

# January 9, 2013

## Anzalone Liszt Research

### National Polling Summary

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Friends,

Below you will find the Anzalone Liszt Research National Polling Summary, which provides a pollster's take on data and trends that affect political campaigns.

With upcoming battles over the debt-ceiling, the sequester, the budget, Cabinet confirmations and immigration reform all looming over DC, there is a risk that meaningful action on gun control will once again be sidelined. Since we sincerely hope that is not the case, we are devoting our first newsletter of 2013 to the public's attitudes on guns

Following our analysis are additional news items and data we thought you'd enjoy.

John Anzalone and Jeff Liszt

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#### **STORY THIS WEEK: The Gun Debate**

While the Newtown shootings did increase support for gun control overall, both supporters and opponents of gun control have pointed to poll results in the wake of the shootings as evidence that the public is on their side. But regardless of opponents' efforts to muddy the waters on where the public stands on the issue, Americans are clearly more in line with supporters of gun control. This is due not only to the surge in support for stricter gun laws in general since Newtown, but also to the continued strong support for specific proposals currently being debated, such as greater restrictions on assault weapons and high-capacity ammunition clips, and expanded background checks.

#### **Surge in Support for Stricter Gun Laws Overall**

The biggest shift in attitudes in the wake of Newtown was on whether gun laws should be more or less strict. Three separate polling organizations showed an increase in support for stricter gun control laws following the shootings, with two finding an increase in support of 15 points or more, and all three finding a solid majority of Americans in favor of making gun laws stricter.

A [CBS News poll](#) showed the biggest shift, with 57% now supporting stricter laws, an 18-point increase since last April (39%). A [USA Today/Gallup poll](#) showed a similar trend, with 58% supporting stricter laws, 15 points above the level of support in October 2011 (43%). An

[ABC News/Washington Post poll](#) also found a majority of Americans favoring stricter gun control (54%), though this was only three points higher than the level of support reached in its last three polls going back to 2009.

Although the broad support for stricter gun laws is encouraging, it is worth noting that the current level of support still falls short of [where it stood](#) in the late 90's and early 2000's, when support for stricter gun laws exceeded 60%.

### **Strong Majorities Continue to Support Bans on Assault Rifles and High-Capacity Clips**

The Newtown shootings had less of an impact attitudes on specific proposals related to assault weapons and background checks, but support for such proposals was already high, leaving little room for growth. In a [CNN/ORC poll](#), the most pronounced shift was on support for a ban on assault guns like the AK-47, with 62% of Americans supporting such a ban, a 5-point increase from last August. The [poll](#) also found strong support for a host of other specific measures, including requiring background checks for all gun buyers (95% favor), preventing the mentally ill and convicted felons from owning guns (92%), requiring guns to be registered (78%) and banning high-capacity ammunition clips (62%). While each of these proposals garnered robust support from the public, the results for each were basically unchanged since August.

Other recent polling is consistent with CNN's results on these measures. The latest [USA Today/Gallup poll](#) found that 92% support background checks at gun shows and about 60% of the public backed a ban on high-capacity clips in both the [USA Today/Gallup poll](#) (62%) the most recent [ABC/Washington Post survey](#) (59%). A [Pew Research poll](#) that was also conducted after the Newtown shootings showed a little less support for a high-capacity ammunition ban, but a majority still supported one by an 11-point margin (53% favor / 42% oppose).

### **Question Wording Clouds Views on Ban on Assault Weapons**

While most polls before and after the Newtown shootings have found broad public support for a ban on assault weapons, opponents of gun control were encouraged by the recent [USA Today / Gallup poll](#) that found just 44% supporting a ban on assault rifles, with 51% opposing it. This poll appears to be an outlier, however, as it differs significantly not only from the results of the latest [CNN poll](#), but also from a recent [PPP poll](#) (63% support for ban), as well as from 2011 polls by [Time Magazine](#) (62%) and [CBS/NY Times](#) (63%).

Although the [USA Today / Gallup](#) result on the assault weapon issue differs from other organization's results, it found virtually identical results in a [2011 poll](#) (43% support ban / 53% oppose ban). This suggests that the divergent results are due to question wording rather than to an anomalous sample. It is also worth noting that these results represent a significant shift from the 90's and early 2000's when [Gallup](#) registered support for such a ban in the high-50's using the same wording.

Given the numbers of variables at play, it is difficult to say what aspect of the [USA Today / Gallup](#) question wording is driving the disparity in results, but it may be due to the terminology used to describe the guns. While [USA Today / Gallup](#) uses “assault rifle,” the other four polling organizations use either “assault guns” or “assault weapons.”

Regardless of what is causing the difference, the results from the other four polls suggest that the [USA Today / Gallup poll](#) finding on an assault weapons ban is an outlier and that the American public is broadly supportive of such a ban.

