins University with funding from the Joyce Foundation of Chicago.

The NGPS-96, NGPS-97, NGPS-98, NGPS-99, NGPS-01 are national, random-digit dial, telephone surveys of adults living in households with phones. Data collection dates and sample sizes were: NGPS-96: n=1200, September 13-November 11, 1996; NGPS-97: n=1200, November 8, 1997 to January 27, 1998; NGPS-98: n=1204, September 10-November 15, 1998; NGPS-99: n=1182, September 9, 1999-December 4, 1999; and NGPS-01: n=1176, May 8-October 30, 2001. In addition, NGPS-01 included an oversample of gun carriers (n=382) which, when combined with the gun carriers in the cross-section (n=252), yielded a total of 634 gun carriers. Analysis used a post-stratification weight that adjusted for age, gender, race, education, and region according to US Census figures. Full technical details on the NGPSs appear in Haggerty and Shin, 1997; Woolley, Kuby, and Shin, 1998; Kuby, Imhof, and Shin, 1999; Kuby Imhof, and Shin, 2000; and Imhof, Kuby, and Hembree, 2001. The GSSs are full-probability, in-person interviews of adults living in households in the United States. The latest data were collected in February-June, 2000. Full technical details are presented in Davis, Smith, and Marsden, 2001.

FIREARM REGULATION AND SAFETY

The public is strongly supportive of measures to regulate firearms, promote firearm safety, and keep criminals from acquiring guns (Smith, 1980; Stinchcombe, et al., 1980; Wright, 1981; Crocker, 1982; Tyler and Lavrakas, 1983; Wright, 1988; Kleck, 1991; Mauser and Kopel, 1992; Kauder, 1993; Vernick, et al., 1993; Hill, 1994; Edel, 1995; Spitzer, 1995; Adams, 1996; Blendon, et al., 1996; Kleck, 1996; Schuldt, et al., 1997; Carter, 1997; Kates, 1997; Kleck, 1997; Public Policy Forum, 1997; Smith, 1997; Bernard and Lester, 1998; Hemenway and Azrael, n.d.; Bowie, et al., 1998; Frank N. Magid, 1998; Harding, 1998; Peter D. Hart, 1998, "Poll," 1998; Michigan, 1998; Singh, 1998; Smith, 1998; Teret, et al., 1998; Smith, 1999; Smith and Martos, 1999; Kellerman, et al., 2000; Smith, 2000; and "Gun Control," 2001). Large majorities back most general measures for controlling guns, policies to increase gun safety, laws to restrict criminals from acquiring firearms, and measures to enforce gun laws and punish offenders. In general, a majority endorse all measures to regulate guns, increase gun safety, and reduce gun violence, except for policies that entail a general prohibition on owning guns.

General and Safety-Related Gun-Control Measures

As Table 1 indicates, majorities support 11 of 14 measures to regulate guns and promote gun safety. 88% want to make gun-safety training mandatory before a gun may be purchased. 79% support requiring a police permit before a gun can be purchased. 78% favor requiring background checks for sales between private individuals. 77% endorse the mandatory registration of handguns and 70% want handgun owners to be required to re-register their weapons at regular intervals. 77% also agree that "the government should do everything it can to keep handguns out of the hands of criminals, even if it means that it will be harder for law-abiding citizens to purchase handguns." 74% want to require that all new handguns be personalized so they can only be fired by their legal owner. 73% favor both a background check and a five-day waiting period before a handgun may be purchased. 69% endorse limiting handgun purchases to one per month per buyer. 63% back the idea that all handgun owners should at least be licensed and trained in the use of their weapons. 52% favor allowing concealed-carry permits only for those with special needs such as private detectives.

A near majority of 49% backs having handguns limited to law enforcement personnel (8% want new handgun sales ended, 31% think that existing gun-control laws are sufficient, 6% believe that existing laws should be relaxed, and 6% did not express an opinion). The public is evenly split on whether laws allowing any adult who passes a criminal background check and a gun-safety course to carry a concealed gun in public makes things safer or less safe. 44% feel that such permissive or shall-issue, concealed-carrying laws make things less safe and 44% believe they make it safer (10% neither more nor less safe and 3% don't know/no answer).

Only a call for the general prohibition of handguns is opposed by a solid majority with just 11% wanting a “total ban on handguns.”

To examine people’s summary views on the general, gun-control measures, a scale was made that went from 0 for someone who rejected all 11 of the measures in Table 1 to a score of 11 for someone who accepted all 11 measures to regulate firearms.^a This scale shows that on average people approved of 7.6 of the 11 measures to regulate firearms.

Guns and Criminals

People want to keep guns out of the hands of criminals. First, state laws now typically restrict convicted felons from legally purchasing guns, but states generally allow most of those convicted of misdemeanors to buy guns. The public however is much less willing to let those convicted of a variety of less serious crimes purchase firearms (Table 2). 95% want to prohibit those convicted of brandishing a gun in public from being allowed to purchase a gun and disapproval is at 84% for those who illegally carried a concealed weapon without a permit, 83% for those having committed simple assault, and 69% for those who drove a car while intoxicated. Of the four misdemeanors asked about in 2001 58% wanted to prohibit all types of criminals from being able to buy a gun and on average people supported prohibition for 3.3 of these four crimes.

Second, 73% back both a mandatory, criminal background check and a five-day waiting period before a handgun can be purchased and another 18% endorse the check of criminal records (Table 1).

Third, the concern about controlling the criminal misuse of guns is so strong that 77% agree that “the government should do everything it can to keep handguns out of the hands of criminals, even if it means that it will be harder for law-abiding citizens to purchase handguns (Table 1).”

Enforcing Gun Laws

People want gun-control laws to be strictly enforced and violators to be firmly punished. 54% favor both passing stricter gun-control laws and the strict enforcement of the current and new laws (Table 3). Another 33% endorse strict enforcement of existing laws. When it comes to illegal gun sales, 55% want penalties to be tougher than for selling illegal drugs, 33% want to be equally tough towards those illegally selling either guns or drugs, and just 5% want illegal gun dealers to be treated less tough than drug sellers (5% are unsure)(Table 3).

CONCEALED-CARRY LAWS AND PRACTICES

The public holds complex attitudes towards gun carrying. First, large majorities want those who have illegally carried or displayed guns to be prohibited from buying guns. As Table 2 shows, 95% want those convicted of brandishing a gun and 84% of those who illegally carried a concealed gun without a permit to be barred from purchasing a gun.

Second, 52% want concealed-gun carrying to be limited to “people with a special need to carry a concealed gun, such as private detectives,” and 46% favor allowing carry permits to “any adult who has passed a criminal background check and a gun safety course” (2.5% were missing or didn’t have an opinion). These attitudes were examined further by asking people follow-up items that challenged their initial preference. When those favoring restricting concealed carrying to people with special needs were

^a There are 14 separate percentages in Table 1, but two were eliminated because they were different versions of the same item and one item came from the GSS, not the NGPS-01. See Table 1 for details.

told that “this would mean that most law-abiding people could not carry concealed handguns even if they thought they needed to for self-protection,” 82% still backed limiting concealed carrying to those with special needs, 14% switched to allowing concealed carrying for those passing a background check and a gun-safety course, and 3% were undecided. Those favoring general access to concealed-gun permits were told that “this would mean that anyone with a concealed-carry permit could bring handguns into stores and malls, restaurants and bars, and other public places.” After hearing this 62% still backed general access, 33% now opposed this, and 6% were undecided. This indicates that opinions for limiting concealed carrying to those with special needs was firmer than attitudes in favor of more general access. In addition, since initial attitudes were so close to being split down the middle, the counter-arguments had large and important impacts on overall public opinion. After having learned that most law-abiding people would not be allowed to carry concealed weapons for personal protection, 43% favored restricting permits to those with special needs and 53% supported broader access (3% were undecided). But after being told any permit holder could bring a concealed gun into public places like stores and restaurants, 67.5% favored restrictions to those with special needs, 30% wanted general access, and 3% were uncertain. Thus, the initial small majority of 52% backing limiting permits to those with special needs could be moved up to a large majority of 67.5% (+ 15.7 percentage points) or into a minority of 43% (- 9.1 percentage points), depending on what additional arguments were offered.

Support also varied by whether people thought general-access, concealed-carry laws would change the actual level of gun carrying. Among those who saw gun-carrying increasing 60% wanted permits only for those with special needs, among those seeing fewer guns 55% favored granting permits only for special needs, but among those seeing no change in the actual gun carrying level 45% favored special needs (vs. 52.5% for general access). Thus, majority support reverses sides among those who think the law would not change the aggregate level of gun carrying.

Third, people split evenly on whether “laws allowing any adult to carry a concealed gun in public, provided they pass a criminal background check and a gun safety course” makes them feel more or less safe. 44% said safer, 44% less safe, 10% the same, and 3% were unsure. People’s assessments of their safety was highly contingent on what they thought the impact of such laws would be on actual gun carrying. Just 29.5% thought that such laws would result in more people “having guns with them in public,” 51% thought that it would not change how many people carried guns, 15% thought it would reduce the number of gun carriers, and 4% were unsure. Among those who saw the number of people carrying guns rising, 61% said that general access, concealed-carry laws make them feel less safe and 31% felt safer, for people seeing no change in the level of gun carrying, 53% felt safer and 33% less safe, and among those believing there would be fewer gun carriers, 43% felt safer and 47% less safe. Thus, only among those who believed that laws allowing general access to concealed-carry permits would have no impact on the level of actual gun carrying did a majority think that such laws would make it safer.

The relationship between seeing general-access laws reducing safety if they increased the level of gun carrying is also shown by a question that asked “Some states have recently changed their laws concerning gun carrying. If more people in your community begin to carry guns, would that make you feel more safe, the same, or less safe?” 64% said they would feel less safe, 25.5% the same, 9% safer, and 1% were uncertain. The 64% who saw things as less safe if there was more gun carrying in the community was very similar to the 61% who thought that such laws would make them feel less safe among those seeing these laws as increasing gun carrying.

Fourth, concerns about concealed-gun carrying also come to light when the presence of guns in various establishments and locales are mentioned. People want business owners to limit customers from bringing guns into their establishments. 79% feel that “public places, such as stores, movie theaters, and restaurants” should “prohibit people from carrying concealed weapons on their premises.” Moreover, 69% say they would be more likely to go to businesses that prohibited gun carrying (for 18% it did not make a differ and 13% said they would be less likely to frequent such businesses). 80% also opposed

“people in your community being allowed to bring guns” into restaurants, 91% on to college campuses, and 92% into bars. Overall 82% opposed guns in all three venues.

TRENDS IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE REGULATION OF FIREARMS

As a much discussed issue that has been debated at the national level since the mid-sixties, public opinion on gun-control tends to be mature and not subject to large or sudden fluctuations or shifts. Moreover, what change has occurred has mostly been movements back-and-forth, rather than clear, long-term trends in one direction.

Table 4 shows 41 time series with two or more data points. Comparing the first to the last reading (see last column in Table 4) shows that in 23 cases there is statistically significant variation across time and the most recent point is lower than the first point (which indicates less support for gun-control measures or less concern about safety-related matters), in 11 cases there were no statistically significant change, and in 7 cases there was statistically significant variation and an increase in support for gun-control and gun-safety measures. Looking at the 13 times series that were asked at all five points from 1996 to 2001, shows 7 statistically significant changes and a net downward movement, 3 cases of no statistically significant change, and 3 statistically significant increases in support.

