

**Miscellaneous**

The Division continues to work to ensure that our list of volunteers only contains individuals who are truly willing to be actively engaged in our political and legislative efforts – currently around 1.65 million nationwide.

The Division is continuously updating its email list, which currently totals roughly 2.3 million.

The Division transmitted 50 issues of the Grassroots Alert this reporting period. The Alert is transmitted every Monday to all with email addresses, with thousands more accessing it on ILA’s website.

**RESEARCH & INFORMATION – Josh Savani, Director**

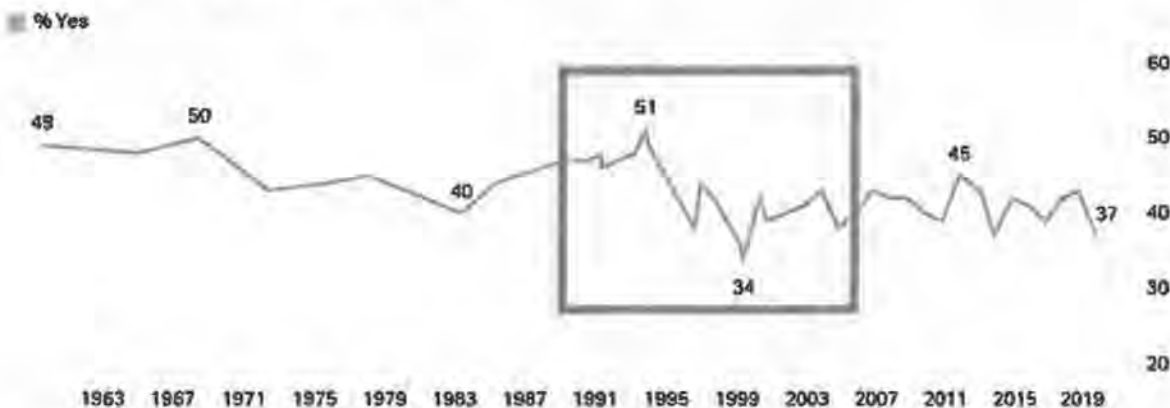
**Assessing Firearm Research**

While an individualized analysis of available firearm research is beyond the scope of this report, it is a good opportunity to address some of the recurring shortcomings of research reviewed by the Division.

All firearm research suffers from one problem: we do not know how many firearms are in the United States or how they are distributed. NRA has long supported various federal laws and appropriations riders as well as laws at the state level to prohibit the collection and centralization of firearm records. While these laws are intended to prevent the creation of firearm registries, they also prevent researchers from conducting accurate studies with the number or distribution of firearms as a variable.

These studies often use self-report to determine firearm ownership levels, but this suffers from other problems. Below is a graph showing Gallup’s polling on a firearm ownership question over time.

**Do you have a gun in your home?**



GALLUP

The highlighted portion of the graph shows, after 1994 far fewer Americans reported having a gun in their home. This timing just happens to coincide with multiple pieces of federal legislation that targeted gun owners. While it is possible that many millions of Americans stopped being gun owners over a period of a few years, it is much more likely that targeting gun owners as a “problem” by federal officials made gun owners much less likely to share gun ownership information with a stranger on the phone.

Another problem common in firearm research (and other areas of research) is misspecification. We will often review studies that attempt to show that more permissive firearm policies increase various types of violent crime. While these studies may attempt to show a particular policy drives certain crime rates, they often fail to correctly account for the various laws of different jurisdictions.

For example, many studies that assess the efficacy of self-defense laws will often look only to the states that have codified a particular policy in statute. However, many states may have very similar self-defense rules through judicial decisions. By misspecifying these states, a study on self-defense laws would be worthless at examining the efficacy of those laws.

We also regularly see attempts to study events that are simply too rare to draw scientifically valid conclusions. This is most common in studies that purport to measure the effect of various laws on mass public shootings. Despite claims by some that hundreds of mass shootings occur each year, research has consistently shown far fewer of these events actually occur. A comprehensive dataset put together by Professor James Allen Fox of these events found that they occur between 20-30 times per year. Even Professor Fox, who is a strong supporter of gun control, admits that there is no evidence that any proposed policy measure will impact the frequency or severity of mass attacks because they are already so rare.

