

GUN CONTROL LESSONS FROM MARYLAND

BY FRANCIS M. DUFFY

"TRUTHS" VS. FACTS

**"We choose truth over facts"
(2020 Presidential Candidate, Joe Biden)**

At the Spartan Firearms Training Group, we deliver high quality firearms training and we are certified to offer: concealed carry training for Maryland, and Washington D.C. and Utah wear and carry permits. Almost one-half of our training events are devoted to gun control laws relevant to Maryland, Washington, D.C. and Utah.

The United States has a long history with gun control ranging from inhibiting who has access to firearms (Maryland's Handgun Qualification License), to identifying by name which firearms may be purchased legally (National Firearms Act, Maryland's Handgun Roster—a list of handguns approved for sale

in the state—and Maryland has banned the sale of eighty-one specific long gun models¹), to limiting ammunition purchases (California requires a background check) and magazine capacity (Maryland, New Jersey, New York and Washington, D.C.), to prohibiting the issuance of a wear and carry permit for self-defense (Maryland requires wear and carry applicants to have a "good and substantial reason" to get a permit, and self-defense is not considered good and substantial), and to confiscating legally owned firearms (nineteen states and the District of Columbia have extreme risk protection order laws, otherwise known as "red flag" laws,

that allow officials to confiscate firearms).

Gun control is an emotionally charged topic for some. The politics of gun control finds politicians and gun control groups framing messages intended to influence potential voters who are horrified by "gun-related" deaths. Some people who are opposed to gun ownership allege there is a cause-effect relationship between gun ownership and gun related deaths.

A basic understanding of research affirms that it is very difficult to establish causal (cause and effect) relationships in the social sciences. Nevertheless, anti-gun politicians and gun opposition groups continue to make

19 STATES CURRENTLY HAVE RED FLAG LAWS.



THE DESTRUCTION OF FIREARMS AFTER A BUYBACK PROGRAM.

an unscientific cause and effect relationship the core of their argument to control or ban firearms.

“TRUTHS” VS. FACTS

A colleague tells a story about a conversation he had with the father of one of his friends. He gave the father some data points on firearms deaths to which the father replied: “Using statistics and data in the gun control debate is counterproductive.” In the 2020 Presidential campaign Candidate Biden famously proclaimed “We choose truth over facts” (video can be viewed at <https://youtu.be/15RjcRJ3Z70>). This perspective explains some of the resistance to gun ownership in the United States, and the consequent gun control efforts to restrict gun ownership.

Facts and data about firearms in the United States get in the way of the gun control advocates’ “truths.” Facts are important, because many of the most relevant are being left out of the conversation from anti-gun activists. Some have manipulated the language, (for example, gun deaths versus gun homicide) to inflate the numbers to make the case that firearms must be severely restricted or confiscated. The facts conflict with the anti-gun-

ners’ truth: guns are evil, used by crazy “white supremacists”, and therefore firearms must be severely restricted and even confiscated.

GUN CONFISCATION

Nineteen states and Washington D.C. have enacted some type of Extreme Risk Protection Order (“Red Flag” Law) since 2018. Those states are: California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and Washington. President Biden recently announced he would enact several gun-control executive orders to create nationwide “red flag” legislation for states to adopt. Red flag laws allow police to confiscate firearms based on the “word” of others against a person whom they allege to be at risk for hurting themselves or others. Some have observed that these laws violate Constitutional amendments IV, V, VI and the XIV.

Red flags laws may be well-intentioned, but the implementation of those laws has had deadly consequences. For example, in Maryland in 2018, the police served a red flag order in the early morning hours to a man living in Anne Arundel County. He refused to

surrender his firearms, a struggle ensued, and he was killed by police inside his house².

In Potomac, Maryland, in 2020, a SWAT team arrived to a house at 4:30 a.m. to serve a red flag order. The man who was the target of the order was shot through a window and killed in his bed while sleeping. His girlfriend asleep next to him was wounded³.

Hurricane Katrina had a devastating impact on New Orleans and its suburbs. Several neighborhoods were essentially destroyed. Police officers went house-to-house in the aftermath of that tragedy to confiscate firearms⁴.

MINORITY POPULATIONS

The population demographics of large American cities like Baltimore, Philadelphia and Chicago largely fall into a category termed “minorities.” The dominant minorities in those urban areas tend to be Black and Hispanic.