Most of these changes were small and often involved mostly back-and-forth movement. Looking at changes involving at least three time points, generally consistent movement in one direction, and a net change of five percentage points or more, indicates that there were only two meaningful trends during this period out of 25 relevant time series. Support for both a mandatory background check and five-day waiting period before a handgun could be purchased dropped from 85% in 1998 to 73% in 2001 (- 12 percentage points) and support for a total ban on handguns fell from 16% in 1996 to 11% in 2001 (- 5 percentage points).

There is also considerable counter-balancing year-to-year shifts in level of support for gun-control and safety related items. From 1996 to 1997 there were 9 increases and 6 declines, from 1997 to 1998 respectively 14 and 5, from 1998 to 1999 5 and 30, and from 1999-2001 8 and 9.^a

The general decline in support from 1998 to 1999 was surprising given the Littleton shootings on April 20, 1999, about mid-way between the 1998 and 1999 NGPSs, and the resulting media and political attention given to this and other high-profile, multi-murders (e.g. the Atlanta stockbroker and Fort Worth church shootings), however previous analysis (Smith, 2000) indicates that while these shootings did much to galvanize public opinion on the issue of gun violence, they had little impact on public support for gun-control measures.

Attitudes towards the regulation of firearms have shown great stability over the last 40 years. Except for a period in the late 1980s and early 1990s when there was a moderate rise of support for gun-control measures, attitudes have generally been stable (Stinchcombe, et al., 1980; Smith, 1980; Smith, 1997). In 1996-2001 most items showed little change and when change did occur it usually showed back-and-forth movement rather than a steady trend. Among the few trends showing notable and consistent shifts, there were more declines than gains for gun-control and safety-related measures.

The stability of these attitudes comes from two causes. First, gun control has been a long-debated issue that is familiar to most people and has been long discussed in the political arena. Second, attitudes towards guns are shaped by one's prior experience with firearms, especially one's exposure to guns while

^a These figures consider all changes whether or not they are statistically significant.

growing up and by the prominence of the gun culture in one's local community. These formative experiences tend to fix people's attitudes towards guns and gun control. Even a tragedy as great and shocking as the Littleton shootings did little to change people's preferences.

GUN OWNERSHIP AND USE

The Prevalence and Distribution of Firearms

The personal ownership of firearms in the United States is probably more widespread than in any other developed nation in the world (Killias, 1993b). As Table 5A indicates, about 35-36% of households have a gun and 22% contain a handgun. Longguns are more common than handguns with 14% of households having only the former and 6% just the latter. In addition, 16% of households have both longguns and handguns. 24% of respondents personally own a gun (as opposed to merely living in a household with a gun) and 15% personally own a handgun.

Gun ownership is concentrated among certain socio-demographics groups (Table 5B). The profile of gun owners is as follows:

1. Both household and personal ownership is greater among men than women.
2. Ownership is lowest in large cities and greatest in rural areas. Likewise it is lowest in the more urban Northeast and higher in more rural regions.
3. The married are most likely to have guns in general, with the never married and separated the least likely to have a weapon.
4. Gun ownership varies little by educational level.
5. Gun ownership increases with household income, but for household presence it appears to fall-off among those with incomes over \$80,000.
6. Gun ownership is highest for the middle aged. Adults under 30 and over 65 are less likely have a gun in their household. However, personal ownership of a gun does not fall-off among older adults. The lower levels among younger adults is partly due to the decline in hunting over the last 25 years.
7. Households with two children are the most likely to have a gun in general or a handgun in particular (but the difference for handguns is not statistically significant). Personal ownership varies significantly, but irregularly, by number of children.
8. All forms of gun ownership are greater among conservatives, lowest among liberals, and intermediate for moderates.
9. Whites show higher ownership levels than Blacks, but none of the differences are statistically significant.

Gun ownership is appreciable among virtually all segments of society, but is highest among social groups connected to America's traditional gun culture and to hunting in particular. This makes older men living in rural areas the mostly likely to both have guns in their households and to personally own a firearm. Women in urban areas and with low incomes are least likely to possess firearms.

Trends in Gun Ownership

The proportion of households with a firearm has been in slow decline over the last quarter century (Table 6). In the early 1970s about 50% of adults lived in households that kept a firearm. This now has fallen about 34-35%. Similarly, the percent of adults living in a household with a gun fell from a high of 51% in 1977 to a low of 32-33% in 2000-2001. These declines are partly the result of a decrease in household size. From 1980 until 1997 the proportion of adults personally owning a gun held steady at about 29%. However, since then even this level declined to about 22-24% of adults personally owning a gun.

There has also been a shift in the types of firearms that people own. As hunting has declined as a recreational pursuit (Smith, 1997), the proportion of adults in households with longguns has decreased from about 42% in the early 1970s to about 27-29% today. Partly compensating for this drop, the proportion of adults living in a household with a handgun rose from about 20% in the early 1970s to 24-25% in the mid-1990s. However, this number is also now be waning with only 21-22% reporting living in a household with a handgun in 2000-2001. Likewise, the proportion ever having bought a handgun increased from 21% in 1996 to 25% in 1997-98 and then fell to 20-21% in 1998/99 (Smith, 2000).^a

Gun Carrying

Gun carrying has increasingly become a topic of interest in both the scholarly and public-policy debates over crime, gun violence, and gun control. There are three fairly large literatures on gun carrying. The first considers whether the adoption of shall-issue, concealed-carry laws reduces crime (Bartley and Cohen, 1998; Bankston, et al., 1990; Black and Nagin, 1998; Bronars and Lott, 1998; Lott, 1998 and 2000; Lott and Mustard, 1997; Ludwig, 1998; Webster and Ludwig, 2000; Webster, et al., 1997). The second looks at whether police, anti-gun interventions reduce crime (Faria, 2000; Marvel, 2000; McGarrell, Chernak, and Weiss, 1995; Sherman, 2000a and 2000b; Yarbrough, 2000). The third deals with gun carrying among youths (Hemenway, Prothrow-Stith, and Bergstein, 1996; Kann, et al., 1998; Kingery, Pruitt, and Heuberger, 1996; Kulig, et al., 1998; Roundtree, 2000; Simon, Crosby, and Dahlberg, 1999). In contrast there has been little recent research on adult gun carrying (Kleck and Gertz, 1998; Nelson, et al., 1996). Only the limited, final body of research directly addresses the examination of gun carrying discussed here.^b

Three different measures were used to identify gun carriers. The first was part of a general scale on personal, anti-crime precautions. It asked if during the last 12 months one had “carried a handgun away from home...to protect yourself from crime” (See Table 13 below for full wording). The second part came considerably later in the interview and asked the following battery:

For which of the following reasons did you carry a handgun away from home during the last 12 months? That is, either on your person or in your car or truck.

- a. Did you carry a handgun as part of work?
- b. Did you carry a handgun for personal protection?
- c. Did you carry a handgun when you went hunting?
- d. Did you carry a handgun when going to a firing range or for target practice?
- e. Did you carry a handgun for any other reason?

^a The quantity of new handguns (domestic manufacturing plus net imports) increased in the 1980s and early 1990s then declined (O’Connell, 1998).

^b On the issue of defensive vs. offensive gun uses see Hemenway and Azrael, 2000; Kleck, 1991 and 1997; McDowall, Loftin, and Presser, 2000; Smith, 1997; Violence Policy Center, 2001.

The third part immediately followed the second group and was asked of those saying “No” both to the item on gun carrying as part of the battery on personal, anti-crime precautions and to the previous five questions on handgun carrying. It read:

Just to be sure I didn't miss something, did you carry a handgun away from home either on your person or in your car or truck even only once during the last 12 months such as to show it to a friend, get it repaired, show it to someone interested in buying it, to move it from your house to another place, or for any other reason?

These items were designed to maximize the reporting of gun carrying in general and handgun carrying in particular. Reports of gun carrying were encouraged by asking about gun carrying multiple times and in different contexts. Specifically, this included: 1) asking about gun carrying in both a crime prevention and general context, 2) separately asking about gun carrying for five specific reasons as part of the general context items rather than screening first for general carriers before asking about reasons for gun carrying, 3) asking all people, not just those with a gun in their household, about gun carrying, and 4) adding a final probe to capture omitted mentions.

Across these items 21.6% indicated that they had carried a gun away from home during the last year and 20.6% had carried a handgun.^a This level is much higher than previously indicated (Nelson, et al., 1996; Kleck and Gertz, 1998; Smith, 2000). As asked in the 1997-1999 NGPS, only 10.5% were identified as gun carriers.^b This of course is not because of an increase in actual gun carrying, but because the more extensive set of items used in NGPS-01 reduced the underreporting of gun carrying in previous surveys. In fact, the time trend on personally carrying a gun as an anti-crime measure actually shows a decrease in gun carrying from 1997 to 2001 (See section on Anti-Crime Precautions below) and there was no evidence of an increase from 1997-1999 on the general measure asked only of people with guns in their households (11.9% in 1997, 9.4% in 1998, and 10.2% in 1999).

Besides expanding the number of gun carriers, the extended set of questions also changed their profile. In 1997 and 1998 13-17% carried a gun only once as opposed to 26% in 2001. In 1997-1999 50-53% usually carried their handgun loaded, but only 38% did so in 2001. In 1997-1998 a rising proportion of 42-55% had a permit to carry a handgun, but only 33% did in 2001. This indicates that on average the extended question drew in less frequent gun carriers.

The most common reason for carrying a handgun according to the general measure was going for target practice (16%). This was followed by hunting (10%), personal protection (8.5%), work (2%), and other reasons (1%). 8% carried a gun for only one of these five reasons, 7% for two reasons, and 5% for 3 or more reasons. About 11% carried a gun only for non-protection reasons, 1% only for protection, 7% for both protection and other reasons, and complete information was missing for 1%.

On the crime precaution measure 9% indicated that they carried a gun for protection. When the two gun-carrying-for-protection items are considered jointly 12% indicate that a gun was carried for protection during the last year.^c

^a The items used are designed to encourage reporting of handgun carrying, but longgun carrying is reported only for purposes of protection as part of the crime prevention item. As a result, longgun carrying and thus total gun carrying is likely to be underreported. The handgun carry figure eliminates people who reported carrying only a longgun for protection.

^b In these surveys only those with a gun in their household were asked the single, general question, “Have you carried a handgun away from home during the last 12 months? That is, either on your person or in your car or truck.”

^c When the precaution, gun-carrying item is limited to handgun carriers, the two measures agree for 94.3% of the cases, disagree for 4.5%, and due to missing data agreement is uncertain for 1.2%.

