

The Sandy Hook Project

Getting to the truth about gun-related violence in the US

The Effects of Gun Control in Washington, D.C. Revisted

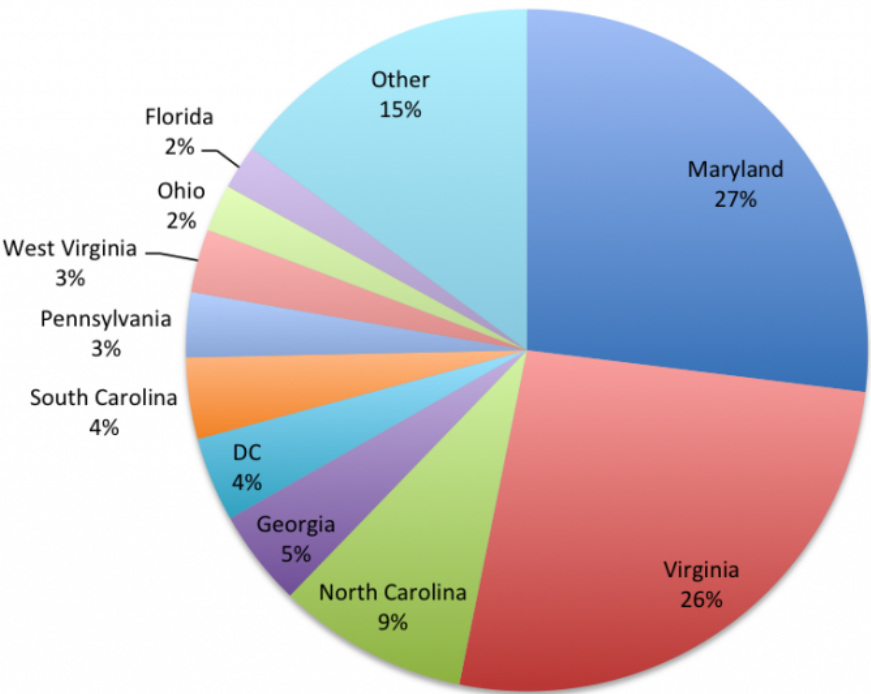
In a previous [post](#) I explored the movement of guns between states and how the accessibility of guns in some states prevented the Brady Act from being effective. In this posting I will discuss how the flow of illegal guns has a similar effect on gun control efforts in the District of Columbia.

The District of Columbia is well known for possessing some of the strictest gun control legislation in the US. In 1976 the District of Columbia passed the [Firearm Control Regulations Act](#), making the purchase of handguns illegal in DC. While this legislation was eventually declared unconstitutional in 2008, it still remains illegal to carry handguns within the District of Columbia.

The Firearm Control Regulations Act was created to combat the extraordinary levels of violent crime experienced in the District of Columbia since the late 1960's. However, [analysis](#) of crime data from 1960-2012 indicates that the ban had no measurable impact on violent crime. Furthermore, for the last five years the number of illegal guns retrieved per resident each year in DC is more than four times greater than the national average. This seems to indicate that the Firearm Control Regulations Act, and subsequent gun control legislation, has had no impact on the availability of guns for criminal purposes.

There is more to this story, however. While the District of Columbia does recover more illegal guns per resident than any state, DC itself is a very small source of illegal firearms. On average less than forty illegal firearms recovered in the US per year were traced to the District of Columbia during the period of 2008 – 2012. This represents only 4% of the firearms recovered in the District of Columbia during that period. An overwhelming majority of firearms recovered in DC come from neighboring states. Guns originating in Virginia, Maryland and North Carolina alone represent between 61-64% of the guns recovered in any given year.

Source of Guns Traced in the District of Columbia (2008 - 2012)



What is interesting to note is that the four states that are the leading sources of illegal guns in DC are also some of the leading sources, per capita, of illegal guns across the U.S. In a ranking of states based on total illegal guns sourced per 100,000 residents, these four states all placed above the seventieth percentile. In contrast, the District of Columbia only placed in the sixth percentile.

State	Avg. No. of Guns Sourced per 100,000 Residents	Percentile Rank
Georgia	90.09	96%
Virginia	78.20	90%
North Carolina	76.25	88%
Maryland	52.94	70%
DC	9.47	6%

It is accurate to conclude that the Firearms Control Regulations Act was ineffective in reducing the number of illegal guns and, subsequently, the level of violent crime in the District of Columbia. But this does not prove that gun control cannot be effective. During the period of 2008 – 2012, the District of Columbia only contributed 0.038% of all of the illegal guns traced by the ATF in the U.S. Maryland contributed nearly six times that amount per capita during this period, and Georgia contributed nearly ten times per capita. What can be concluded is that any efforts to introduce gun control in a single location will be negated by the accessibility of guns in other states, unfettered interstate travel and the laws of supply and demand.

At the heart of this issue is the question of states' rights. Specifically, a state's right to maintain gun policies that effect the entire country. At what point should those rights be superseded by the responsibility to protect the safety of one's neighbors? Is it not irresponsible to ignore the fact that guns originating in one's states are contributing to crimes occurring in other states?

The data for this analysis can be found [here](#).

This entry was posted in Gun legislation and tagged Brady Bill, Gun Control, Gun Legislation, Washington DC on December 9, 2013 [<http://www.TheSandyHookProject.org/the-effects-of-gun-control-in-washington-d-c-revisted/>].
