

Violence Policy Center



1730 Rhode Island Avenue, NW
Suite 1014
Washington, DC 20036

202.822.8200 voice
202.822.8205 fax
www.vpc.org web

**RESEARCH EXPOSES DANGEROUS FLAWS IN STATE CONCEALED
HANDGUN PERMIT SYSTEMS**

Preeminent Research Institution Rejects Claim that Concealed Carry Laws Reduce Crime

- A 2007 in-depth review conducted by the *Florida Sun-Sentinel* of **Florida's concealed carry law** found that *Florida's licensing system had granted concealed carry permits to: more than 1,400 people who had pleaded guilty or no contest to a felony; 216 people with outstanding warrants; 128 people with active domestic violence injunctions; and, six registered sex offenders.*¹
- Research in 2008 by the *Memphis Commercial Appeal* found that **Tennessee's concealed handgun permitting system** has armed dozens of people with violent criminal histories, including a man convicted of sexually assaulting his ex-girlfriend and then, armed with an assault rifle and a handgun, abducting her. *The newspaper identified 70 residents of Shelby County, Tennessee, who were issued permits despite arrest histories that included robbery, assault, and domestic violence.* The paper cited one case in which a permit holder had 25 arrests on his record when he obtained his CCW permit. He was later the subject of federal charges for a series of bank robberies. The newspaper's research also found that individuals with felony convictions were issued CCW permits because of administrative flaws within the state agencies that issued the permits.²
- A 2009 investigation by *The Indianapolis Star* of **Indiana's concealed handgun system** found that many dangerous individuals were granted concealed handgun permits, including: one man who pressed the barrel of a loaded handgun into the chest of a woman holding her one-year-old son; another man whose handgun was confiscated by police three times (twice for shooting in public); and a man who had been arrested for allegedly dealing crack cocaine and was later accused of beating his girlfriend. The investigation found that *"in all of these cases— and hundreds of other questionable ones uncovered by The Indianapolis Star—the Indiana State Police granted that request [for a concealed carry permit], often over the objections of the local police department and even though, in some cases, it appears the State Police had a legal obligation to deny the permit. Even worse, many of those people*

¹ See http://articles.orlandosentinel.com/2007-01-28/news/MGUNS28_1_carry-a-gun-license-to-carry-concealed.

² See <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/aug/03/wrong-fingers-are-on-the-triggers> ; <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2009/mar/12/armed-and-dangerous-tennessee-gun-debate-prone>.

committed subsequent crimes, some with the guns they were legally permitted to carry.”³

- A 2011 investigation of **Michigan’s concealed handgun law** by Booth newspapers uncovered serious problems with the law’s reporting requirements including incomplete records, spotty compliance by counties under a duty to report, and unreported criminal convictions. Specific problems identified included instances where licenses were reinstated after convictions when they were supposed to be revoked. One county revoked just one license in nine years because of a procedural misunderstanding. The report stated, “Countless other cases are unaccounted for, either because county licensing boards are not notified of the outcome of criminal charges, or they neglect to take action. Revocations are not completed, so they never show up in public reports.”⁴
- A 2010 audit of **Colorado’s CCW permit database** by the Office of the State Auditor found serious inaccuracies and inconsistencies that could endanger law enforcement personnel. For example, the database was woefully incomplete in that only 55 percent of CCW handgun permits issued in Colorado were represented in the statewide database. Of records in the database, 32,000 or 63 percent contained inaccuracies or inconsistencies: 11,000 or 22 percent had incorrect expiration dates; 18,000 or 35 percent had no expiration date listed at all; and 2,000 or 4 percent were duplicate records. These flaws greatly diminished the utility of the database to police who relied on the information to help keep officers safe by making them aware of persons that may have a gun, share information among law enforcement about persons whose behavior may render them ineligible to possess a permit, and verify the validity of a permit when law enforcement comes into contact with a permittee who is carrying a concealed handgun.⁵
- Beginning in 1998, the Violence Policy Center conducted four studies analyzing the operation of **Texas’ concealed carry law**. The final VPC study, *License to Kill IV: More Guns, More Crime*, was completed in 2002 and incorporated the findings of the previous three studies. It found that from 1996 to 2000, Texas concealed handgun permit holders were arrested for weapon-related offenses at a rate 81 percent higher than that of the general population of Texas, aged 21 and older. These weapon-related offenses included: 279 arrests for assault or aggravated assault with a deadly weapon; 671 arrests for unlawfully carrying a weapon; and, 172 arrests for deadly conduct/discharge firearm.⁶

³ See <http://www.indystar.com/article/20091011/NEWS14/910110365>.

⁴ See http://www.mlive.com/news/index.ssf/2011/06/special_report_concealed_gun_1.html.

⁵ See [http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/UID/ECCC3BC021B740EA872577F3007F36E5/\\$file/2104_ConcealedHandgunsPerfNov2010.pdf?OpenElement](http://www.leg.state.co.us/OSA/coauditor1.nsf/UID/ECCC3BC021B740EA872577F3007F36E5/$file/2104_ConcealedHandgunsPerfNov2010.pdf?OpenElement)

⁶ See <http://www.vpc.org/studies/ltk4cont.htm>.

- Finally, proponents of liberal concealed handgun laws argue that such laws reduce overall crime rates. But such assertions are contradicted by the findings of the National Research Council. In 2004 the **National Research Council's Committee on Law and Justice** determined that studies—such as those conducted by pro-gun researcher John Lott—indicating a relationship between concealed carry laws and overall crime rates were not reliable. Specifically, *the Committee carefully examined Lott's data and research methods and concluded "that with the current evidence it is not possible to determine that there is a causal link between the passage of right-to-carry laws and crime rates."*

H.R. 822 would deny all states with concealed carry permit systems the discretion to refuse to recognize any other state's permits regardless of how many criminals and other dangerous individuals have been armed by a flawed system.