As one would expect, gun carriers have a socio-demographic profile similar to that of personal gun owners in general (Nelson, et al., 1996; Kleck and Gertz, 1998). As Table 7 shows, gun carriers have the following characteristics:

1. Men are almost three times as likely as women are to carry a gun and men are more likely than women to carry for all reasons except other.
2. Rural residents are most likely to carry a gun and those living in large cities the least likely. This difference is especially large for hunting, but there is no difference for work-related, gun carrying and those in large cities are actually the most likely to carry a gun for other reasons.
3. Southerners are most likely to carry a gun followed by Westerners, Midwesterners, and Northeasterners. The overall Southern edge mainly results from their higher use of guns for personal protection. The West leads in carrying for target practice and is tied with the South for hunting.
4. Overall gun carrying does not vary much by marital status. Carrying for specific reasons does differ however, with it being highest for hunting among the married, for target practice among the never married, for work among the divorced, and for other reasons among the widowed.
5. Gun carrying is lowest among those with less than a high school education. This is primarily because the less educated tended to be older adults and earners of less income.
6. Gun carrying is much higher among those earning \$50,000+ than among those with incomes below \$20,000. The increase in gun carrying as income rises shows up for all reasons except other.
7. Gun carrying is fairly even across age groups from under 30 to 50-64, but drops off among those 65+. Those 40-49 are the most likely to carry for protection and those under 30 the most likely for hunting and target practice.
8. Overall gun carrying does not differ by number of children in the household, but carrying for protection, hunting, and target practice are all higher among people with 2 or more children at home.
9. Liberals are less likely than moderates or conservative to carry a gun. The overall difference is not statistically significant, but it is for work, protection, hunting, and target shooting.
10. No meaningful racial differences on gun carrying occur.

Not surprisingly gun carrying is related to owning a gun. About 44% of those with gun in their home carried a gun, while only 9% without a gun at home carried a weapon (Table 8). One might even have supposed that gun carrying would have been exclusively among gun owners, but only 59% of gun carriers had a gun at home that they personally own, another 15% had a gun at home, but do not personally own that weapon, and 26% did not have a gun at home. This latter group consists of people who own a gun, but keep it elsewhere (e.g. at work or at a second residence, such as a vacation home), those who did not own a gun during the last year and used guns that belonged to people in other households, and those who had a gun during the last year, but no longer own one.

Gun carrying is also related to exposure to crime. Those who have been victimized, think they will be victimized, and disagree that the police will respond quickly when needed are more likely to carry guns (Table 8). However, their higher gun carrying does not simply reflect more carrying for protection, they are also more likely to carry for almost all reasons.

Gun carrying is also weakly related to having been charged with a traffic violation and having been arrested for a non-traffic offence. The overall differences are not statistically significant, but those charged or arrested are more likely to carry for most specific reasons.

Finally, those who never drink are least likely to carry a gun, while those who report that they sometimes drink more than they should are the most likely to carry a weapon.

Stolen Guns

About 6% report that they have ever had a gun stolen from them. This includes 9% of current gun owners and 4% of those not now owning a gun. 12% of those who personally own a gun have had one stolen from them. Victims of gun thefts tend to have the same socio-demographic profile as gun owners (Table 9). Thefts are more common from men, Southerners, the widowed, those with a high school education, and older adults. Theft did not vary by race, having children, political ideology, income, and residence. The fact that gun thefts are about equally common from rural areas up through large central cities is surprising given that rural residents are about three times more likely than those living in a large city to own a gun. This may reflect more crime in large cities or perhaps even the targeting of guns by thieves in these locales.

THE CONNECTION BETWEEN GUN OWNERSHIP AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS FIREARMS

The possession of firearms strongly shapes attitudes toward the regulation of firearms, beliefs about gun safety, and opinions on other gun-related issues. As Table 10 shows, people's views vary greatly according to whether they personally own a gun, live in a household with a gun (but do not personally own a firearm), or live in a household without guns.

First, in all but two of the 27 comparisons there are statistically significant differences. In this sense there is little consensus between gun owners and non-gun owners on firearms and how they should be regulated.

Second, in all 27 cases people who personally own guns are more pro-gun (i.e. less for regulation, less concerned about safety issues) than those without guns. Besides being pervasive these differences are often quite strong. In 13 cases the gap is 20 percentage points or more.

Third, in most cases (20 of 27) those living in gun households, but not personally owning guns, are intermediate in their attitudes between those who personally own guns and those living in households without guns. In all instances others in gun households are more supportive of the regulation of firearms and more concerned about their safety than those who personally own guns. In seven cases they are even marginally more pro-gun control than those from households without guns. This non-linearity comes mostly from the fact that the non-owners tend to be women and women tend to be more for gun control than men are.

These differences naturally show up on the two gun-regulation scales. On the general regulation measure personal gun owners backed 6.1 policies, those in a household with a gun (but not personally owning it) supported 8.2 and non-gun owners also favored 8.2 (prob.=.000). Likewise, personal gun owners wanted to bar criminals from buying guns for 2.9 crimes, those in a household with a gun for 3.3 crimes and non-gun owners for 3.5 crimes (prob.=.000).

Support for gun-control measures is also uniformly lower among gun carriers than non-gun carriers. As Table 11 shows, in 25 of 26 comparisons gun carriers are statistically significantly less supportive of gun-control measures than non-carriers are. On the general regulation scale, gun carriers favored, 5.9 measures and non-gun carrier 8.1 (prob.=.000). On barring criminals from buying guns, gun carriers wanted the ban to cover 2.8 crimes, while non-gun carriers supported prohibitions for 3.4 crimes (prob.=.000).

Gun carriers also tend to show even less support than those who personally own guns (in 18 of 26 comparisons of Tables 7 and 8). In large part because of the overlap between these two groups the differences are usually small, but on several items specifically dealing with gun carrying the gun carriers are about 10 percentage points less in favor of restrictions or more convinced of the safety benefits of gun carrier than those who personally own guns.

It was possible to examine this in more depth for two items that were asked of gun carriers on the oversample as well as of everyone on the cross-section. For both mandatory registration of handguns and having private sellers of gun have to do the same background checks that gun dealers are required to carry out, support is lowest among those who are both personal gun owners and gun carriers and highest among non-gun owners who do not carry guns. On mandatory registration of handguns support is at 51% among gun carriers who personally own a gun and at 71-74% for gun carriers who do not personally own a gun. Similarly, among non-gun carriers registration is backed by 74% of those personally owning a gun and 81-85% of non-carriers who also do not own a gun. Likewise, among gun carriers, 57% of those who personally own a gun endorse background checks for private sales, but among gun carriers, not personally owning a gun, support is at 64-80%. Similarly, for non-gun carriers who personally own a gun, 77% want private sales checked on, while 81-85% of non-carriers, without guns support background checks for private gun sales.

The different behaviors of gun carriers (or the different types of gun carriers that exist) also further affect their attitudes towards regulating firearms. For both the mandatory registration of handguns and requiring background checks for private sales, support is highest amongst infrequent carriers, next highest amongst daily carriers, and lowest amongst those who carry about once a week. Handgun registration is backed by 65% of those carrying a gun several times a year or less often, by 58% of those carrying a gun almost every day and 32.5% of those carrying a gun weekly (prob.=.000). The corresponding numbers for supporting background checks for private sales are respectively 68%, 55%, and 34% (prob.=.000). The relatively high level of support among the most frequent carriers is largely explained by the fact that almost 40% of daily gun carriers carry a gun for work (mostly police and private security personnel) and daily carriers who carry a gun for work are very supportive of both handgun registration (80%) and background checks for private sales (84%).^a

Finally, despite the large differences by gun ownership and the systematically lower backing for the regulation of firearms among those who personally own guns, support for gun-control policies is actually quite high even among gun owners. For 8 of the 14 general regulation and gun-safety measures and all 4 of the items about guns and criminals a majority of those who personally own guns favor the restriction of firearms. Likewise, among those having a gun in their household, but not personally owning a gun, majorities backed 11 of the 14 general measures and all four measures to bar criminals from buying guns. For example, 59% of those personally owning gun wanted handgun purchases limited to one-per-month (as did 72% of those from gun-owning households who did not personally own guns) and 64% believed that all new handguns should be personalized (as did 77% of those co-residing with gun owners).

Similarly, a majority of gun carriers endorsed 7 of 13 general measures and all four measures to restrict gun sales to criminals. For example, 63% of gun carriers thought that businesses should prohibit guns on their premises and 60% opposed gun carrying in restaurants. Thus, while less supportive of gun regulation than non-owners, those who personally own guns and gun carriers are in favor of most specific proposals to regulate guns and to curb the access of criminals to guns.

^a These figures are based on only 24 cases.

SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS FIREARMS

With the exceptions of the sharp and consistent differences between men and women and by place of residence, most demographic groups do not differ greatly in their attitudes towards the regulation of firearms and/or do not show consistent differences across the two attitude scales (Table 12). The key patterns are as follows:

1. Men support fewer measures to regulate guns and fewer bans on criminals acquiring guns.
2. Residents of rural areas are least supportive of measures to regulate guns or restrictions on criminals buying guns and those living in large cities are most for both. Support does not vary by region of the country however.
3. Income is not related to attitudes on general, firearm regulation, but those with lower incomes are more in favor of barring guns from criminals.
4. Support for the general measure does not significantly vary by age, but older adults are more for limiting sales to criminals.
5. Number of children in the household has no consistent relationship to firearm attitudes. It is unrelated to barring criminals from buying guns and has an irregular association with general firearm regulation.
6. Liberals back more regulations of firearms than conservatives do, but support for limiting gun purchases by criminals does not differ by political ideology.
7. Marital status, education, and race make little difference. The differences tend to be small and are not consistent across the scales.

NON-DEMOGRAPHIC DIFFERENCES IN ATTITUDES TOWARDS FIREARMS

Attitudes towards guns are also related to past and expected experiences with crime. First, victims of robberies and assaults back more measures to bar criminal from buying guns (3.3 vs. 3.1; prob.=.020) and more general regulation policies (7.6 vs. 7.2; but the difference is not statistically significant, prob.=.129). Second, those who see future victimization as at least somewhat likely support the most restrictions on criminals buying guns (very likely=3.2, somewhat likely=3.4, not likely=3.3; prob.=.002) and the most general regulations (very likely=7.5, somewhat likely=7.8, not likely=7.6; prob.=.018). Third, those with confidence in the police (people believing that “I can count on the police to come quickly when they are called”) are most likely to back more gun regulations. Those who agree that they can count on the police are more for barring criminals from buying guns (strongly agree and agree=3.4, disagree=3.2, strongly disagree=2.8; prob.=.000) and support more policies to regulate guns (strongly agree=8.1, agree=7.7, disagree=6.6, strongly disagree 6.7; prob.=.000).

ANTI-CRIME PRECAUTIONS

As Table 13 shows, the only two measures taken by a majority of people were locking one’s doors (94%) and acting more aware or cautious (63%). About a third have kept a dog (34%), stayed in at night (33%), or kept a gun at home (30%). These precautions were followed by having a security system (21%),

joining a neighborhood watch (19%), obtaining self-defense training (17%), and carrying self-protection chemicals like Mace (14%). The least frequently used anti-crime measure was carrying a gun (9%). On average people took 3.3 of these measures during the last year.

People are taking fewer anti-crime precautions now (3.3) than they did in 1997 (3.6) (prob=.000). All measures concerning protection away from home are lower now: staying home (-2.7 percentage points, carrying Mace (-4.7 percentage points), and carrying a gun (-2.1 percentage points). Most measures for general and/or at home security also are now used by fewer people (acting more aware - 16.4 percentage points, keeping a gun at home, - 2.7 percentage points, and joining a neighborhood watch (-2.6 percentage points), but there was no meaningful change for locking doors (-0.2 percentage points), obtaining self-protection training (-0.8 percentage points), and having a security system (+ 1.0 percentage points), and there was an increase in keeping a dog (+ 4.8 percentage points).

PERCEIVED SAFETY THAT GUNS PROVIDE

People are very divided about how much safety guns provide. First, in the case of whether having a gun in a home usually makes it safer or less safe, 43% consider an armed home as safer, 16% say it depends or are not sure, and 40% think guns make it less safe. This fairly even split with neither the safer nor less safe position garnering a majority has prevailed from 1996-2001. However, this is the first year in which the plurality narrowly thought that guns made homes safer.

