

# Opinion

## YOUR VIEWS

### Handgun ban would erode our right to self-defense

In supporting the latest fashionable Goldilocks gun control proposal — Handgun Control Inc.'s proposed ban on Saturday night specials, *The Daily Breeze* is being used.

In the Goldilocks gun banners' fairy tale, "some guns are too big, some guns are too small" but no gun is just right — not target pistols, not hunting rifles and certainly not the self-defense guns, mostly small, inexpensive handguns, that are used by 2.5 million Americans every year to protect themselves, their families and their livelihoods. The gun-ban fanatics never discuss the overwhelming scientific evidence (14 studies in all) that shows 65 lives are protected by guns for every life lost to a gun.

The ordinances being considered by some cities do not address the problem of guns in the hands of criminals. Though disguised and professionally promoted by HCI as a "crime-fighting" and "safety" measure, the ordinance is a manifestation of their political agenda, not yours. Their agenda is to "control" guns out of the hands of law-abiding citizens and to destroy the right to self-defense in the process. The ordinance can be used to ban some of the finest guns made, including those worn by most police departments.

The attorney general has repeatedly held, and still holds, that local cities cannot enact this law because only the state has the authority to do so. The California legislative counsel has also stated that this specific law is pre-empted by the state. Until now, the California Rifle and Pistol Association's lawsuit has been limited to the city of West Hollywood and has focused on the state-vs.-local-authority issue. CRPA, and the firearms manufacturers now pending lawsuit or that issue.

Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (BATF) and state Department of Justice (DOJ) statistics show that less than 10 percent of the guns used in crimes are bought in gun stores. The drug dealers and gang members who most often criminally possess a gun — by stealing them, buying them from non licensed dealers or borrowing them. The overwhelming weapon of choice among criminals is the 9mm semi-automatic handgun. These guns typically cost \$400 to \$700.

Poor people count on inexpensive guns as a means of defending themselves and their families. This law doesn't just sit on the books; cities pay to administer it as new guns are added and manufacturers' challenges heard. A city's time, money and energy could be more effectively spent in other ways. Youth programs, increased police and police technology, gang injunctions, etc., are all being successfully implemented to fight crime.

City councils should reject this law in favor of something that will really make a difference in reducing the criminal use of firearms.

— **CHUCK MICHEL**  
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■ **Editor's note:** Chuck Michel was formerly a prosecutor and staff counsel to the Christopher Commission. He represents the California Rifle and Pistol Association in its lawsuit against West Hollywood.