Those same cities have draconian gun control laws that essentially and effectively prevent the good citizens of those minority populations from getting firearms⁴. Baltimore, Maryland, serves as one example. Maryland created a Handgun Qualification

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF GUN CONTROL ADVOCATES "TRUTHS" VS. GUN OWNERSHIP FACTS

GUN CONTROL ADVOCATES' "TRUTH"	GUN OWNERSHIP FACTS
There is an epidemic of gun violence in the United States.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gun ownership has increased 30% in the last 20 years while violent crime has fallen by 50% (2019, FBI statistics). • One estimate suggests there are at least 393,000,000 firearms in the United States (Global Small Arms Survey https://www.graduateinstitute.ch/communications/news/small-arms-survey). Another estimate suggests there are at least 434,000,000 firearms in the U.S. • Although there are at least 393,000,000 firearms owned in the United States there have been only 39,707 firearms deaths as of 2019 (1% of the total). • Of the 39,707 deaths, 23,941 (60%) were suicides. • 14,414 (37%) were homicides (FastStats - Homicide (cdc.gov)). • 486 (1.2%) were accidental • 520 (1.3%) were by legal intervention (police) • Between 1982 and 2021 there have been 172 mass shootings. 145 committed with a handgun, 57 committed with a rifle, and 30 committed with a shotgun (https://www.statista.com/statistics/476409/mass-shootings-in-the-us-by-weapon-types-used/)
"Weapons of war" should not be in the hands of civilians. The so-called weapon of war is the modern sporting rifle, also known as an AR-15 (and rifles with a similar design). The "AR" is said to mean assault rifle by gun control advocates. However, it actually represents the manufacturer, ArmaLite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some of the gun control advocates actually believe that the "assault rifle" (weapon of war) can shoot rounds rapidly on an automatic setting. All of the AR rifles legally sold in the United States without a special tax stamp from the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives are semi-automatic rifles that can only shoot one round at a time. • The AR-15 is a popular target for gun control advocates because it resembles a "weapon of war that is used to kill a lot of people. FBI 2020 statistics tell a different story. Hand-guns, knives, fists and feet all kill more people than rifles. https://www.statista.com/statistics/195325/murder-victims-in-the-us-by-weapon-used/
We need more "commonsense" firearms laws	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are thousands of gun laws in the United States (federal, state, and local).
We need more background checks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All retail guns sales already require background checks, whether it's at a brick-and-mortar store, at a gun show or purchased online. The buyer's information is submitted to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) at the point of sale.
"The use of guns in self-defense by private citizens is extremely rare." Self-Defense Gun Use Violence Policy Center (vpc.org)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The report "Priorities for Research to Reduce the Threat of Firearm-Related Violence" indicates a range of 60,000 to 2.5 million defensive gun uses each year. https://www.nap.edu/catalog/18319/priorities-for-research-to-reduce-the-threat-of-firearm-related-violence

License (HQL) that is required to purchase a handgun. The HQL law requires four hours of classroom instruction to include taking one live fire shot. In addition to the tuition for the training, applicants must pay a state police application fee and fingerprinting costs. The total cost is about \$230 per applicant. The training venues, for the most part, are not in Baltimore—they are in surrounding counties which often requires transportation.

Additionally, Maryland's concealed carry requirements essentially strip residents of their ability to use a handgun for self-defense outside their homes. To get a concealed carry permit in Maryland the applicant must provide a "good and substantial reason" to carry concealed. If a person doesn't provide an arbitrarily "satisfactory" reason, he or she doesn't get a permit. Self-defense is not considered a good and substantial reason.

Furthermore, Maryland's wear and carry

regulations also require 16 hours of classroom instruction and passing a firearms qualification course of fire. The average cost of that training is \$350 plus the cost of fingerprinting and application fees which bring the total fees to about \$500. People taking the course have to pay the tuition and fees upfront without knowing if the Maryland State Police will approve their application. The tuition and fees are non-refundable if the application is denied.

There are few people who would risk paying \$500 only to find out the Maryland State Police turned down their application. There are also only a couple of shooting ranges in Baltimore, thereby limiting opportunities to practice even if they were able to get a wear and carry permit. Most shooting ranges are in surrounding counties. Getting to those ranges requires the time and expense of transportation. It should be evident that these impediments

function as a nuisance that is not an evenly distributed burden.