Second, people are also split over the safety that concealed carrying affords. 44% see permissive concealed, gun-carrying laws as making things safer, 44% as less safe, 10% as neither safer nor less safe, and 3% are unsure. Safety assessments about concealed carrying have see-sawed back-and-forth over the last several years with no clear trend. In 1996 56% saw it as making things less safe, this fell to 47% in 1997-98, then rose again to 54% in 1998, and fell again in 1999 to 45% and in 2001 to 44%. Among the mostly stable gun attitudes and behaviors, this has been among the more variable of items. The public's assessment on when gun carrying promotes safety changes notably when told that shall-issue, conceal-carry laws would increase the number of guns being carried in public. Under this scenario, 64% believe it would be less safe, 25.5% neither safer nor less safe, 9% safer, and 1% uncertain.^a

Looking at these at-home and gun-carrying safety items jointly shows that 26% feel that both a gun in the home and a law allowing more guns on the streets improves safety.^b 25% take the opposite position that guns in both cases decrease safety. 13% hold the intermediate positions that a gun in the home increases safety while allowing more carrying of guns decreases safety and another 11% think homes with guns are less safe, but feel that allowing more concealed carrying would make things safer. Finally, some are unsure about the safety impact of one or both situations (21%) or think that both have no impact on safety (3%). However, when safety at home and safety with more gun carrying in the community are compared, only 7.5% consider that both situations increase safety, 36% feel that both make things less safe, 19.5% that it is safer at home, but less safe on the streets, 1% that it would be less safe in the home, but safer

^a For more on the safety issue regarding gun carrying see the section on Concealed-Carry Laws and Practices above.

^b These items are not parallel in that the one asks about whether guns in a house makes things safer and the other asks whether laws permitting concealed carrying makes things safer. A more parallel comparison would ask about safety from concealed guns being carried around.

outside it, 6.5% that there would be no net change in either situation, and 29.5% were unsure about one or both situations.^a

GUN-CARRY BEHAVIORS AND CHARACTERISTICS

In the section on Gun Carrying above, the prevalence of gun carrying and the profile of gun carriers compared to non-carriers was discussed. In this section the gun-carry behaviors of gun carriers are considered. As Table 14 indicates, during the last year 70% carried a handgun for target practice, 47% for hunting, 42% for protection, 11% for work, and 7% for other reasons. On average gun carrier mentioned 1.8 reasons. Most carrying was fairly infrequent with 56% carrying a handgun only several times a year or less and just 15% several times a week or more. However, on average this still translates into carrying a handgun on 44 days per year. 52% carried a handgun in their car or truck.^b 70% had a handgun in their car or truck only several times a year or less and just 14% several times a week or more. Both when carrying in general and when a handgun was transported in a car about two-fifths usually kept it loaded.

Most people usually had their weapon concealed either on their person (23%) or in a handbag, briefcase, or other satchel (33%). 24% carried it visibly and 14% in some other manner. Of those mentioning other means of carrying the handgun 31% said it depended on the circumstances and/or did not indicate just how it was carried, 23% said only in their car/truck, 12% mentioned miscellaneous other ways (e.g. in a gun case, in ones hand, stuck in ones belt), and 34% said they did not actually carry a gun. A few of these indicated that they had not carried a gun (thereby contradicting their prior reports), but most explained that either someone else actually transported the gun for them (e.g. a husband or boyfriend carrying the gun to the firing range for the respondent) or that the gun was someone else's and they had merely used the gun at a location away from their home (e.g. at a firing range or out hunting).

Carriers were asked if they had taken a handgun to a store or supermarket, restaurant, movie, bar, sporting event, or to some other place. On average people mentioned only 0.7 of these places. Of the five specifically named places having a handgun at a sporting event was most common (9%). This was probably because shooting competitions and possibly even some hunting events were included. This was followed by carrying to stores (9%), restaurants (7%), bars (4%), and movies (3.5%). Among the volunteered other events were firing ranges (13%), camping or in the woods (6%), hunting (5%), trips/vacations (3.5%), work (3%), police/military (2%), car/truck (1%), and miscellaneous (9.5%).^c

Most gun carriers indicate that they feel safer carrying a handgun (59%), but 26.5% do not feel safer or less safe, 10% feel less safe, and 4% are unsure. Very few (3%) report having drawn or displayed their weapon during the past year because of a perceived threat.

Only a third of gun carriers have a permit to carry a handgun and just 67% of them or 22% of all gun carriers and 5% of all adults have a permit that allows concealed carrying. Since most gun carriers indicated that they usually carry their weapon concealed (57% concealed, 25% openly, 18% not clearly

^a On the impact of general gun control and concealed carry laws on crime and suicide see McDowall, Loftin, and Wiersema, 1995; Leenaars and Lester, 1996; Lott and Mustard, 1997; Webster, et al., 1997; Kwon, et al., 1997 and 1998; Kovandzic 1998a and 1998b; and Lott, 1998.

^b The item asked "In the past 12 months have you carried a handgun in your car or truck?" It is likely that many people who rode in a motor vehicle while carrying the gun on their person did not say "yes" to this item.

^c Totals 44% because of multiple mentions. Miscellaneous places include: everywhere, the neighborhood, dangerous neighborhoods, hospitals and doctors offices, schools, courthouses, and friend's homes. Reports of carrying to all of the volunteered places undoubtedly undercount the true levels because people were not explicitly asked about these venues.

indicated), this means that only 31% of concealed-gun carriers had a permit to carry concealed weapons. Among those who have a permit to carry a handgun, 73% report no change in the frequency of gun carrying after they obtained the permit, 14% an increase, 9% a decrease, and 4% were unsure. On those who do not have a concealed-carry permit, 7% had applied for a permit. Of these applicants 40% had gotten the permit (but no longer had it), 44% had not been granted a concealed-carry permit, and 16.5% did not indicate the outcome of their application.^a

Permits are more likely to be held by those who carry a handgun for protection rather than other carriers (63% vs. 29%, prob.=.000); by frequent carriers (almost daily - 80%, monthly to several times a week - 44%, several times a year - 28%, and only once - 20%, prob.=.000); and by those who carried a handgun to several different places (0 - 27%, 1 - 31%, 2+ - 73%, prob.=.000).

Looking at the socio-demographic profile of those doing various gun-carrying behaviors indicates that men are more likely than women to carry a handgun for work, several times a week or more often, and loaded (Table 15). Men also mention more reasons for carrying handguns (Table 16). However, women are more likely than men to carry the handgun concealed and to have both a permit and a concealed-carry permit. More men also report feeling safer carrying a handgun than women do.

Southern carriers are the most likely to carry a handgun for protection, several times a week+ (tied with Northeasterners), loaded, and in their car/truck. Northeasterners are the most likely to carry several times a week+ (tied with Southerners), concealed, and to have both types of permits. Southerners are the most likely to feel safer carrying a handgun.

Given the strong differences in gun owning and other gun behaviors by place of residence, it is surprising that the characteristics of carriers varies little by locality. In addition, several of the differences that do appear are unanticipated. Those in large cities are most likely to carry several times a week and concealed, but rural residents are the most likely to have loaded handguns.

Gun carrying behaviors vary in several complex ways by marital status. Unexpectedly the widowed appear to stand out being the most likely to carry for protection, several times a week, loaded, and to have both types of permits.

Education does not differentiate much, but the better educated carry handguns to more places and for more reasons.

Most gun behaviors increase with income with those earning \$60,000+ being engaged in more active handgun use on most categories.

The middle-aged (40-49 or 50-64) lead in most carrying behaviors with use, permits, and other behaviors generally lower among the young and old. An exception is that the old are the most likely to carry their handguns loaded.

Gun-carrying behaviors vary little by the presence of children in the household, political ideology, and race.

Among gun carriers, carrying behaviors vary little by concern about police response or use of alcohol. Those who have been arrested and those cited for traffic violations are much less likely than others to have both general- and concealed-carry permits, are somewhat more likely to carry their weapons concealed and are more likely to say they carry a handgun because of a threat from a specific person. In particular, 9.5% of arrestees carrying a handgun for protection said this was in response to threats from a specific individual vs. 2% of those never arrested. Past victims of crimes are more likely to carry for

^a These numbers are based on only 41 cases.

protection, to carry their weapon loaded, and to carry more often (but for carrying in cars the difference is not statistically significant). Those who consider future victimization as more likely are not more likely to carry for protection or to carry in a car. But if they carry for protection, it is more likely because of a threat from a specific person and if they carry in a car, they do so more frequently and are more likely to have the handgun loaded. Those worried about victimization are also somewhat less likely to have either type of carrying permits.

Another way that these covariates of gun carrying can be utilized is to look at how many gun carriers have characteristics that might raise concerns about their possession of weapons. This indicates that 21% of gun carriers sometimes drink more than they should, 13% have been arrested by the police for a non-traffic offence, and 49% have been charged with a moving, motor-vehicle infraction. Combined together 61% of gun carriers drink too much, have been arrested, and/or have been charged with a moving violation and 30% drink too much and/or have been arrested.

Many of the specific characteristics of gun carry depend in large measure on reasons for carrying. The frequency of gun carrying depends on large part of the reason for which handguns are carried. Those who carry a handgun for work are the most frequent with 53% carrying several times a week. This is followed by those concerned about personal protection with 30% carrying several times a week. Hunters and target shooters are less likely with respectively 16% and 19% carrying several times a week and 57% and 56% carrying just several times a year or less often.

In particular, those who carry a handgun for protection show quite different gun behaviors than other carriers. 30% of protection carriers do so at least several times a week compared to only 5% of non-protection carriers. 68% usually have the handgun loaded (vs. 20% of non-protection), 75% carry in a car (vs. 35%), 65% carried the handgun loaded when in the cars (vs. 16%), 20% carried in a store and 16% in a restaurant (vs. less than 1%), 50% had a permit to carry (vs. 21%), and 41% a concealed-carry permit (vs. 10%). 78% of protection carriers thought that carrying a handgun increased safety (15% neither more or less safe and 6% less safe), while only 46% of non-protection carriers felt safer (35% neither safer nor less safe and 13% less safe). Essentially all displays of handguns in situations in which a threat was perceived came from those carrying for protection (6%) rather than others (0.1%).

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Public opinion endorses a wide range of policies designed to regulate firearms, promote gun safety, and keep guns out of the hands of criminals. First, regarding the general regulation of firearms, majorities or pluralities back all measures except those that call for the outright outlawing of handguns. Second, consensus prevail that those convicted of various misdemeanors should be prohibited from purchasing guns, that the illegal use of guns should be severely punished, and that both existing and new gun laws should be strictly enforced.

Attitudes towards concealed carrying are particularly complex. Large majorities want those who have violated gun-carrying laws or otherwise misused guns to be prohibited from buying guns and a small majority backs restricting concealed-carry permits to those with special needs and not allowing general access even by those passing criminal, background checks and a gun-safety course. Support for restricting permits goes up more than down if counter-arguments are offered. The public is evenly divided on whether general-access, concealed-carry laws increase or decrease safety, but a strong majority believes safety would be reduced if gun carrying actually increased. People are also strongly in favor of business owners prohibiting gun carrying in their establishments and prefer going to businesses that bar customers from carrying guns.

