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## **Another Brady hallucination: More guns, more 'gun violence' (Part 1)**

February 15, 4:54 PM  
by Howard Nemerov

### **Do Howard a favor and click on the link above, thanks!**

A recent [USA Today article](#) discussed pending legislation on the open carrying of holstered handguns. It also afforded the Brady Campaign's president an opportunity to display his knowledge of the situation:

Says Paul Helmke, president of the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, which opposes open-carry laws: "We don't want more people carrying guns either openly or concealed because **the more guns you have in a situation, the more likely you are to get gun violence.**" [Emphasis added]

The following series examines various government datasets to test Helmke's "more guns, more violence" theory.

### **Examining the 2007 Brady report card**

Nearly every year since 2001, the Brady Campaign has published an annual report card, grading states on how well they have implemented what Brady calls "sensible gun laws." Curiously, most of these report cards ignore Washington, D.C., which consistently owns the highest violent crime rate in the country: It is included here because its population exceeds Wyoming's and D.C. has enough autonomy to enact its own gun control laws, like any state.

Brady's [2007 Scorecard](#) contains detailed criteria for determining a state's score. Using their criteria, Washington, D.C. would have scored around 83, higher than any state, because it has

the strictest gun laws in the country. It deserves note that in [2007](#) (latest final FBI crime data available), this closest model of Brady's gun control utopia had 3.0 times the violent crime rate and a 5.5 times higher murder rate than the entire U.S. Therein lies the introduction to Helmke's dilemma.

The first hint that Brady's scorecard effectively identifies a state's anti-self-defense environment is Brady's definition of "common sense gun restrictions." For example, states earn two points for *not* enacting what Brady calls a "Shoot First Law" (aka Stand Your Ground), which Brady interprets to mean that law-abiding citizens can use deadly force "as the first resort" when confronted by criminal attackers. Curiously, there are no corresponding points for how well states punish criminals who use deadly force, a criterion that clearly signals a state's intention to reduce gun violence.

Further evidence of the pro-criminal bias appears when comparing Brady scores to FBI violent crime rates. Including the District of Columbia, nine of Brady's "Top 10" states restricted concealed carry for law-abiding citizens. Brady's "Top 10" averaged a [violent crime](#) rate of 505.1 (incidents per 100,000 population) and a Brady score of 55.5. Brady's "Bottom 10," all right-to-carry [RTC] states, averaged a violent crime rate of 380.3—38.2% lower than Brady's "Top 10"—and a Brady score of 4.1. More interesting is that Brady's "Top 10" had an average murder rate of 7.0, while the "Bottom 10" averaged 5.5.

Looking at the entire dataset, RTC states averaged a 400.5 violent crime rate in 2007, a 4.9 murder rate, and an average Brady score of 9.7. Non-RTC states averaged a violent crime rate of 525.0 and a murder rate of 6.8; 31.1% and 38.5% higher, respectively, than RTC states. Helmke considers non-RTC states much safer from "gun violence" because they average a Brady grade of 48.6, five times higher than RTC states.

Some might argue that the non-RTC states might have had even worse crime rates without their restrictive gun laws. Between 2001 and 2007, the national violent crime rate dropped 7.4%. During that same time period, RTC states saw a 7.6% rate decrease, while non-RTC states saw a 6.7% drop. Between 2004 and 2007, the U.S. saw a 0.8% *increase* in the violent crime rate; RTC states saw a 0.7% increase while non-RTC states experienced a 1.2% increase.

With "more people carrying guns," right-to-carry states have become safer relative to states with restrictive laws. It would be interesting to see Helmke's dataset, but in the meantime, part 2 will examine additional government datasets to test his "more guns, more gun violence" hypothesis.



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Last update: 15 February 2009