In 1966 in Orlando, Florida, hundreds of women began buying handguns to protect themselves after a spree of brutal rapes. Editorials complained about women buying guns for self-protection³. The implication of the editorials was that women were incompetent to handle guns effectively. A publisher even demanded that the chief of police stop the sale of handguns to women. The chief did not comply with the publisher's request and ultimately the number of rapes significantly decreased. Who among us would especially benefit from being able to exercise self-defense with a concealed handgun? Women of all races, of course.

It has been asserted that members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (or questioning) (LGBTQ) population throughout the United States are at risk of



MAKESHIFT MEMORIAL OUTSIDE THE PULSE NIGHTCLUB AFTER THE SHOOTING.

personal attack because of their sexual identity. In 2018, LGBTQ people, and others, socializing at the Pulse Night Club in Orlando, Florida were the victims of a “mass shooting”. Restrictions on purchasing firearms or carrying concealed, put LGBTQ people at risk without the means to defend themselves while waiting for police assistance that came too late for 49 people killed in the terrorist attack.

FORECASTING

Gun control activists action a strategy called incrementalism. They progressively nibble away at our Second Amendment rights over time with this strategy. They also propose draconian gun control measures and continuously advance them wherever they are not

challenged by citizens and stopped by courts. For example, at the beginning of 2021 President Biden promised not only to ban the sale of semi-automatic firearms, but to launch a massive government gun confiscation scheme misidentified as “mandatory buy-backs”. He promised to ban the on-line sale of ammunition; assured gun control advocates that he would set-up state-level gun-owner licensing schemes; and appears to have strived to bankrupt the American gun industry.

Another example of a draconian gun bill is H.R.127—Sabika Sheikh Firearm Licensing and Registration Act submitted by Texas Representative Sheila Jackson Lee⁶. Although this bill has not come to pass it is likely that efforts like this will continue.

The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives; ATF processed 54.7 million firearm documents from Federal Firearms Licensees (FFL) going out-of-business records in fiscal year 2021⁷. Private records for firearms transactions are sent to the ATF storage facility in West Virginia, when a FFL shuts down. Constitutional advocates fear that those documents will be used to create a national database to track American firearms owners in violation of Federal law.⁸

Supporters of the Second Amendment must be aware of efforts to implement unconstitutional gun control bills. The National Rifle Association—Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA) sends legislative updates, by state, to people who sign-up for their service. There are also on-line gun law websites that provide valuable updates on firearms laws (e.g., www.handgunlaw.us).

The “truths” held by gun control advocates are often at odds with facts. Subversive gun control measures harm all Americans. These measures are incrementally expanded anywhere citizens and courts are not vigilant and it is evident that minority populations have

also been a victim of this infringement. The future of gun control in the United States will be determined by your vigilance and by your ability to communicate with and persuade your fellow Americans, of all backgrounds, to be equally vigilant. ✓

BIO

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TACTICS AND PREPAREDNESS

SKILLS AND SURVIVAL FOR ALL SITUATIONS



COMPETE WITH YOUR CARBINE

BY SHANNON SMITH | PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHANNONSMITHSHOOTING.COM

I recently read *Undaunted Courage* (by Steven Ambrose), the account of the Lewis and Clark expedition with the Corps of Discovery.

One of many things I found interesting was that Captain Lewis had rifles commissioned to pick up at Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Upon arrival he was not pleased with the 42-inch barreled rifles. He had apparently requested “short” rifles and he had gunsmiths cut them down to 33 inches. Today, we don’t think of a 33-inch barrel as a short rifle, but as a former infantryman I appreciate his

thought process. We had a saying: “ounces equal pounds and pounds equal pain”. These guys were about to walk across the country - all the way across - (and somehow cross the Rocky Mountains) and he was rightfully concerned with weight.

I’m pretty certain a soldier is a soldier and whether it be Lewis and Clark, Revolutionary War, World War II, Vietnam or GWOT if you get young men together

with rifles there will eventually be a challenge issued and competition will ensue. I know we did in my time: how far can you hit? How tight of a group? How fast can you shoot? How fast can you reload?

Any match I am familiar with that allows carbines also allows rifles, and I don’t know where to draw a line that makes a rifle a carbine anyway, so many skills will apply to both. Our wonderful [continued >](#)