Attitudes towards gun control are reasonably stable. In part, this is because gun control is a long-debated, political perennial. Also, the stability comes about because views on guns are often deeply rooted, originating from childhood exposure to firearms and community ties to the gun culture. Even the Littleton shootings and other multi-murders have not change attitudes towards guns and gun control, although they did greatly heighten the salience of crime in general and gun violence in particular (Smith, 2000). When counter-arguments are brought up against pro- and anti-regulation positions, those supporting gun control are firmer in their opinions than the opponents of gun control are.

Gun owners and gun carriers are much less supportive of measures to regulate guns and bar criminals from buying guns than non-gun owners/carriers are, but majorities of both owners and carriers still back most of the proposals to regulate firearms.

People are very divided on the advantages and disadvantages of having guns and whether guns enhance or undermine personal safety.

First, people evenly split on whether guns in the home reduce or increase safety (43% safer vs. 40% less safe). Second, the public is also closely divided on whether more permissive, concealed-carry laws enhance safety (44%) or compromise it (44%). Concerns about safety from general-access, concealed-carry laws increase notably when people think that the level of concealed carrying will be higher.

The theft of guns is a major source of weapons for criminals. One of eight of those currently personally owning a gun have had a gun stolen from them as have 4% of those not currently having any guns in their household. Gun thefts appear to occur as often in large cities as in rural locales even though many more households in the countryside have firearms.

Gun ownership is continuing to decline slowly, but gun carrying is more widespread than previously thought with over a fifth of adults carrying a gun away from home in the last year. On average gun carriers had a weapon with them over 40 days per annum. The frequency and characteristics of the gun carrying vary greatly by the reasons for carrying a gun from very frequent work-related carrying to rather infrequent carrying for hunting and/or target practice. Carrying for protection is intermediate in frequency and distinctive because the weapon is more often concealed, in a car, loaded, taken into stores, and covered by a permit. However, only two-fifths of those carrying a handgun for protection actually had a permit allowing the carrying of a concealed weapon.

Gun carriers generally have the same socio-demographic profile as gun owners. Gun carrying is higher among those who have been or are worried about being victims of a crime. Many gun carriers have had brushes with the law (13% arrested), problems with alcohol (21% saying they sometimes drink too much), or at least one of these characteristics (30%).

Americans favor measures to regulate firearms short of prohibiting guns in general. First, just like automobiles are registered, drivers are licensed, and car sales are recorded and documented, people, including most gun owners, believe there should be a set of common-sense regulations to control firearms. Second, while support for the regulation of firearms is greatest among those who do not own nor carry guns, gun owners and carriers still back many additional, gun-control proposals. Third, the public is divided on whether guns increase or decrease safety, but most people think safety is impaired if there are more guns on the streets and oppose guns being carried in stores, restaurants, and other public places.

Gun owning and gun carrying are both widespread with over a third of adults having a gun in their household, a quarter personally owning a gun, and a fifth carrying weapons with them away from home. Target practice is the most common reason for carrying a handgun followed by hunting, protection, work, and other reasons. Most handgun carriers do not have permits for concealed carrying even though their handguns are usually carried concealed and often loaded. Almost a third of gun carriers have either an arrest record or drink more than they should.

Table 1. Support for General Gun-Control and Gun-Safety Measures^a

Gun buyers must take gun-safety courses	87.9
Police permit needed before gun may be purchased (GSS2000)	79.0
Require background check for private sales	77.5
Mandatory registration of handguns	76.9
Keep guns from criminals, even if harder for law-abiding	76.7
Require that all new handguns be personalized	73.6
Mandatory background check and 5-day waiting period	73.0
Regular re-registering of handguns	69.8
Limit one handgun per month per buyer	69.1
Handgun owners must at least be licensed and trained	62.7 ^b
Concealed carrying only for those with special needs	51.8
Handguns for law enforcement only	49.1
General concealed-carrying laws make it less safe	43.5
Total ban on handguns	11.0 ^b

Source: NGPS-2001; GSS-2000

^a Results are from the latest, 2001, survey except as marked otherwise.

^b 11.0% wanted a “total ban of handgun ownership” and 51.7% said that “handguns owners should be licensed by the government and complete mandatory training.” 62.7% favored licensing or a more stringent measure.

QUESTION WORDINGS:

Do you think that mandatory gun-safety training should or should not be required for anyone to buy a gun?

Would you favor or oppose a law which would require a person to obtain a police permit before he or she could buy a gun? (GSS-2000)

In most states, a gun owner may legally sell his or her gun without proof that the buyer has passed a criminal history check. How strongly do you favor or oppose a law that required private gun sales be subject to the same background check requirements as sales by licensed dealers?

Do you favor or oppose the mandatory registration of handguns and pistols?

For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree? The government should do everything it can to keep handguns out of the hands of criminals, even if it means that it will be harder for law-abiding citizens to purchase handguns.

Engineers are now designing handguns equipped with devices which can recognize the owner of a gun and not fire for anyone else. If a new law were to require all new handguns to be personalized, how strongly would you favor or oppose it. Please tell me if you would strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose it?

Which of the following would you most favor to regulate the sale of handguns:

- Check on a buyer's criminal record and have a five-day waiting period for buying a handgun.
- Check on a buyer's criminal record instantly and drop the five-day waiting period for buying a handgun.
- Neither check on a buyer's criminal record nor have a five-day waiting period for buying a handgun.

Do you favor or oppose requiring gun owners to re-register their handguns and pistols at regular intervals to establish that they still own them?

Some states have passed laws limiting handgun sales to one per month per customer. Some people favor these laws as a way to prevent people from buying large quantities of handguns and selling them to criminals or teenagers. Other people oppose these laws because they say the law interferes with the right of law-abiding citizens to buy guns. Do you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose a law that prohibits citizens from buying more than one handgun per month?

Which of these views comes closer to your own? Legal restrictions on the sale and ownership of handguns are too strict and should be relaxed/Existing restrictions on the sale and ownership of handguns are sufficient now/Handgun owners should be licensed by the government and complete mandatory training/There should be a total ban on handgun ownership.

Most states require a special license to allow people to carry a concealed firearm. Should licenses to carry concealed firearms be issued to any adult who has passed a criminal background check and a gun safety course or only to people with a special need to carry a concealed gun such as private detectives?

Which of these views comes closer to your own? Legal restrictions on the sale and ownership of handguns are too strict and should be relaxed/Existing restrictions on the sale and ownership of handguns are sufficient now/No new handguns should be manufactured or imported, but current legal owners could keep their handguns/ Handgun possession should be allowed only by law enforcement personnel, but law-abiding citizens should still be allowed to purchase and possess shotguns and rifles.

Do laws allowing any adult to carry a concealed gun in public, provided they pass a criminal background check and a gun safety course, make you feel more or less safe?

Table 2. Attitudes to Denying Guns to Criminals

	% for Prohibiting Gun Purchases to Criminals
Convicted of...	
Publicly displaying a firearm in a threatening manner	94.7
Carrying a concealed weapon without a permit	83.7
Assault and battery that does not involve a lethal weapon or serious injury	82.9
Driving under the influence of alcohol	68.5

Source: NGPS-2001

QUESTION WORDING:

Now I would like to read you a list of crimes. In most states persons who have been convicted of these crimes can legally purchase firearms. In each case, tell me if you think persons who have been convicted of the crime should or should not be able to purchase firearms.

Table 3. Attitudes Towards Enforcing Gun-Control Laws

Penalties for Illegal Gun Sells	
Tougher than for Illegal Drug Sells	54.6%
Same	38.5
Less Tough than for Illegal Drug Sells	4.6
DK/Missing	2.3
Most Effective in Reducing Gun Violence	
Passing Stricter Gun-control Laws	8.0%
Stricter Enforcement of Current Laws	33.3
Passing Stricter Gun-Control Laws and strict Enforcement of Current and New Laws	53.9
DK/Missing	4.7

Source: NGPS-2001

QUESTION WORDING:

Should penalties for illegally selling guns be tougher, less tough, or about as tough as penalties for illegally selling drugs?

Which of the following options would be most effective in reducing gun violence:

- Passing new laws with stricter gun control
- Strict enforcement of the current gun laws
- Passing new laws with stricter gun control and strict enforcement of both the current and new laws

Table 4. Trends in Attitudes Towards Guns

	1996	1997/98	1998	1999	2001	Change Last - First
A. Support for Gun-Control Measures						
Police permit before purchase ^b	80.3	—	82.0	—	79.0	-1.3
Mandatory background check and 5-day waiting period	—	—	85.3	80.7	73.0	-12.3**
Mandatory registration of handguns	81.3	81.5	85.3	80.0	76.9	-4.4**
Checks on private sales of guns	77.4	—	79.5	78.6	77.5	+0.1**
Restrictions on sale of ammunition	—	77.5	76.8	73.4	—	-4.1
Keep guns from criminals, even if harder for law-abiding	78.3	70.1	75.3	69.8	76.7	-1.6**
Ban all high-capacity ammunition magazines	—	—	73.2	66.6	—	-6.6**
Handgun owners must at least be licensed and trained	69.8	64.1	69.6	65.7	62.7	-7.1*
Limit one handgun per month per buyer	66.8	—	—	—	69.1	+2.3
Mandatory registration of rifles/shotguns	66.3	62.6	72.3	61.3	—	-5.0**
Concealed carrying only for those with special needs	53.5	57.9	59.8	55.9	51.8	-1.7*
General concealed carrying laws make it less safe	55.7	47.4	53.6	45.2	43.5	-12.2**
Ban possession of handguns, except police/ authorized	35.2	36.1	38.5	—	—	+3.3*
Total ban on handguns	16.1	16.5	15.6	12.8	11.0	-5.1*
B. Support for Gun-Safety Measures and Beliefs						
Require federal handgun safety standards	—	93.6	94.9	94.1	—	+0.5
Gun buyers must take gun-safety course	—	—	90.1	84.7	87.9	-2.2**
Federal handgun safety standards even if more expensive	—	85.7	89.8	86.3	—	+0.6*
Require that all new handguns be childproof	85.8	87.5	87.9	85.6	—	-0.2**
Make owners liable for injuries if gun not stored to prevent misuse by children	—	—	79.6	76.2	—	-3.4**
Guns must be stored in locked box or cabinet	—	—	73.7	74.1	—	+0.4
Guns must be stored unloaded	—	—	78.4	73.9	—	-4.5
Guns must be stored with trigger lock	—	76.8	72.8	—	—	-4.0*
Current gun owners must take gun-safety course	—	—	76.7	68.3	—	-8.4**
Require federal safety regulations for gun design	74.6	67.8	74.9	66.2	—	-8.4**
Requiring that all new handguns be personalized	68.0	71.4	69.8	63.4	—	-4.6**
Requiring that all new handguns be personalized (variant)	—	—	74.5	—	73.6	-0.9
Current gun owners who won't take gun-safety course be required to turn in their guns	—	—	55.1	49.3	—	-5.8*

Table 4. Trends in Attitudes Towards Guns (Continued)

	1996	1997/98	1998	1999	2001	Change Last - First
C. Prohibiting Gun Purchases to Criminals Convicted of...						
Publicly displaying a firearm in a threatening manner	95.4	—	—	—	94.7	- 0.7
Domestic violence	—	89.2	90.1	90.4	—	+ 1.2*
Carrying a concealed weapon without a permit	85.4	82.9	84.3	82.6	83.7	- 1.7
Assault and battery that does not involve a lethal weapon or serious injury	77.9	84.5	80.9	81.8	82.9	+ 5.0**
Driving under the influence of alcohol	63.1	70.6	68.1	66.5	68.5	+ 5.4**
Wait and \$25 fee to pay for background checks	—	—	85.1	78.9	—	- 6.2**
D. Illegal Gun Use						
Double sentence if gun used during crime	—	—	82.8	78.2	—	- 4.6**
Treat illegal gun possession as a serious crime	—	—	84.7	81.6	—	- 3.1**
E. Miscellaneous Beliefs and Issues						
Business should prohibit carrying of concealed weapons on premises	—	—	83.2	75.8	78.7	- 4.5**
More likely to go if prohibited	—	—	—	67.2	66.8	- 0.4
Conceal carry laws mean more handguns will be carried	—	—	35.4	21.5	29.5	- 5.9**
Believes their state allows concealed carry of handguns	—	—	—	45.2	57.0	+ 11.8**
Manufacturers liable for gun misuse	—	—	36.9	39.9	—	+ 3.0**
Congress should hold hearings on gun industry	—	—	75.3	74.5	—	- 0.8
Home less safe with handgun	43.4	45.4	46.4	43.2	40.4	- 3.0**

Source: NGPS-96, NGPS97-98, NGPS-98, NGPS-99, NGPS-00, GSS-1996-2000

QUESTION WORDING: FOR ITEMS NOT GIVEN IN TABLES 1-3 THE WORDINGS ARE LISTED BELOW:

Do you think that the sale of handgun ammunition should be subject to the same restrictions and background checks as the sale of handguns?

