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Growing Public Support for Gun Rights

*More Say Guns Do More to Protect
Than Put People at Risk*

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
ON THIS REPORT:**

Carroll Doherty, Director of Political Research

Jocelyn Kiley, Associate Director

Rachel Weisel, Communications Associate

202.419.4372

www.pewresearch.org

Growing Public Support for Gun Rights

More Say Guns Do More to Protect Than Put People at Risk

For the first time in more than two decades of Pew Research Center surveys, there is more support for gun rights than gun control. Currently, 52% say it is more important to protect the right of Americans to own guns, while 46% say it is more important to control gun ownership.

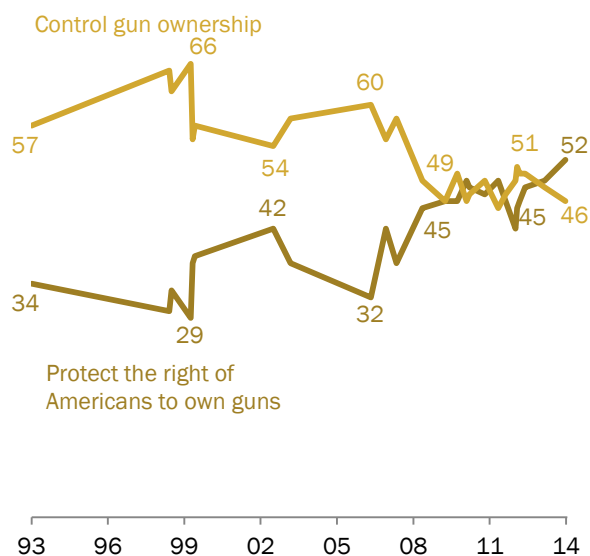
Support for gun rights has edged up from earlier this year, and marks a substantial shift in attitudes since shortly after the Newtown school shootings, which occurred two years ago this Sunday.

The balance of opinion favored gun control in the immediate aftermath of the Newtown tragedy in December 2012, and again a month later. Since January 2013, support for gun rights has increased seven percentage points – from 45% to 52% -- while the share prioritizing gun control has fallen five points (from 51% to 46%).

The latest national survey by the Pew Research Center, conducted Dec. 3-7 among 1,507 adults, also finds a shift in attitudes about whether gun ownership in this country does more to protect people or put people's safety at risk. Nearly six-in-ten Americans (57%) say gun ownership does more to protect people from becoming victims of crime, while 38% say it does more to endanger personal safety. In the days after Newtown, 48% said guns do more to protect people and 37% said they placed people at risk.

Two Years After Newtown, A Shift in Favor of Gun Rights

% saying it is more important to ...



Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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Increasing Number Say Gun Ownership Protects People From Crime

% who say gun ownership in this country does more to...

	Dec 2012 %	Dec 2014 %	Change
Protect people from becoming victims of crime	48	57	+9
Put people's safety at risk	37	38	+1
Don't know/Refused (Vol.)	16	5	-11
	100	100	

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014.

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Over the past two years, blacks' views on this measure have changed dramatically.

Currently, 54% of blacks say gun ownership does more to protect people than endanger personal safety, nearly double the percentage saying this in December 2012 (29%). By contrast, whites' views have shown less change: 62% now view guns as doing more to protect people, up from 54% in December 2012.

Partisan differences on this question, already sizeable in 2012, have widened over the last two years. As was the case in December 2012, a majority of Democrats (60%) say guns do more to put people's safety at risk, while only about a third (35%) say they do more to

protect people from becoming crime victims. By contrast, eight-in-ten Republicans say guns do more to protect people from becoming crime victims, up 17-points from 2012.

More Conservative Republicans, African Americans Say Gun Ownership Protects People From Crime

% who say gun ownership in this country does more to...

	December 2012		December 2014		Change in "protect from being victims"
	Protect from being crime victims	Put people's safety at risk	Protect from being crime victims	Put people's safety at risk	
	%	%	%	%	
Total	48	37	57	38	+9
Men	55	30	63	32	+8
Women	40	43	51	43	+11
White	54	33	62	34	+8
Black	29	53	54	41	+25
Republican	63	21	80	16	+17
Conservative Rep	70	16	86	10	+16
Independent	53	33	62	33	+9
Democrat	33	56	35	60	+2
Cons/Mod Dem	39	50	47	49	+8
Liberal Dem	23	65	20	76	-3

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Don't know responses not shown.
Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics.

