

"Writing the truth  
as I see it;  
trying not to  
offend  
those who will  
disagree."

# The truth as I see it™

Idaho Common Sense™



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## "I intend to be among the outlaws"

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By June, 2008 the United States Supreme Court may offer some clarification of the Second Amendment and the rights of individuals to own guns. Unfortunately, their interpretation may be so narrow that it has little impact outside the source of the case, Washington, D.C.; leaving the rest of the nation still debating gun control.

If we are going to seriously entertain wholesale legislation of gun control shouldn't we first find data that will guide us to a reasonable conclusion? To determine the usefulness of gun control we need to study locations that have strict gun control laws and locations that have more relaxed gun control laws. This will give us a window to see how well gun control works. If gun control works you would expect areas with strict gun control laws to have lower crime rates and areas with lenient gun control laws to have increased crime rates.

Let's begin with Washington, D.C. where handguns have been banned since 1976. Prior to the ban, Washington, D.C.'s murder rate had been declining. For the 31 years since the ban Washington, D.C. has almost always ranked number one in the nation in murder rates! Mayor Anthony Williams must believe the best way to prevent criminals from using guns and reduce gun related crimes is to post a sign stating, "No one who lives in the District of Columbia is allowed to own a handgun". That ought to really terrify the criminals!

Australia is a good source of data because they are comparable to the United States, with similar access to guns prior to their banning most guns in 1996. Following the ban, armed robberies increased by 51%, assaults increased by 24% and kidnappings increased by 43%. Homicides remained essentially unchanged or slightly lower or higher depending on your source of statistics. It appears that in Australia,

just as in Washington, D.C., disarming the citizens led to more crime rather than less crime.

Whose side is the government on? If you were a criminal what would you prefer if you were going to break into my home? Would you prefer to wonder if I had a gun or would you prefer to have the government guarantee you that I did not have a gun? I think the answer is rather straightforward.

Maybe we should look to England for answers. After all they are more civilized than we Americans and have had stringent gun laws in place for many years adding a handgun ban in 1997. But, according to the *BBC News*, handgun crime in the United Kingdom rose by 40% in the two years following the passage of the handgun ban in 1997. It appears the criminals were not obeying the new law! The United Nations reported in 2000 that the crime rate in England was higher than the crime rates of 16 other industrialized nations, including the United States. In England it seems the "No Guns Allowed" signs are not working in the best interests of the public.

What about locations that have rather lenient gun control? Does allowing relatively easy access to guns affect the crime rates? Switzerland requires every able-bodied adult to keep a semi-automatic weapon at home! According to gun control logic their crime rates should be staggeringly high. Yet their crime rates have historically been low. Their last mass murder was in 2001, not last week! Could the criminal possibly find it dangerous with every household owning a semi-automatic rifle? This required semi-automatic rifle is the same style that was once banned in our country with gun control activists wanting the ban reinstated!

What if a state increased the availability of concealed weapons permits? Allowing people to carry a

hidden gun must increase crime rates! Interestingly, states that passed concealed carry laws reduced their murder rates by an average of 8.5%.

In 2004 the National Academy of Sciences reviewed approximately 500 journal articles, books, and government publications. They studied over 80 gun-control measures. They could not find even one gun-control measure that reduced violent crime. The year prior the CDC evaluated several types of gun restrictions and found "none of the laws had a meaningful impact on gun violence".

Gun control simply does not work! Restrictions on gun ownership increase crime! Imagine the lives that might have been saved had we put all the gun control energy and money into finding and removing those who use guns for violent crimes.

We need to use factual information in the decision making process. Far too often these laws are knee-jerk reflexes to some tragic event. Passing legislation with emotion and without facts is costing lives. Edward Abbey summed it up saying, "The rifle is the weapon of democracy.... If guns are outlawed, only the government will have guns. Only the police, the secret police, the military.... Only the government – and a few outlaws. I intend to be among the outlaws". I agree!

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