In 1994, Congress banned the manufacture and sale of new-high-capacity magazines or clips that hold more than 10 rounds of ammunition. People can still buy similar magazines, however, if they were manufactured before the ban. Would you favor or oppose a law that would ban all high-capacity ammunition magazines?

Do you favor or oppose the mandatory registration of rifles and handguns?

Do you think there should be a law that would ban the possession of handguns except for the police and other authorized persons?

Handguns made in foreign countries and imported into the United States have to meet certain federal government safety and quality standards. Do you think that handguns made in the United States should or should not have to meet the same standards?

If applying these safety and quality standards made the handguns more expensive, would you still support the standards?

Handguns can be made so that they cannot be fired by a young child's small hands. How strongly would you favor or oppose legislation requiring that all new handguns sold in the US be childproof?

Some states have child access prevention laws that subject adults to criminal or civil penalties if they fail to store their firearms to prevent access by children who then use the firearm and death or injury results. Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose a similar national child access prevention law?

Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose government safety regulations for the design of guns?

Do favor or oppose laws requiring

- a. that all guns be stored in a locked box or cabinet?
- b. That all guns be stored unloaded?
- c. that all guns be kept with a trigger lock? A trigger lock is an attachment that prevents a gun from being fired until the device around the trigger is unlocked and removed.

What about people who already own guns. Do you think they should or should not be required to take a gun-safety course?

Engineers are now designing handguns equipped with devices which can recognize the owner of a gun and not fire for anyone else. For example, these personalized guns may have a mechanism that prevents the gun from firing unless it comes in contact with a special ring that the shooter must wear. The technology is intended to protect a gun owner if an attacker tries to take his gun away and to make the gun less useful to criminals if it is stolen. Personalized guns are also designed to reduce the risk of a child or teenager shooting themselves or someone else. But personalized guns will cost more than other guns and the chances that the gun will not fire when you want it to may be increased slightly. If a new law were to require all new handguns to be personalized, how strongly would you favor or oppose it? Would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose?

If a current gun owner won't take a gun-safety course, should they or should they not be required to turn their guns into the police?

Now I would like to read you a list of crimes. In most states persons who have been convicted of these crimes can legally purchase firearms. In each case, tell me if you think persons who have been convicted of the crime should or should not be able to purchase firearms.

a. Domestic violence

You said that you felt that people who were convicted of [CRIMES MENTIONED IN PRECEDING QUESTION] should not be able to purchase a handgun. To allow checks to insure that people who were convicted of these crimes did not buy handguns, would you support or oppose a requirement that all people wanting to buy a handgun had to pay a \$25 fee and wait two weeks while a criminal background check was carried out?

For each of the following statements, please tell me if you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree?

- a.** If a gun is used during a crime, the sentence for the crime should be twice as long.
- b.** The illegal possession of a gun should be treated as a serious crime like a robbery or burglary.

Do you think that public places, such as stores, movie theaters, and restaurants, should allow or prohibit people from carrying concealed weapons on their premises?

Would you be more or less likely to go to those businesses (i.e. movie theaters, stores, restaurants) that prohibited people from carrying concealed weapons on the premises?

Do you think such laws ["allowing any adult to carry a concealed gun in public provided they pass a criminal background check and a gun safety course"] would result in more people having guns with them in public, fewer people having guns with them in public, or would it not change how many people have guns with them in public?

Do you think that your state has or does not have a law that allows all adults who have passed a criminal background check and a gun safety course to get a special license to allow them to carry concealed firearms?

As you may know, currently some states are suing cigarette makers to recover some of the money the states paid for medical care of smokers. If your state or city considers suing gun manufacturers for the medical costs of gun victims and gun injuries, would you strongly favor, favor, oppose, or strongly oppose this action?

All but one of the major American gun manufacturers are private companies that do not file public reports about their gun business. Foreign companies that export guns to America also do not file public reports. In the past several years, Congress has conducted several major hearings to investigate the tobacco industry. But Congress has never held similar hearings on the firearms industry. Should or should not Congress hold hearings to investigate the practices of the gun industry?

Do you think that a gun usually makes a home much safer, safer, less safe, or much less safe?

^aChange across all years asked. % change from first to last year.

^bGSS. Item asked in 1996, 1998, and 2000 GSS. 2000GSS is under 2001 column.

*=overall change in distribution significant at .05-.002

**overall change in distribution significant at .001 or less

Table 5. Levels and Distribution of Gun Ownership

A. Levels	
Have Gun in Household	34.9%
Respondent Owns Gun	24.1
Other Person Owns Gun	11.6
No Gun in Household	64.2 ^a
Have Handgun in Household	21.7
Respondent Owns Handgun	15.4
No Guns in Household	64.3 ^a
Handgun Only	6.0
Longgun Only	13.6
Both Types of Guns	16.1

Source: NGPS-01

^aThese numbers differ slightly because of a few missing cases being excluded from second set of numbers.

Table 5. Levels and Distribution of Gun Ownership (continued)

A. Ownership by Socio-Demographics			
	Gun in Household	Handgun in Household	Personally Owns Gun
Men	41.7	27.9	39.2
Women	28.5**	16.0**	10.2**
Northeast	26.0	11.4	18.9
Midwest	35.0	18.9	21.2
South	44.2	29.5	31.8
West	27.7**	20.9**	18.8**
Rural	65.2	41.8	43.6
Town, Small City	35.3	19.2	27.7
Suburb	29.5	20.8	15.9
Large City	21.7**	13.8**	15.6**
Married	41.9	26.7	27.0
Divorced	29.2	17.0	24.9
Separated	24.6	11.8	18.4
Widowed	28.3	16.1	28.0
Never Married	23.2**	13.8**	15.0**
Less than High School	27.7	12.8	19.2
High School	40.3	25.7	27.9
College	34.9	22.3	24.0
Greater than College	31.7	23.0	21.2
\$0-9,999	16.1	10.2	14.3
\$10,000-19,999	27.1	10.9	20.1
\$20,000-29,999	31.1	17.0	27.0
\$30,000-39,999	35.2	18.5	19.2
\$40,000-49,999	30.4	21.5	23.5
\$50,000-59,999	39.6	27.2	27.8
\$60,000-79,999	49.8	30.0	29.2
\$80,000+	41.3**	31.0**	29.6**
Less than 30	25.8	16.2	13.3
30-39	37.0	21.6	20.6
40-49	41.1	26.4	28.8
50-65	34.2	24.4	29.4
65+	37.2*	19.9**	29.2**
No children in home	34.6	21.1	25.8
1	31.7	21.8	18.5
2	39.6	25.0	23.3
3	35.1	20.0	19.7
4+	35.9**	20.7	30.7**
Liberal	25.9	16.1	18.4
Moderate	35.0	19.7	24.0
Conservative	40.0**	26.6*	26.9*
Whites	37.8	23.3	25.3
Blacks	21.6	15.4	18.3

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 6. The Ownership of Guns

A. Trends in Gun Ownership - Overall			
	% of Adults in Households with Guns	% of Households with Guns	% of Adults Personally Owning Gun
1973	49.1	47.3	----
1974	47.9	46.2	----
1976	49.7	46.7	----
1977	54.0	50.7	----
1980	50.8	47.7	29.0
1982	48.9	45.5	29.1
1984	48.5	45.2	25.5
1985	48.1	44.3	30.7
1987	48.6	46.1	28.2
1988	43.4	40.1	25.2
1989	48.9	46.1	27.4
1990	45.8	42.7	28.7
1991	43.7	39.9	27.6
1993	45.5	42.1	29.4
1994	43.9	40.7	28.5
1996a	43.4	40.2	27.2
1996b	42.3	39.1	30.8
1997	38.6	37.4	28.7
1998a	36.8	34.9	22.5
1998b	37.8	34.5	25.4
1999	39.9	35.8	27.2
2000	34.3	32.5	22.3
2001	34.9	33.1	24.2

Source: NGPS-01

Table 6. The Ownership of Guns (Continued)

B. Trends in Gun Ownership - Type of Firearm		
	% of Adults in Households with Handguns	% of Adults in Households with Longguns
1973	20.3	42.1
1974	20.3	40.4
1976	22.2	41.7
1977	21.3	45.8
1980	24.3	42.8
1982	22.4	41.5
1984	22.4	41.3
1985	24.2	39.5
1987	26.5	41.9
1988	24.4	35.9
1989	26.8	40.0
1990	24.9	37.3
1991	22.1	37.0
1993	26.1	36.7
1994	26.2	35.4
1996a	23.7	34.8
1996b	24.8	36.9
1997	24.0	31.1
1998a	20.7	29.0
1998b	23.1	31.9
1999	22.2	33.5
2000	20.7	27.3
2001	21.7	29.1

Source: GSS=1973-1996a, 1998a, 2000; NGPS-96=1996b; NGPS-97=1997; NGPS-98=1998; NGPS-99=1999; NGPS-01=2001

