



Democrats Shift to the Right on Guns and the Second Amendment

In its [flawed survey](#) of Americans about firearms that Gallup released on Monday, November 18, [it got one thing right](#). When it comes to handguns, most Americans oppose banning their ownership. What's remarkable is the precipitous drop among Democrats in their support of banning them.

In early October, Gallup asked 1,023 citizens: "Do you think there should or should not be a law that would ban possession of handguns, except by the police and authorized persons?"



Just 20 percent, or one in five, said yes, handgun possession should be banned.

Among Democrats, half of whom said yes last year, only a third this year said they should be banned. That's an astonishing and jaw-dropping 16-percent decline among the group most likely to support banning firearms.

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It's part of an overall decades-long decline in opposition to the private ownership of handguns. When Gallup began asking in 1959, that opposition topped 60 percent. By 1990 support for such a ban had declined to 43 percent. Today it's just 20 percent, virtually matching the low of 19 percent hit in 2021.

Why the Decline?

Part of the answer to that is the proliferation of privately owned firearms in the United States, now estimated at between 300 and 400 million. As people become more comfortable with seeing them, owning them, and carrying them, or seeing others carrying them, opposition to them tends to fade over time.

Another part of the answer was provided by Gallup itself in its 2023 survey. Nearly two-thirds of the respondents said that having a gun in the home makes it a safer place to be. That response represented a complete reversal from when Gallup started asking that question back in 2000. Back then, just 35 percent said that a gun at home improved personal safety.

Part of the answer is the growth in the "constitutional carry" movement that now encompasses nearly 30 states.

And, despite the false claim by anti-gunners that more guns equals more crime, gun violence has continued a long, slow, and largely unappreciated decline. (Except for in large cities, mostly run by Democrats who have enacted severe restrictions on gun ownership by law-abiding citizens, resulting in spikes in gun violence by criminals.)



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on November 22, 2024

Gallup's Megan Brenan failed to provide a persuasive reason for the decline in opposition, especially among Democrats:

Gallup has measured public support for a ban on handguns since 1980 and, before that, had asked a similar question about "a law which would forbid the possession" of "pistols and revolvers."

Support for banning the ownership of handguns by unauthorized people peaked at 60% in 1959, the initial reading. Since then, support has never risen to the majority level and has been consistently below 30% since 2008, including the current near-record low.

The decline in support for a handgun ban this year is largely owed to Democrats, whose backing has fallen by 16 points since 2023 to 33% — a new low — after the group showed increasing support for a ban the prior two years.

Pandering by Harris

Some have suggested that Kamala Harris' pandering to naïve gun owners about her owning a Glock pistol and declaring that anyone entering her home without permission would be shot backfired. Her support of a total handgun ban in San Francisco and a ban on sales of new handgun models in California revealed her treachery to those uninformed gun owners. Perhaps it influenced her Democratic supporters enough to drive the opposition to bans lower over the last twelve months.

Others have suggested that Democrats living in high-crime cities have put self-defense ahead of ideology. More than 22 million Americans obtained guns for the first time under the Biden administration, revealing their independent thinking on the matter.

In any case, Gallup provided a useful revelation of the change in attitudes toward the private ownership of handguns, especially among Democrats, who now are finally beginning to see the light.

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