

In support of testimony to Gun Violence Prevention Working Group" public hearing, January 28 Hartford, CT. Greg Burns, 18F Folkstone Road, East Windsor, CT 06016

## Citizen Armed Resistance Executive Summary

It is important for conscientious policymakers to consider not only the stated goals of gun control regulations, but the actual results that they produce.

What would be the effect of depriving ordinary, law-abiding citizens from keeping arms for self-defense? One result seems certain: the law-abiding would be at a distinct disadvantage should criminals acquire guns from underground markets. After all, it is simply not possible for police officers to get to many crime scenes where they are urgently needed.

Outside of criminology circles, relatively few people can reasonably estimate how often people use guns to fend off criminal attacks. If policymakers are truly interested in harm reduction, they should pause to consider how many crimes—murders, rapes, assaults, robberies—are thwarted each year by ordinary persons with guns. The estimates of defensive gun use range between the tens of thousands to as high as two million each year.

This paper uses a collection of news reports of self-defense with guns over an eight-year period to survey the circumstances and outcomes of defensive gun uses in America. Federal and state lawmakers often oppose repealing or amending laws governing the ownership or carrying of guns. That opposition is typically based on assumptions that the average citizen is incapable of successfully employing a gun in self-defense or that possession of a gun in public will tempt people to violence in "road rage" or other contentious

situations. Those assumptions are false. The vast majority of gun owners are ethical and competent.

That means tens of thousands of crimes are prevented each year by ordinary citizens with guns and many lives saved.

Self-defense is one of our most basic rights. Strict gun control regulations interfere with that right because ordinary citizens abide by the regulations while criminals acquire guns from underground markets. That leaves honest, law-abiding people at a distinct disadvantage because it is not possible for the police to be at every scene where they are desperately needed.

Many people support gun control regulations because they are convinced that the average citizen is either incapable of using a gun in self-defense or will use the gun in a fit of anger over some petty matter. Those assumptions are false. The evidence on this point has grown so strong that even President **Obama** has had to chide gun safety advocates to accept the proposition that **"almost all gun owners in America are highly responsible."**<sup>92</sup> And, as the scores of incidents described in this study show, gun owners stop a lot of criminal mayhem—attempted murders, rapes, assaults, robberies—every year.

Moreover, it is important to note that when a gun owner stops or kills an attacker or is able to hold a rapist or a burglar until the police arrive, it is very likely that more than one crime has been prevented because if the culprit had not been stopped, he could have targeted other citizens as well. **Policymakers interested in harm reduction should thus refrain from treating ordinary gun owners as hoodlums or loose cannons and adopt policies that respect the ownership and carrying of arms by responsible individuals. Armed citizens save many lives every day.**

Armed Citizens – Fact and Fiction <http://www.cato.org/sites/cato.org/files/pubs/pdf/WP-Tough-Targets.pdf> 2011 Crime Reference: <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/press/cv11pr.cfm> Police Reported Crime a Problem: [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/17/violent-crime-bureau-justice-statistics\\_n\\_1974123.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/10/17/violent-crime-bureau-justice-statistics_n_1974123.html)