Table 7. Gun Carrying by Socio-Demographics

	% Carrying Gun					
	All	Work	Prot.	Hunt	Target	Other
Men	32.4	2.8	12.4	17.2	24.7	2.0
Women	11.5**	0.7*	4.9**	3.4**	8.5**	
Northeast	16.4	0.9	5.2	4.2	12.9	1.3
Midwest	17.6	1.3	4.4	8.4	14.6	1.0
South	26.8	2.5	12.8	12.7	17.3	1.7
West	21.9*	1.6	8.8*	12.6*	19.2	1.5
Rural	33.6	1.0	16.9	17.6	25.9	2.1
Town, Sm City	20.8	1.5	4.8	12.1	14.6	0.5
Suburb	18.8	2.3	8.4	7.1	16.9	0.0
Large City	17.7**	1.7	7.9**	5.8**	11.8**	3.5**
Married	21.8	1.4	9.6	11.4	16.6	1.1
Divorced	19.4	3.5	9.7	8.3	13.5	1.7
Separated	11.1	2.1	2.1	2.8	6.3	0.0
Widowed	17.3	0.5	9.9	6.8	9.0	3.1
Never Married	25.4	2.0**	5.6**	9.6**	20.7**	1.7**
LT High School	12.6	0.4	6.1	4.0	7.3	0.0
High School	24.3	1.2	9.7	12.2	17.9	0.9
College	23.4	2.2	8.9	11.1	18.7	2.1
GT College	20.8*	3.4**	7.9**	9.0**	15.6**	2.3**
\$0-9,999	8.6	1.8	1.3	4.8	7.4	0.0
\$10,000-19,999	9.7	0.0	2.6	7.1	6.1	0.3
\$20,000-29,999	17.9	0.5	6.3	8.4	10.0	0.0
\$30,000-39,999	21.6	0.6	10.6	12.7	19.6	2.7
\$40,000-49,999	19.9	3.6	12.1	3.7	14.2	0.3
\$50,000-59,999	28.2	2.3	10.6	12.2	19.1	4.1
\$60,000-79,999	28.3	2.5	11.9	13.9	24.1	0.5
80,000+	28.5**	3.1	11.4*	16.0*	26.9**	2.2*
Less than 30	26.1	2.9	7.1	12.4	22.7	1.8
30-39	21.9	0.5	8.4	10.6	16.1	1.6
40-49	27.6	3.3	14.1	12.0	19.9	1.8
50-65	19.5	1.6	9.7	8.8	15.0	1.0
65+	10.3**	0.0**	3.1**	5.2**	5.9**	0.4**
No children	21.0	1.9	8.6	8.4	14.8	1.0
1	17.7	0.4	5.9	6.8	13.3	1.3
2	23.4	2.5	9.0	15.4	19.6	0.8
3	28.6	0.2	10.3	15.6	23.0	7.3
4+	25.0	0.8*	14.2**	14.3**	21.8*	0.6**
Liberal	17.8	0.8	5.4	5.4	13.1	1.6
Moderate	22.7	1.3	7.6	11.7	15.1	1.2
Conservative	23.3	2.6*	11.3*	11.8*	19.3*	1.6
White	22.0	1.7	8.1	11.2	16.7	1.0
Black	18.7	1.2	10.8	2.2	13.4	5.0*

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 8. Gun Carrying by Non-Demographics

	% Carrying Gun					
	All	Work	Prot.	Hunt	Target	Other
Has Gun	43.7	2.0	18.5	21.6	34.2	2.6
No Gun	8.7**	1.4**	2.3**	3.1**	6.0**	0.9**
Not Victim	20.5	1.2	7.8	9.3	15.4	1.4
Victim	31.9*	7.0**	15.5*	18.2*	24.4*	2.0
Future Victim:						
Very Likely	42.0	3.8	4.8	13.0	25.7	1.7
Somewhat	18.3	1.9	9.1	9.3	14.0	1.1
Not Likely	21.0**	1.6**	8.5**	10.1**	16.3**	1.6**
Police Come Quickly:						
Agree	18.9	1.8	6.7	7.7	14.2	0.9
Neither, DK	9.3	3.2	3.2	0.0	9.3	0.0
Disagree	33.2**	1.4**	18.8**	18.2**	24.9**	3.8**
Drinking:						
Doesn't	17.7	0.7	7.4	9.1	13.8	0.0
Some	22.8	2.0	9.2	9.0	17.7	2.5
Too Much	26.1*	3.1	9.6	14.5	18.2	1.9*
Traffic:						
Charged	23.2	1.5	10.3	10.7	17.3	1.5
Never Charged	20.1	1.9**	6.8**	9.5**	15.4**	1.4**
Arrested	29.1	2.2	12.4	13.0	17.7	1.7
Never Arrested	20.7	1.7**	8.1**	9.8**	16.2**	1.4**

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 9. Having a Gun Stolen by Socio-Demographics

Men	8.7
Women	3.3**
Northeast	2.2
Midwest	4.4
South	10.2
West	3.7**
Rural	7.6
Town, Sm City	5.0
Suburb	5.4
Large City	6.2
Married	6.1
Divorced	7.6
Separated	6.8
Widowed	9.0
Never Married	3.3**
LT High School	3.8
High School	8.5
College	4.9
GT College	6.0**
\$0-9,999	6.8
\$10,000-19,999	6.6
\$20,000-29,999	2.8
\$30,000-39,999	5.5
\$40,000-49,999	10.3
\$50,000-59,999	5.9
\$60,000-79,999	4.2
80,000+	5.8
Less than 30	4.1
30-39	4.7
40-49	6.8
50-65	7.9
65+	6.0**
No children	5.4
1	8.3
2	5.2
3	4.0
4+	13.8
Liberal	4.4
Moderate	5.7
Conservative	7.1
White	5.3
Black	9.2

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 10. Attitudes Towards Guns by Gun Ownership

	Personally Owns Gun	Gun in Household	No Gun in Household	No Gun Minus Per. Gun	Prob. ^a
A. Support for Gun-Control Measures					
Gun buyers must take gun-safety course	78.7	88.4	91.7	13.0	.000
Police permit before purchase ^b	62.5	77.0	85.5	23.0	.000
Checks on private sales of guns	66.6	84.2	80.1	13.5	.000
Mandatory registration of handguns	61.1	82.3	81.4	20.3	.000
Keep guns from criminals, even if harder for law-abiding	61.5	82.0	82.2	20.7	.000
Requiring that all new handguns be personalized	63.9	77.1	76.3	12.4	.001
Mandatory background check and 5-day waiting period	72.4	77.5	72.6	0.2	.001
Regular re-registering of handguns	42.0	75.5	79.7	37.7	.000
Limit one handgun per month per buyer	59.1	71.8	72.3	13.2	.000
Handgun owners must at least be licensed and trained	38.6	59.4	72.4	33.8	.000
Concealed carrying only for those with special needs	37.2	38.8	60.2	23.0	.000
Handguns for law enforcement only	33.9	50.9	54.9	21.0	.000
General concealed carrying laws make it less safe	27.3	36.1	51.3	24.0	.000
Total ban on handguns	2.8	3.6	15.8	13.0	.000
B. Prohibiting Gun Purchases to Criminals Convicted of...					
Brandishing firearm	92.1	96.9	95.5	3.4	.624
Carrying a concealed weapon without a permit	73.5	84.4	88.1	14.6	.000
Assault and battery that does not involve a lethal weapon or serious injury	67.9	83.7	88.4	20.5	.000
Driving under the influence of alcohol	54.1	69.8	73.7	19.6	.000
C. Penalties and Enforcement					
Illegal gun sales punished more than illegal drug sales	46.8	58.3	56.8	10.0	.098
Pass and enforce gun laws	31.9	45.7	64.6	32.7	.000
D. Miscellaneous Beliefs and Issues					
Business should prohibit carrying of concealed weapons on premises	65.9	80.8	83.1	17.2	.000
More likely to go to places that prohibited concealed weapons	52.7	66.0	72.5	19.8	.000
Oppose people having guns in restaurants	66.1	81.9	85.4	19.3	.000
Oppose people having guns at colleges	83.8	95.1	93.5	9.7	.000
Oppose people having guns at bars	86.9	93.7	93.5	6.6	.020
Less safe if more gun carrying in community	45.2	58.6	72.5	27.3	.000
Home less safe with handgun	13.7	16.0	55.3	41.6	.000

Source: NGPS-96, NGPS97-98, NGPS-98, NGPS-99, NGPS-01, GSS-1994-00

Question Wording: See Tables 1-4

^aProbability levels are based on the entire distributions, not just the proportions displayed above.

Table 11. Attitudes Towards Guns by Gun Carrying

A. Support for Gun-Control Measures				
	Gun Carrier	Not Carry Gun	Not Minus Carrier	Prob.^a
Gun buyers must take gun-safety course	80.5	90.0	9.5	.000
Checks on private sales of guns	65.1	80.8	15.7	.000
Mandatory registration of handguns	62.2	80.9	18.7	.000
Keep guns from criminals, even if harder for law-abiding	58.9	81.7	22.8	.000
Requiring that all new handguns be personalized	65.0	76.1	11.1	.030
Mandatory background check and 5-day waiting period	69.5	74.0	4.5	.005
Regular re-registering of handguns	48.8	75.6	26.8	.000
Limit one handgun per month per buyer	56.6	72.5	15.9	.000
Handgun owners must at least be licensed and trained	37.8	70.1	32.3	.000
Concealed carrying only for those with special needs	26.0	59.0	33.0	.000
Handguns for law enforcement only	25.6	55.2	29.6	.000
General concealed carrying laws make it less safe	24.1	48.8	24.7	.000
Total ban on handguns	6.6	12.4	5.8	.000
B. Prohibiting Gun Purchases to Criminals Convicted of...				
Brandishing firearm	90.6	95.8	5.2	.001
Carrying a concealed weapon without a permit	67.1	88.3	21.2	.000
Assault and battery that does not involve a lethal weapon or serious injury	63.9	88.2	24.3	.000
Driving under the influence of alcohol	54.0	72.5	18.5	.000
Illegal gun sales punished more than illegal drug sales	50.4	55.8	5.4	.057
Pass and enforce gun laws	32.1	59.9	27.8	.000
D. Miscellaneous Beliefs and Issues				
Business should prohibit carrying of concealed weapons on premises	63.2	82.9	19.7	.000
More likely to go to places that prohibited concealed weapons	47.3	72.2	24.9	.000
Oppose people having guns in restaurants	60.2	85.2	25.0	.000
Oppose people having guns at colleges	83.4	93.7	10.3	.000
Oppose people having guns at bars	85.8	93.4	7.6	.000
Less safe if more gun carrying in community	32.1	72.5	40.4	.000
Home less safe with handgun	13.7	47.8	34.1	.000

Source: NGPS-96, NGPS97-98, NGPS-98, NGPS-99, NGPS-01, GSS-1994-00

Question Wording: See Tables 1-4

^aProbability levels are based on the entire distributions, not just the proportions displayed above.

Table 12. Attitudes towards Guns by Socio-Demographics

	General Firearm Regulation	Barring Guns to Criminals
Men	6.8	3.0
Women	8.3**	3.6**
Northeast	7.9	3.4
Midwest	7.7	3.3
South	7.3	3.2
West	7.6	3.3
Rural	6.8	3.1
Town, Sm City	7.6	3.3
Suburb	7.8	3.3
Large City	7.9**	3.3*
Married	7.5	3.3
Divorced	8.0	3.3
Separated	8.1	3.4
Widowed	7.3	3.4
Never Married	7.6	3.1
LT High School	7.5	3.4
High School	7.3	3.3
College	7.8	3.3
GT College	7.8	3.2
\$0-9,999	7.1	3.4
\$10,000-19,999	7.6	3.5
\$20,000-29,999	7.9	3.4
\$30,000-39,999	8.0	3.4
\$40,000-49,999	7.7	3.1
\$50,000-59,999	7.8	3.2
\$60,000-79,999	7.4	3.3
80,000+	7.7	3.1*
Less than 30	7.8	3.2
30-39	7.8	3.2
40-49	7.4	3.2
50-65	7.4	3.4
65+	7.4	3.5*
No children	7.4	3.2
1	8.2	3.4
2	7.8	3.3
3	7.8	3.3
4+	6.9*	3.3
Liberal	8.0	3.3
Moderate	7.7	3.2
Conservative	7.4*	3.4
White	7.6	3.3
Black	7.6	3.2

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 13. Crime Prevention Measures

	% Doing
Locked your doors	94.1
Acted more aware or cautious	62.5
Kept a dog	33.7
Stayed in at night	33.4
Kept a gun in the house	29.7
Used a home burglary system or security system	20.5
Joined or participated in a neighborhood watch program	18.6
Obtained self-defense training or education	17.0
Carried mace or some self-protection chemical	13.9
Carried a gun away from home	8.9

Source: NGPS-01

Question Wording: Which of the following precautions have you taken during the last 12 months, from MONTH, 2000 to now, to protect yourself from crime. Have you...

