



LARGE-VOLUME GUN SALES: THE ILLEGAL GUN TRAFFICKER'S BEST FRIEND

Q. What Are Large-Volume Gun Sales?

A. Large-volume guns sales are sales of multiple handguns to a single buyer in a short period of time. Currently, federal law does not limit the number of firearms that a person can buy in one transaction. Gun traffickers, using a “straw buyer” (who has a clean record and can pass the required Brady Law background check) take advantage of this loophole in federal law by buying large numbers of guns, usually handguns, from gun dealers and reselling them on the street to criminals. There are also a number of corrupt gun dealers who, in the search for even more profits, willingly turn a blind eye to straw purchases by making large-volume sales. This further increases the supply of illegal guns in the hands of criminals.

The Brady Campaign has launched a [Campaign Against Illegal Guns](#) to reduce the supply of guns available to gun traffickers. The Campaign will seek to curb large volume sales and strengthen the ability of state and local officials to go after corrupt and reckless gun dealers.

[Click here to join our Campaign Against Illegal Guns.](#)

Q. Why Are Large-Volume Sales a Problem?

A. Federal law enforcement regards the purchase of multiple handguns by a single buyer in a single transaction as an indicator that the buyer intends to traffic the guns to the illegal market. For this reason, if someone buys two or more handguns in a five-day period, federal law treats the purchase as so suspect that it must be reported to ATF. Handguns sold in multiple sales accounted for 20% of all handguns sold and traced to crime in 2000. In a particularly egregious recent example, a licensed gun dealer/distributor named Charles Brown sold hundreds of guns at Ohio gun shows to straw purchasers for gun trafficker James Bostic, **including 87 handguns in a single transaction.** Those guns were systematically trafficked from Ohio into New York State, where they have been used in dozens of crimes.

Examples of people victimized by crimes involving multiple-sale guns include two New Jersey police officers that were shot with a gun sold as part of a 12-handgun sale by a West Virginia gun dealer, several victims of a hate-crime spree through Illinois and Indiana fueled with a gun bought from a gun trafficker that systematically acquired more than 70 handguns from a single

Illinois dealer, and a Philadelphia woman who lost her seven-year-old son to a gun trafficked from an upstate-Pennsylvania dealer.

Our [Campaign Against Illegal Guns](#) will help ensure that such tragedies become a thing of the past. [Click here to join our Campaign Against Illegal Guns.](#)

Q. What Can Be Done To Curb Large-Volume Gun Sales?

A. Three states – California, Maryland and Virginia – have enacted laws restricting handgun purchases to one per month, thus eliminating large volume purchases. These one-gun-a-month laws work! The Brady Center’s study of Virginia’s law showed that prior to the law, 38% of all guns originating in the Southeast and traced in the Northeast came from Virginia gun shops. After the law took effect, that percentage dropped to 16%. However, because gun traffickers can simply use new “source” states, the ultimate solution is a federal law eliminating large-volume handguns sales.

Our [Campaign Against Illegal Guns](#) will be harnessing the energies of Mayors and local activists to help bring about change at the state level to build support for the solutions that only a national law can provide. Illegal guns are a national problem requiring a national solution.

Q: Do Limits on Large-Volume Gun Sales Prevent Gun Trafficking?

A. It’s just common sense that if you prevent handguns from being bought in large numbers, then gun runners will have to work much harder to acquire guns to resell on the streets to criminals and other bad guys. But, in addition to common sense, studies have shown that Virginia's one-gun-a-month law has been effective at reducing the number of guns trafficked from Virginia gun dealers to states in the Northeast. The Virginia State Crime Commission also concluded that, "Virginia's [gun sale limitation] statute has had its intended effect of reducing Virginia's status as a source state for gun trafficking. The imposition of the law does not appear to create an onerous burden for law-abiding gun purchasers." According to Helen Fahey, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia, "Since passage of the legislation, instances of gunrunning have decreased dramatically."

In Maryland, handgun sales dropped more than 25% during the first year of that state's gun sale limitation law, a decline attributed to the prohibition on multiple sales. Furthermore, the number of Maryland multiple-sale guns turning up at crime scenes in Washington, D.C. and Baltimore dropped precipitously.

The experiences of Maryland and Virginia only confirm what common sense tells us and are telling reminders of why we need to build support for our [Campaign Against Illegal Guns.](#)

Q. Why Does the Gun Lobby Oppose Efforts to Limit Large-Volume Gun Sales?

A. The NRA and the gun industry do not like laws that could result in a reduction in gun sales, even sales of guns that make their way into the illegal market. Their desire for profits

outweighs any concern for public safety. In response to such efforts, the gun lobby loves to raise the phony argument that such efforts will hurt hunters, sportsmen and collectors. The one-gun-a-month laws in Virginia, Maryland, and California do not hurt such buyers. In Virginia, for example, an exception is made for law enforcement agencies, private security companies, the purchase of antique firearms and for persons whose handgun was stolen or irretrievably lost and needs to be replaced immediately. And there is no limit on the purchase of hunting rifles or shotguns.

The NRA and the gun industry will do and say anything to thwart our [Campaign Against Illegal Guns](#). We need your help to make this Campaign a success: [Click here to Donate](#), [Click here to join our Campaign Against Illegal Guns](#).



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