



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
CITY OF CHICAGO



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 27, 2014

CONTACT:

Mayor's Press Office

312.744.3334

press@cityofchicago.org

Chicago Police Department

Adam Collins

312.745.6110

adam.collins@chicagopolice.org

**MAYOR EMANUEL AND CHICAGO POLICE DEPARTMENT RELEASE REPORT DETAILING
SOURCES OF ILLEGAL GUNS IN CHICAGO**

*Based on New Analysis from the University of Chicago Crime Lab, Report Shows Path of Guns from
Suburban and Indiana Gun Stores to Chicago Streets;
New City Ordinance Regulating Gun Stores Proposed Following Court Decision*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel and the Chicago Police Department, with assistance from the University of Chicago Crime Lab, today released a report exposing the impact of the illegal gun market on Chicago's violence. The analysis reveals that Chicago's violence issues are directly linked to the number of illegal guns on the City's streets, that the majority of guns recovered in crimes in Chicago were first sold in states with weaker gun laws and that a handful of gun stores are responsible for a disproportionate number of guns used in crimes.

"Every family, every child, every person in Chicago deserves to enjoy the same sense of freedom and safety," said Mayor Emanuel. "This report shows the extent to which illegal guns are the leading factor in driving violence, the sources of those guns, and simple, reasonable steps we can take to curb the flow of illegal guns onto our streets. The findings in this report demand action from each and every one of us."

Research shows Chicago is not substantially different from the nation's other major cities (New York and Los Angeles) in key indicators long thought to have an impact on violent crime – such as poverty and police resources. In fact, the city has more police officers per capita than New York or Los Angeles. One critical fact that sets Chicago apart is the number of illegal guns, which drives the city's murder rate. Per capita, Chicago Police Department recovers 7 times as many crime guns as New York City and more than twice as many as Los Angeles. And while Chicago's non-gun homicide rate is comparable to both of those cities, Chicago gun-related homicide rate is three times larger than New York and twice that of Los Angeles.

“There is no question that Chicago’s murder rate is driven by the availability of guns,” said Dr. Phil Cook, Professor of Public Policy and Economics at Duke University. “Choking off the supply of illegal guns on the street will be critical to reducing murder in Chicago.”

The study found almost 60 percent of the guns used to commit a crime in Chicago between 2009 and 2013 were first purchased in states like Indiana, Wisconsin and Mississippi which do not require background checks for gun sales at gun shows or on the internet.

More than 3,000 guns – or nearly 20 percent of all guns recovered from crime scenes in Chicago during the same time period were sold by just four local dealers: three in Cook County, including Chuck’s in Riverdale, Midwest Sporting Goods in Lyons, and Shore Galleries in Lincolnwood, and Westforth Sports in Gary, IN. The average number of guns traced back to other gun stores was three.

“The vast majority of gun dealers sell very few guns that turn up in crimes, but one or two dealers like the ones we have here in Cook County can funnel thousands of guns to the street,” said Mark Jones, Law Enforcement Advisor at the U of C Crime Lab and retired ATF Special Agent who worked in Chicago. “Even if those dealers are following the exact letter of federal law, they are not following the spirit of the law. That’s why local licensing regulations like the ones the City has implemented are so important. They can help curb trafficking and are ultimately part of larger strategy to reduce homicides.”

Actionable solutions are offered including passage of the federal Gun Trafficking Prevention Act sponsored by U.S. Senators Mark Kirk and Kirsten Gillibrand, and supported by Senator Dick Durbin. The creation of a multi-state regional gun tracing center would provide law enforcement with a more accurate and detailed view of how illegal guns flow through the region.

Due to the fact that a federal court has ordered the City of Chicago to allow commercial gun sales, the City has drafted one of the toughest, smartest licensing laws in the country focusing on another gun trafficking solution from the report – enhanced dealer regulations. The ordinance will be introduced at City Council on Wednesday.

"Faced with a federal court decision mandating gun sales within city limits, Chicago has responded by proposing national best practices for curbing gun trafficking," said Arkadi Gerney, Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress. "If it passes, this law could serve as a national model for any city struggling with retail stores that are high volume sources of crime guns."

In order to operate with a city license, gun stores will be required to take a number of steps that are proven to minimize gun trafficking, illegal gun sales and theft including:

- Employee background checks and state-of-the-art training
- Anti-theft safety plans and quarterly inventory audits
- Video cameras to record the point of sale
- Maintain a log of all guns sales where the gun was later recovered in a crime and traced back to the store
- Sell only one handgun per month per buyer
- Make store records available to police for inspection at all reasonable times

- 72-hour waiting period to purchase handguns, and a 24-hour waiting period to purchase rifles and shotguns

Additionally, the City would ensure a dealer whose business license is revoked cannot reopen immediately in the same location or by former employees.

###