

Criminal Use of Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Firearms: An Updated Examination of Local and National Sources

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Review: Criminal Use of Assault Weapons and High-Capacity Firearms: An Update Examination of Local and National Sources

In this document, researchers study the impact of semi-automatic weapons and high-capacity magazines as they are used in serious crimes. Researchers used the following data sources: 10 large cities in the United States, firearms reported by law enforcement to federal agencies for investigation, guns used in the murder of law enforcement officials, and firearms used in mass murders.

Overview of Findings

According to the research conducted by the Center for Evidence-Based Crime Policy at George Mason University, assault weapons and other high-capacity semiautomatic weapons are used in a range of 22% to 36% of crimes. Assault weapons are used in 57%, though data on this statistic is more limited than the aforementioned statistic.

The researchers examined the types of guns recovered by police after crimes in ten large American cities: Hartford, CT; Rochester, NY; Syracuse, NY; Baltimore, MD; Richmond, VA; Minneapolis, MN; Milwaukee, WI; Kansas City, MO; Seattle, WA; and Sacramento, CA. For instance, in Hartford, recovered guns that could be classified as semiautomatics with large-capacity magazines account for 30% of guns linked to violent crime. In Milwaukee and Seattle respectively, 35.5% and 36.2% of guns recovered by law enforcement can be classified as semiautomatics with large-capacity magazines.

The research also highlights the significant impact that assault weapons and high-capacity magazines have on public health. From 2010-2012, according to the Journal for Preventive Medicine, there were 59,790 deaths and injuries, and this total number cost American society over \$22 million in medical and employment-related costs.

Data shows that the proportion of semi-automatic, high-capacity weapons used in crimes increased from 33% to 112% since the federal weapons ban was lifted. The research concludes that the federal ban played a role in curbing the spread of high-capacity semiautomatic weapons.

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