

Massachusetts Gun Laws Provide Interesting Case Nationally

Massachusetts has some of the toughest gun laws in the country when it comes to the purchase, ownership, and carrying of firearms. Massachusetts' gun laws present an interesting case nationally, because in spite of its strict regulations, the rate of firearms-related deaths rose, according to a report in **Medical Daily**.

In contrast, firearm deaths in Arizona, California, Illinois, Maryland, Nevada, New York, North Carolina, and the District of Columbia, mostly among people of Hispanic and black backgrounds, fell.

The information was reported by Columbia University researchers, who looked at gun-related deaths — from murders, suicide and unintentional shootings — across the nation between 2000 and 2010, utilizing data from the Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System.

After assessing the data, Dr. Bindu Kalesan, the study's author concluded, "We need much better gun laws than what's in existence." Kalesan found that states like Massachusetts, which have implemented tough gun use laws, which have not reduced the number of gun deaths. Ironically, reports of gun-related deaths continued to increase following the passage of Massachusetts gun laws in 1998.

"The gun problem in this country has little to do with the prevalence of semiautomatics," said Jack Levin, a criminology professor at Northeastern University and co-director of its Center on Violence and Conflict, in a **Boston Globe** article.

"There are 15,000 single-victim murders in the United States every year, about two-thirds of which are committed with firearms. The overwhelming majority of these homicides are committed with handguns."

Those who argue both sides of the gun-control debate agree that banning assault weapons won't eradicate the problem, particularly when people can purchase guns online and at gun shows.

"Even in states with the strongest gun laws, there are still loopholes that need to be filled," said Lindsay Nichols, staff attorney for the Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence, which supports tougher gun laws, in the *Globe* report.

Nichols uses Massachusetts as an example in that the state does not require background checks at the point of purchase. Once residents are granted a firearm permit, they are able to purchase as many guns and as much ammunition as they like without undergoing further checks until that permit expires.

This article does not constitute legal advice. Check the current gun laws before purchasing or traveling with a firearm.

By Susan Pascal