Table 14. Gun Carrying Behaviors of Gun Carriers

Carried Gun for		
Target Practice	70.1%	
Hunting	46.7%	
Protection	41.6%	
Work	10.7%	
Frequency of Gun Carrying		
	In General	In Car
Daily	10.2%	10.4%
Several Times a Week	5.1	3.3
Weekly	3.0	2.1
Several Times a Month	5.7	5.0
Monthly	9.0	5.8
Several Times a Year	30.2	16.3
Once a Year	26.1	8.4
Never	0.0	46.3
Don't Know	6.0	0.4
Missing	4.7	2.1
Gun Carried in Car		
	51.6%	
	In General	When in Car
Usually Gun Was Loaded	40.0%	45.3%
How Carried Gun		
Visibly	23.9%	
Concealed on Person	23.1	
In Bag/Briefcase	33.3	
Other	14.1	
Don't Know	2.0	
Missing	3.5	
Places Where Gun Was Carried		
Sporting Event	9.3%	
Store	8.8	
Restaurant	7.2	
Bar	4.4	
Movie	3.5	
Other	37.1	
Firing Range	13.2	
Camping, In Woods	6.3	
Hunting	5.4	
Trips, Vacations	3.5	
Work	2.8	
Police/Military	1.9	
Car/Truck	1.4	
Miscellaneous	9.5	
Ever Displayed Gun in Response to threat		
	2.8%	
Gun Carrying Makes Person Feel		
Safer	59.4%	
Same	26.5	
Less Safe	9.8	
DK/Missing	4.3	

Table 14. Gun Carrying Behaviors of Gun Carriers (Continued)

Permit to Carry Gun	
Has	33.3%
Has Not	62.2
Not Required	3.5
DK/Missing	1.0
Permit to Carry Concealed Gun	
Has	23.1%
Has Not, Other Permit	8.0
Has Not, No Permit	65.7
DK/Missing	3.2

Source: NGPS-01

Question Wordings:

How often did you carry a handgun during the last 12 months: almost every day, several times a week, about once a week, several times a month, about once a month, several times a year, or only once?

Do you usually carry the handgun loaded?

In the past 12 months have you carried a handgun in your car or truck?

How often did you carry a handgun in your car or truck during the last 12 months: almost every day, several times a week, about once a week, several times a month, about once a month, several times a year, or only once?

When you carry a handgun in your car, do you keep it loaded?

Earlier you told us that you carried a handgun for protection. Was that usually because of a threat from a particular person or just as a general precaution?

During the past 12 months, did you ever draw or display the concealed gun you were carrying/the gun you were carrying even if you did not fire it because you thought you or others were being threatened?

When you carry your handgun on your person how do you usually carry it: visibly on your person, concealed on your person, or concealed in a brief case, purse or other carrying bag?

I'm going to read you a list of places. For each place, please tell me whether or not you carried a handgun there during the past 12 months. a) retail store or supermarket, b) restaurant, c) movie theater, d) sporting event, e) bar, club, f) other.

Do you feel more safe or less safe carrying a handgun?

Do you have a permit to carry a handgun?

Does the permit allow you to carry a concealed handgun?

Since you obtained the permit, has your frequency of gun carrying increased, decreased, or stayed the same?

Have you ever applied for a permit to carry a concealed handgun?

When you applied for a permit to carry a concealed handgun, did you receive it or not?

Table 15. Gun Carrying Behavior by Socio-Demographics

A. Support for Gun-Control Measures										
	Carry for Work	Carry for Protection	Several Times a Week+	Usually Unloaded ^a	Carry in Car	Carried Concealed	Displayed Gun	Felt Safer	Has Permit	Concealed Permit
Men	13.2	42.7	16.8	43.5	53.0	54.2	3.5	63.0	29.4	21.5
Women	4.8*	39.0	11.8*	31.5*	48.2	61.5**	1.1	50.9**	42.6*	26.8**
Northeast	11.5	38.0	20.2	40.4	42.7	62.5	4.5	46.6	43.2	36.4
Midwest	7.0	24.0	9.2	26.9	46.7	54.1	1.2	55.7	30.3	9.5
South	12.6	49.3	19.7	49.0	56.0	61.3	3.5	67.0	35.0	27.7
West	9.5	43.7*	9.0*	33.7**	53.3*	45.6**	1.4*	57.4**	26.0*	16.4**
Rural	5.7	45.6	14.8	47.2	61.7	56.8	1.4	62.4	34.9	24.8
Town	9.4	33.6	12.6	32.7	47.2	48.5	2.2	54.4	33.8	21.7
Suburb	17.3	48.1	12.7	40.1	52.1	55.2	4.4	67.1	33.6	23.7
Large City	13.8	42.8	20.8*	41.1*	46.1	67.1**	4.2	57.0	29.9	22.0*
Married	11.2	42.7	15.5	42.7	56.1	56.1	2.7	55.6	34.1	24.6
Divorced	15.9	56.7	15.7	30.8	54.2	50.0	1.9	59.3	40.3	23.2
Separated	9.4	40.6	19.6	41.9	42.6	60.3	0.7	75.3	30.5	27.4
Widowed	3.2	67.7	22.1	53.4	43.2	56.1	2.1	54.9	53.9	35.0
Nev. Marrd.	8.8**	25.6**	12.1*	33.1	40.8	60.0**	3.8	69.1	23.3**	15.9**
LT High School	7.5	44.2	9.5	40.9	38.0	58.0	0.0	58.5	32.7	15.5
High Sch.	10.0	37.4	13.9	37.7	52.2	55.0	2.0	56.3	27.3	20.2
College	11.5	43.7	18.1	41.4	54.9	56.6	4.2	62.5	38.3	28.4
GT Col.	14.7	40.4	15.6**	40.0**	54.1	57.5**	2.7	55.0	29.1	18.0
\$0-9,999	16.0	33.9	11.5	63.9	11.5	52.6	0.0	57.2	31.6	7.3
\$10-19,999	19.1	39.1	19.0	28.3	30.0	43.9	5.1	50.0	24.3	12.2
\$20-29,999	7.8	39.2	9.2	27.3	45.2	40.3	0.0	57.5	21.4	12.3
\$30-39,999	7.8	32.2	13.1	35.1	55.6	59.8	3.1	63.5	34.8	29.2
\$40-49,999	16.8	54.7	17.2	52.5	61.2	64.4	2.5	61.4	30.9	23.4
\$50-59,999	5.8	37.1	8.3	37.9	55.0	61.9	0.0	57.8	29.0	23.4
\$60-79,999	12.4	42.2	21.1	43.7	65.2	67.0	2.0	58.3	44.2	31.7
\$80,000+	13.1	47.0**	15.0**	40.8**	61.0**	57.6**	5.6*	70.3	40.0*	28.8**
LT 30	11.3	24.7	13.3	28.7	42.5	51.3	3.3	56.0	20.5	13.9
30-39	7.8	42.7	14.3	36.8	53.7	56.7	4.1	57.9	40.9	28.0
40-49	10.8	46.7	21.7	45.8	60.6	60.6	3.5	60.5	37.6	30.3
50-65	17.7	53.8	11.0	44.0	56.0	53.6	0.9	69.3	30.6	19.6
65+	2.0**	48.6**	10.2*	62.7**	37.5**	67.4	0.0	52.2	43.8*	23.0**

Table 15. Gun Carrying Behavior by Socio-Demographics (Continued)

	Carry for Work	Carry for Protection	Several Times a Week+	Usually Unloaded ^a	Carry in Car	Carried Concealed	Displayed Gun	Felt Safer	Has Permit	Concealed Permit
A. Support for Gun-Control Measures										
No child.	10.2	41.1	12.2	43.6	49.5	60.9	1.4	59.3	30.5	20.7
1	12.7	40.2	17.9	37.2	51.0	55.0	1.1	63.5	35.0	26.3
2	17.5	48.1	20.4	42.1	65.2	50.6	10.8	58.2	38.8	25.7
3	0.2	38.7	23.0	29.1	50.5	46.2	0.0	59.7	36.5	27.2
4+	4.8	37.9	8.7*	27.8	43.1	58.7	1.2**	40.8	45.1	26.4
Liberal	9.7	37.0	19.7	37.8	45.6	54.3	6.6	59.4	31.5	22.2
Moderate	12.7	39.5	14.3	40.3	48.1	60.3	0.9	53.5	33.6	20.5
Conservative	9.4	45.6	14.1	40.8*	56.9*	54.6	2.7*	65.2	34.2	25.6
White	9.8	40.2	13.8	39.7	53.0	54.6	2.6	59.1	31.9	22.8
Black	16.3	57.0	26.0	46.5	49.4	60.3	2.8	72.2	36.1	25.7**

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

Table 16. Frequency of Gun Carrying, Number of Reasons for Carrying, and Number of Places Carried Among Gun Carriers Means

	Days per Year	Means	
		Number of Reasons	Number of Places
Men	48.0	1.84	0.74
Women	33.8	1.59*	0.62
Northeast	58.2	1.74	0.86
Midwest	28.0	1.73	0.67
South	55.9	1.74	0.69
West	24.5**	1.85	0.65
Rural	41.5	1.80	0.78
Town, Small City	37.9	1.66	0.61
Suburb	39.4	1.94	0.76
Large City	54.4	1.73	0.71
Married	43.8	1.83	0.71
Divorced	45.6	1.85	0.66
Separated	51.1	1.72	0.93
Widowed	87.0	1.73	0.68
Never Married	32.5*	1.56	0.69
Less than High School	24.4	1.50	0.46
High School	39.7	1.74	0.59
College	51.2	1.87	0.82
Greater than College	43.2	1.73*	0.87*
\$0-9,999	28.5	1.34	0.21
\$10,000-19,999	42.6	1.72	0.44
\$20,000-29,999	28.5	1.38	0.54
\$30,000-39,999	41.2	1.88	0.67
\$40,000-49,999	45.5	1.89	0.68
\$50,000-59,999	28.6	1.74	0.69
\$60,000-79,999	53.2	1.95	0.80
\$80,000+	42.3	2.01**	0.99*
Less than 30	35.0	1.70	0.66
30-39	44.3	1.70	0.78
40-49	54.5	1.83	0.72
50-65	34.5	1.99	0.66
65+	40.4*	1.48*	0.72
No children in home	37.8	1.69	0.74
1	46.9	1.77	0.59
2	52.0	1.93	0.87
3	57.3	1.86	0.38
4+	28.7	1.84	0.70
Liberal	60.2	1.56	0.70
Moderate	39.2	1.79	0.69
Conservative	40.6	1.83*	0.72
Whites	40.6	1.80	0.72
Blacks	64.6	1.62	0.57

Source: NGPS-01

*=overall differences in means significant at .05-.002

**overall differences in means significant at .001 or less

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