

Gun control restricts those least likely to commit violent crimes
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The March 21 murder of four Oakland police officers by Lovelle Mixon, a convicted felon wanted for a recent parole violation, epitomizes the futility of “gun control,” or the banning and restricting of gun ownership for law-abiding adults. Using the officers’ tragic deaths to further an unrelated agenda — stripping away the Second Amendment rights of honorable citizens — is both harmful and distracting.

Mixon was not an anomaly. Felons commit over 90 percent of murders, with the remainder carried out primarily by juveniles and the mentally unbalanced. The United States already has laws forbidding all three groups from owning guns, which, by definition, are ineffective against the lawless. “Gun control,” therefore, only “controls” those who have done nothing to merit such regulations.

Arguments for gun control rest on deceptive claims such as National Coalition to Ban Handguns’ allegation that “most murders are committed by previously law-abiding citizens.” Americans are deluged by literally dozens of supposedly scholarly articles asserting such falsehoods — but with no supporting references. For there are none.

Notably, only 15 percent of all Americans have criminal records, yet more than 90 percent of murder suspects have a history of crime. Their criminal careers average six or more years’ length, including four major adult felonies, in addition to their often extensive juvenile records.

A New York Times study of the 1,662 murders in that city between 2003 and 2005 found that “more than 90 percent of the killers had criminal records.” Baltimore police records show

similar statistics for its murder suspects in 2006. In Milwaukee, police reported that most murder suspects in 2007 had criminal records, while “a quarter of them [killed while] on probation or parole.” The great majority of Illinois murderers from the years 1991-2000 had prior felony records. Eighty percent of Atlanta murder arrestees had previously been arrested at least once for a drug offense; 70 percent had three or more prior drug arrests — in addition to their arrests for other crimes.

In sum, guns or no guns, neither most murderers nor many murderers — nor virtually any murderers — are ordinary, law-abiding, responsible adults. This conclusion is so invariably reached by homicide studies that the 1998 study by David Kennedy and Anthony Braga describes the fact that murderers are almost invariably veteran criminals as a standard “criminological axiom.”

Naïve, well-meaning people often respond to such facts with, “Still, wouldn’t this be a better world without guns?” After many years of studying guns as a highly effective method of self-defense, I reply, no, the world would be immeasurably worse off without the only weaponry that gives the weak a real chance against predators. After all, there was a time, hundreds of years ago, when there were no guns. Without guns for self-defense, survival was measured by the strength of men’s arms, as women, children and the elderly huddled in terror, escaping only by abject submission to their predators. Yes, Mixon used a gun to kill four Oakland police officers. But had he not been shot and killed by another member of the SWAT team, the death toll would have been undoubtedly higher. In the hands of sworn officers and moral citizens, guns are a powerful, swift means of

protection. When the government passes laws that only peaceable people obey, they are simply leaving the same people at the mercy of violent predators.

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