### **Research Based Policy**

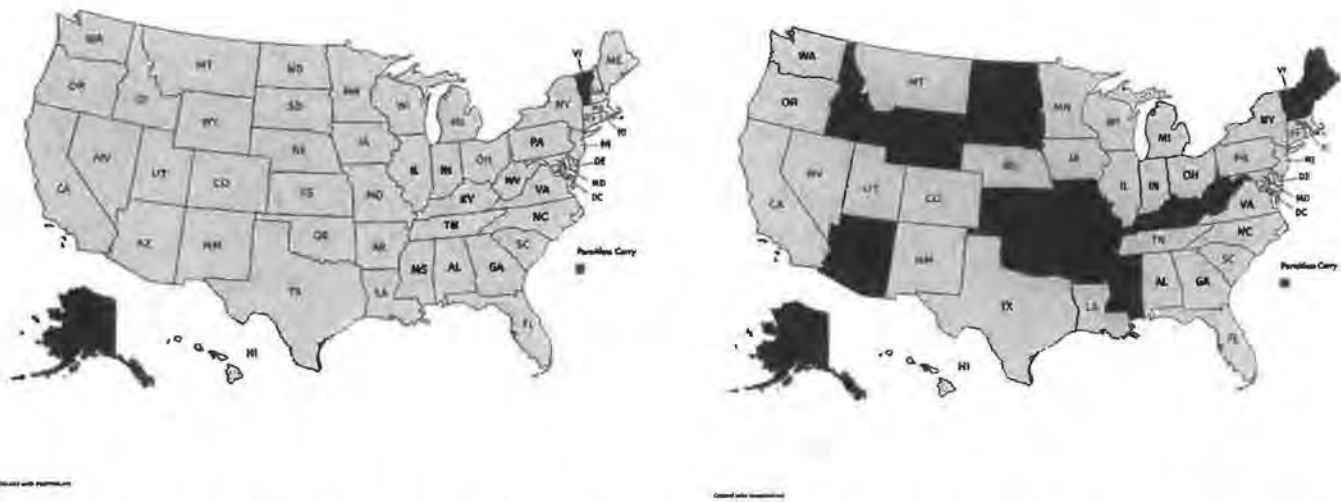
A large part of the Division’s work is focused on informing the policy work done by ILA. By using arguments and messaging that resonate with the largest number of Americans, ILA can best represent the interests of our members.

We know from repeated research that the vast majority of Americans agree that law-abiding people have the right to defend themselves and their families with the firearm of their choosing. This is why that no matter the policy, our messaging continues to focus on self-defense.

Nowhere is this clearer than on our work to expand right-to-carry (“RTC”) laws. There is some evidence that NRA’s work to expand RTC laws in the 90s and early 2000s helped drive public support for self-defense with a firearm. That support has now made it possible to further expand RTC.

Since we are about to close out the decade, an examination of the expansion of permitless carry in the last ten years shows how well our focus on RTC has worked.

Here is a map showing the state of permitless carry in 2010 and the same map in 2020.



Only two states provided for permitless concealed carry at the beginning of the decade, but 16 do today.

And, it's not just permitless carry that substantially improved in the last decade. When most RTC laws were first passed, they provided for an ad hoc system of reciprocal agreements between states for interstate permit validity. Another push by ILA in the last ten years is to get every state to recognize valid permits from all other states.

The benefits of this system are two-fold. It provides for the greatest number of permittees who can carry in each state, and it proves that interstate carry is very feasible. This second benefit helps counter arguments to federal concealed carry reciprocity legislation.

While some states were initially hesitant to recognize permits from states that did not recognize their permit, many states have now overcome this concern and recognize permits from all states as can be seen from this map.



While ILA's work defending and expanding the rights of law-abiding gun owners is far from over. Gun rights at the end of this decade are more expansive than they were at the beginning due in large parts to the efforts of this Association.

### **2020 Firearm Research**

As 2020 comes to a close, two clear trends are obvious from research conducted this year, gun ownership is up (especially amongst new gun owners), and support for gun control is down.

Through November, (the most recent month for which data is available), the FBI's NICS Section had conducted 35,758,249 checks. For some perspective, in 2019, the former busiest year for NICS checks, FBI ran 28,369,750 checks in all 12 months. Assuming December 2020 remains on track with the rest of the year, FBI will likely run ten million more checks in 2020 than it did in 2019 (a 35% increase).

NICS checks are not a perfect measure of gun sales, but they are used regularly as a predictor of current sales until more reliable, but slower to be released, data becomes available.

Subject to the caveats discussed above regarding self-report data sources, there is reason to believe that the huge surge in firearm buying is being driven by new gun owners. According to the National Shooting Sports Foundation, more than seven million new gun owners purchased a firearm in 2020.

This survey data seems to be supported by the types of firearms being sold in 2020. Prior surges in firearm sales have been driven by calls to ban particular types of firearms, most often semiautomatic rifles. In response, huge numbers of rifles have been sold during past surges, but the increase in handgun sales have generally been more modest.

In contrast, sales in 2020 have been mostly handguns, which are likely driven by new gun owners interested in self-defense. The FBI NICS office has run 10,931,060 handgun-related checks and 6,361,838 checks related to long gun sales. This tops the annual handgun check record by 35% (over the 8,085,498 handgun-related checks run in 2016) and this still doesn't include December. However, the long gun checks are likely to only approximately match or narrowly surpass 2013 (the prior record year for long gun-related checks). Not counting December, this year is 766,961 checks away from beating the long gun record set in 2013 (with 7,128,798 such checks).

As noted, with this huge surge in gun ownership, available data shows support for gun control amongst the American people has substantially diminished in 2020.

The longtime pollster Gallup regularly asks Americans what they believe to be "the most important problem" facing the nation. "Guns/gun control" reached a highpoint in March 2018 with 13% of respondents indicating it was the most important issue. In 2020, this number fell to less than 0.5% in each month it was asked from May through November.

This doesn't mean that gun control advocates will be going away, at least not until their billionaire financiers decide to give up on curtailing Americans' fundamental rights, but it does mean that more Americans than ever before will likely be supportive of the goals and objectives of the National Rifle Association in 2021 and beyond.