

North Carolina's Pistol Purchase Permitting System Works

The current permitting system (PPP) helps to prevent the diversion of illegal firearms into the communities most suffering from daily gun violence. Taking away one of the few laws that disproportionately saves Black lives from gun violence is a racist act.

The Pistol Purchase Permitting System saves lives and reduces gun violence in communities disproportionately impacted by gun homicides

PPP closes the gun show loophole on handguns, meaning that you need a permit and background check no matter where you are buying your handgun, even at a gun show or on the Internet.

African Americans in North Carolina are disparately impacted by gun violence. A study found that though Black, Non-Hispanic North Carolinians comprised 22.1% of the 2018 N.C. population, they experienced 67.1% of the firearm homicide deaths.¹

Permit to purchase systems (like NC's PPP system) are among of the most well-researched gun violence prevention policies.

- After Missouri repealed its handgun permit to purchase law in 2007, the state's firearm homicide rate increased 47% from 2008 – 2016, compared to the rate expected had they not repealed their law.²
- Another study found that after controlling for a wide range of demographic and social factors, firearm purchase licensing laws were associated with an 11% reduction in firearm homicides in urban counties (1984-2015).³ This is important, because most gun homicides among Black North Carolinians occur in metro areas. In 2019, 288 (76%) of the 377 Black North Carolinians killed by gun homicide were killed in metro areas.⁴ We cannot repeal PPP, knowing repeal could further increase these deaths among Black North Carolinians in NC cities.
- A study of 2006-2016 ATF data on crime guns showed that states with permit to purchase laws were associated with a lower percentage of in-state crime guns recovered by police, meaning that fewer of the guns recovered by police after a crime had been trafficked from an in-state source.⁵
- A study with 25 cities found that "States with... permit to purchase systems appear to do a better job than other states of keeping guns initially sold within the state from being recovered in crimes."⁶

Claims that PPP targets people of color are unfounded and speculative

The study which argues that there are racial disparities in PPP denials examines data from only one county (Wake County). The researcher concludes that, "the conclusions from [this data] are limited. Without further research into the reasons for permit denials broken down by race, as well as data from all counties in North Carolina, definitive conclusions regarding racial biases present in the modern permit system are speculative."⁷ Furthermore, data from one county is not representative of or generalizable to the rest of the state.

The researcher often cited by Second Amendment extremists for his claims on PPP has been widely and repeatedly discredited

Studies by John Lott, a frequently-cited opponent of purchase permitting systems, have been debunked because of Lott's research methodology errors and false statements when his research and methodology have been questioned.

- Lott's research claiming that jurisdictions allowing concealed carry have less crime than those without has numerous methodological errors. For example, Lott's analysis coded Florida and Georgia differently than other states. When researchers replicated his study correcting for his coding error, the difference in violent crime dropped from 4.9 to 3.6%, robbery dropped from 2.2 to 0.5%, and property crime increased from 2.7% to 4.6%.⁸ A 2002 comprehensive follow-up study that included more states and more years of data in the analysis undermined Lott's concealed carry hypothesis and results entirely.⁹
- Lott published a critique of the studies showing that homicides increased after repeal of Missouri's purchase permitting law, disputing the steep increase in gun homicides. To make this false claim, Lott selectively chose data, including misinformation about gun homicides in Missouri after their law was repealed.¹⁰
- When results from a large national survey he conducted on defensive gun use were questioned, he claimed that his computer crashed losing the data and any evidence of the study (including financial evidence), and that he did not remember anyone who helped him with any part of the study – including collecting data from over 2400 people.¹¹
- In response to criticism of his research, Lott created an online persona to defend his research on websites in the US and abroad. Lott himself has admitted "I should not have done it, there is no doubt. But it was a way to get information into the debate."¹²

References

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³ Crifasi CK, et al. Correction to: Association between firearm laws and homicide in urban counties. *Journal of Urban Health: bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*. 2018 95(5):773-776.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. WISQARS fatal injury reports, national, regional and state, 1981–2019. 2021. Note: Black was defined as Black, Non-Hispanic.

⁵ Collins T, et al. State firearm laws and interstate transfer of guns in the USA, 2006-2016. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2018 Jun;95(3):322-336.

⁶ Webster DW, Vernick JS, Hepburn LM. Relationship between licensing, registration, and other gun sales laws and the source state of crime guns. *Injury Prevention*. 2001 Sep;7(3):184-189.

⁷ Gallo N. Misfire: how the North Carolina Pistol Purchase Permit System misses the mark of constitutional muster and effectiveness. *North Carolina Law Review*. 2021 Jan;99(2):529-564.

⁸ Ayres I, Donohue JJ. Nondiscretionary Concealed Weapons Laws: A Case Study of Statistics, Standards of Proof, and Public Policy. *American Law and Economics Review*. 1999 Fall;1(1-2), 436-470.

⁹ Ayres I, Donohue JJ. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Paper No. 9336. 2002 Nov.

¹⁰ DeFilippis E, Hughes D. Shooting down the gun lobby's favorite "academic": A lott of lies. *Armed With Reason*. 2015 Dec.

¹¹ Lindergren J. Comments on questions about John R. Lott's claims regarding a 1997 survey. 2003 Jan 17.

¹² Morin R. Scholar invents fan to answer his critics. *The Washington Post*. 2003 Feb 1.