

Tacoma to Seattle: Hold My Beer

Seattle's southern neighbor, Tacoma, Washington, is going to weigh a plan that's already proven to be a failed policy. But since its anti-gun, city council members think it is worth adopting, City Councilman Ryan Mello proposed that Tacoma adopt Seattle's so-called "gun violence tax" plan that would levy a \$25 tax on firearms, a two-cent-per-round tax on .22-caliber or less, or five-cent-per-round for all other ammunition that's sold at retail.

To put this in real costs, that's \$25 on top of the excise taxes already paid by firearms and ammunition manufacturers, just to exercise a constitutional right by a law-abiding citizen to buy a gun. Rimfire ammunition runs about five cents per round. A two-cent tax increases the cost by 40 percent. A five-cent tax on a box of shotgun shells adds roughly 11 percent to the price tag. Of course, a higher tax is proposed for "higher velocity" or military-style ammunition, including hollow-points. Never mind that the overwhelming majority of ammunition used by the military is full metal jacketed rounds. Mello's reason? "They're designed to pierce through body armor with the intent to kill somebody," he said. No. Hollow-points are *not* designed to pierce body armor. In fact, there's proof that body armor easily defeats hollow-point ammunition.

What Mello is really doing is placing the blame for the crime on law-abiding gun owners. Here's what Mello is missing. Law-abiding gun owners buying firearms at retail are already navigating a tangled web of complicated gun control laws. They complete the sale of that firearm by completing a Form 4473 and an approval from the FBI National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Of course, since it's Washington, that also means the law-abiding gun owner must wait for "enhanced background checks" on semiautomatic modern sporting rifles and handgun transfers that can take as long as 10 days.

As part of I-1639, Washington also has an age based gun ban on semiautomatic rifles, so if you're an 18-year-old adult legally allowed to vote, exercise freedom of speech and religion, you still can't exercise your Second Amendment rights. If you're over 21, you must complete additional training requirements and have the chief law enforcement officer's approval to own a modern sporting rifle.

That's just for those who follow the law. Criminals, of course, don't bother with any of this. They just steal them or get them on the black market. That's proven by the Department of Justice's Bureau of Statistics report showing 90 percent of felons (Alper and Glaze, Jan 2019) get firearms from means other than legally buying them – theft or the street corner. All of that brings us back to taxing the wrong people who aren't responsible for the so-called gun violence. Mello said the tax would fund gun violence programs in Tacoma, much like Seattle said it would.

The problem is, Seattle's gun and ammo tax failed. The money was meant to offset the cost for treating victims of so-called gun violence at Harborview Medical Center, which city officials said costs taxpayers millions. Seattle raised \$104,000 in 2017, the first year the tax was in effect. In 2018, Seattle raised \$93,000. Crime went up in Seattle just like taxes. In fact, the city's police chief report complaints of shots fired were up by 65 percent and recorded crimes involving firearms dropped by just six. At the same time, firearms retailers in Seattle shuttered their shops, moving outside the city. Gun stores went from 40 to 32.

Mello doesn't want Tacoma to offset the cost of victims of criminal activity. He wants Seattle's results. Mello's trying to drive lawful firearms retailers out of town and punish those who lawfully own and use their firearms.

Larry Keane, NSSF, August 28th

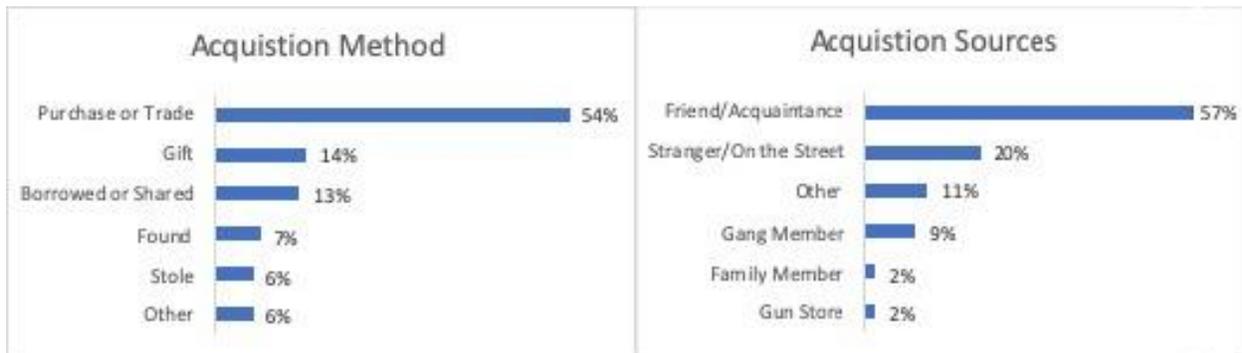
Another Study Confirms Criminals Break Laws

A recent study, funded by the National Institute of Justice and conducted by anti-gun researcher Phillip Cook, takes an interesting approach to the question of how long criminals possess a firearm before they are arrested and charged with a firearm-related crime. It is acknowledged that for firearms recovered by law enforcement many years typically pass between the first retail purchase of the misused firearm and its illegal use or possession. The average “time-to-crime” in the U.S. is over 9 years according to the latest ATF data.

This study doesn’t examine the near-decade between the legal retail sale of a traced firearm and its association with illegal activity. It does use a survey of Chicago inmates to examine the “last link” or “the elapsed time from the transaction that actually provided the offender with the gun in question.”

It is rare to see a study published that echoes our message: enforce existing gun laws and prosecute criminals. The study concludes that “more effective enforcement of the laws governing gun transactions may have a quick and pervasive effect on gun use in crime.”

The authors found that the duration of the last link is about two months. Inmates surveyed reported that most of the firearms possessed at their arrest were obtained by buying or trading from a friend or acquaintance. Few obtained their firearms from a gun store, where they would have had to pass a background check, and “none of the respondents mentioned a gun show or the Internet as a source.” This aligns with prior federal surveys of inmate populations.



Other findings include state laws that require law-abiding gun owners to register their firearms were of no help, as naturally the criminals who obtained the firearm years after the legal purchase, did not register their typically-illegal possession. Also, unsurprisingly, “most or all of the transactions that provided inmates with guns were illegal, in that they violated state or federal regulations...The bottom line is all or almost all of the respondents were disqualified from acquiring or possessing a gun in Illinois at the time of their current arrest. Yet, most of them had extensive involvement with guns at that time.” Let’s give a slow clap for a gun control advocate finally admitting that criminals do not abide by the laws. More enforcement of the existing laws is needed. The firearms and ammunition industry knows this and supports several campaigns to help law enforcement do their jobs and to help our retailers, ranges, and manufacturers on the front lines in preventing criminals from obtaining firearms. We do not support adding more laws onto citizens who already follow the existing laws. These criminals will not be stopped by gun or ammunition registrations, universal background checks, or any irrational bans that the gun

control crowd demands as knee-jerk reactions to the real problems in our country with unauthorized access to firearms.

Elizabeth McGuigan, NSSF, July 2019