<b>SUPPORT FOR BAN ON ASSAULT WEAPONS</b>			
<b>Poll and Question Wording</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Favor</b>	<b>Oppose</b>
<b>(CNN/ORC)</b> A ban on the manufacture, sale and possession of semi-automatic assault guns, such as the AK-47?	<b>12/17-18/12</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>37%</b>
<b>(PPP)</b> Would you support or oppose banning assault weapons?	<b>12/18-19/12</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>32%</b>
<b>(Time Magazine)</b> Should the federal government be allowed to ban the sale of semi-automatic assault weapons, except for use by the military or police, or is it more important to protect the rights of gun owners to purchase any guns they wish to purchase?	<b>6/20-21/11</b>	<b>62%</b>	<b>35%</b>
<b>(CBS News/NY Times)</b> Do you favor or oppose a nationwide ban on assault weapons?	<b>1/15-19/11</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>34%</b>
<b>(USA Today/Gallup)</b> Are you for or against a law which would make it illegal to manufacture, sell, or possess semi-automatic guns known as assault rifles?	<b>12/19-22/12</b>	<b>44%</b>	<b>51%</b>

### **Oppose Handgun Ban, but Open to Ban on Semi-Automatic Handguns**

While the public is supportive of bans on assault weapons and high capacity clips, they draw the line at banning handguns. The most recent [ABC/Washington Post poll](#) found that 71% were opposed to a ban on handguns and the latest [Pew poll](#) put it almost as high at 67%. However, the sensitivity to wording differences is again evident here. When the [ABC/Washington Post poll](#) asked specifically about banning *semi-automatic* handguns, rather than just handguns generally, a majority of respondents (52%) actually supported a ban.

### **NRA Still Viewed Favorably but Even Gun Owners Frequently Disagree with It**

A majority of Americans still view the NRA positively, with the latest [USA Today / Gallup poll](#) finding that 54% of Americans rate the organization favorably, 16 points above the share who rate in unfavorably (note: the press conference of NRA CEO Wayne LaPierre occurred midway through the fielding of this poll). Although this favorable rating is 6 points below the organization’s rating the last time Gallup asked the question in 2005 (60% favorable), it is well above its low-point of 42% in 1995. [PPP also polled](#) on the NRA’s favorability following the Newtown shootings (but before the LaPierre press conference), and though it did

not find as many Americans viewing the organization favorably as the [USA Today / Gallup poll](#) did, it too found a plurality rating the NRA positively (48% favorable / 41% unfavorable).

But just because Americans have a favorable view of the NRA overall doesn't mean that they agree with it in lockstep, as large segments of both Americans overall and even gun-owners themselves indicate that they offer differ with the organization's positions. According to [USA Today / Gallup](#), just 35% of Americans say that the NRA reflects their attitudes on guns either always or most of the time, with 61% saying it does only sometimes or never. Among those with a gun in the household just half (50%) say they agree with the NRA's position most of the time. Such results suggest that while Americans and gun owners may appreciate that the NRA exists, they recognize that its views are often at odds with their own.

### Guns in America: By the Numbers

	U.S.	Canada	United Kingdom
# of Guns per 100 people <sup>1</sup>	88.8	30.8	0
# of Gun Homicides <sup>2</sup>	9,960	173	41
# of Child Injury Deaths (per 100,000 people) <sup>3</sup>	14.1	9.7	6.1
# of Mass Murders and Victims in 2012	3-44	0-0	0-0
Assault Rate (per 100,000 people) <sup>4</sup>	1.5	1.3	1.9
Homicide Rate (per 100,000 people) <sup>5</sup>	5.0	1.8	1.2
Gun Homicide Rate (per 100,000 people) <sup>6</sup>	3.2	0.5	0.1

What is perhaps most remarkable about these numbers is that despite having [an assault rate](#) that is actually *lower* than the United Kingdom's (1.5 for U.S. vs. 1.9 for U.K) and only slightly higher than Canada's (1.3), [America's murder rate](#) is significantly higher (5.0 vs. 1.8 for Canada and 1.2 for the U.K). So while someone in England is actually more likely to be mugged, someone in Americas is over four times more likely to be killed. The major reason for this disparity is clear: guns. While the *non-gun* homicide rates for the three countries are all within a point of each other, the *gun* homicide rate in the United States is over six times Canada's and over thirty times the U.K.'s.

This data on the deadlier nature of attacks in the U.S. due to guns was brought into painful relief on December 14, the day of the Newtown shootings. That same day in China's Henan province [a mad man stabbed 22 children at an elementary school](#). They all survived.

<sup>1</sup> The Guardian

<sup>2</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

<sup>3</sup> Unicef Innocenti Report Card 2001

<sup>4</sup> OECD

<sup>5</sup> OECD

<sup>6</sup> United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

## OTHER NEWS FROM THE POLLING AND POLITICAL WORLD

Nate Silver's [analysis](#) of the most and least accurate public pollsters of 2012 (Good news for TIPP; bad news for Gallup)

Mark Blumenthal's [analysis](#) of the accuracy of polling in 2012

Ezra Klein's [passionate endorsement](#) of "What It Takes," the late Richard Ben Cramer's classic book on the 1988 Presidential campaign.

Gallup finds Democrats have re-established [party-ID advantage](#)

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### Public Polling

#### PRESIDENT OBAMA'S JOB RATING

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Approve	Disapprove
<b>RCP.com Avg.</b>	<b>Jan 9</b>		<b>53%</b>	<b>42%</b>
Gallup	Jan 5-7	Adults	54%	39%
CNN	Dec 17-18	Reg Voters	50%	45%
ABC/WP	Dec 13-16	Reg Voters	55%	42%
CBS News	Dec 12-16	Adults	57%	37%
Fox News	Dec 9-11	Reg Voters	48%	46%

#### GENERIC HOUSE BALLOT

Polling Firm	Date	Sample	Dem	Rep
<b>RCP.com Avg.</b>	<b>Jan 9</b>		<b>47%</b>	<b>48%</b>
Politico/GWU/Battleground	Nov 4-5	L. Voters	46%	47%
CNN	Nov 2-4	L. Voters	48%	49%
Gallup	Nov 1-4	L. Voters	49%	48%

#### PARTY SELF ID

Polling Firm	Date	Dem	Rep	Ind/Other
Pollster.com Trend	Jan 9	36.2%	31.2%	29.4%