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Across many demographic and political groups, opinion has moved in the direction of greater support for gun rights since January 2013, though the overall differences between demographic groups are largely unchanged.

Today, about six-in-ten whites (61%) prioritize gun rights over gun control. By contrast, only about a third of blacks say this (34%) while six-in-ten (60%) say it is more important to control gun ownership. And Hispanics prioritize gun control over gun rights by a wide 71% to 25% margin.

Among those who have not attended college, 53% say it is more important to protect gun rights. Those with graduate degrees continue to support controlling gun ownership at higher levels than those in other groups.

As in the past, Republicans support protecting gun rights over controlling gun ownership by a substantial margin (76% to 22%), and support for protecting gun rights is particularly high among

Broad Increase in Support for Gun Rights

% saying it is more important to ...

	January 2013		December 2014	
	Protect right to own guns %	Control ownership %	Protect right to own guns %	Control ownership %
Total	45	51	52	46
Men	51	44	61	37
Women	38	57	43	54
18-29	39	59	47	52
30-49	48	47	49	49
50-64	44	51	57	39
65+	45	47	53	43
White	53	42	61	37
Black	24	66	34	60
Hispanic	27	72	25	71
College grad+	39	55	42	56
Post grad	32	65	37	61
College degree	42	51	46	52
Some college	52	45	58	39
HS or less	43	52	53	44
Republican	70	27	76	22
Conservative Rep	74	23	83	15
Independent	49	47	56	42
Democrat	22	73	28	69
Cons/Mod Dem	25	70	37	61
Liberal Dem	15	81	14	81
Parents	46	51	50	48
Non-parents	44	51	52	45
Urban	37	57	42	55
Suburban	44	51	52	45
Rural	60	37	68	30

Survey conducted Dec. 3-7, 2014. Don't know responses not shown. Whites and blacks include only non-Hispanics; Hispanics are of any race.

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conservative Republicans (83%).

Conversely, a majority of Democrats say that it is more important to control gun ownership (69%) than to protect the right of Americans to own guns (28%). Liberal Democrats, in particular, prioritize controlling gun ownership (81% say this, while just 14% say protecting gun rights is more important).

About the Survey

The analysis in this report is based on telephone interviews conducted December 3-7, 2014 among a national sample of 1,507 adults, 18 years of age or older, living in all 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia (605 respondents were interviewed on a landline telephone, and 902 were interviewed on a cell phone, including 513 who had no landline telephone). The survey was conducted by interviewers at Princeton Data Source under the direction of Princeton Survey Research Associates International. A combination of landline and cell phone random digit dial samples were used; both samples were provided by Survey Sampling International. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Respondents in the landline sample were selected by randomly asking for the youngest adult male or female who is now at home. Interviews in the cell sample were conducted with the person who answered the phone, if that person was an adult 18 years of age or older. For detailed information about our survey methodology, see <http://people-press.org/methodology/>

The combined landline and cell phone sample are weighted using an iterative technique that matches gender, age, education, race, Hispanic origin and nativity and region to parameters from the 2012 Census Bureau's American Community Survey and population density to parameters from the Decennial Census. The sample also is weighted to match current patterns of telephone status (landline only, cell phone only, or both landline and cell phone), based on extrapolations from the 2013 National Health Interview Survey. The weighting procedure also accounts for the fact that respondents with both landline and cell phones have a greater probability of being included in the combined sample and adjusts for household size among respondents with a landline phone. Sampling errors and statistical tests of significance take into account the effect of weighting.

The following table shows the unweighted sample sizes and the error attributable to sampling that would be expected at the 95% level of confidence for different groups in the survey:

Group	Unweighted sample size	Plus or minus ...
Total sample	1,507	2.9 percentage points
Republican	408	5.6 percentage points
Democrat	445	5.4 percentage points
Independent	574	4.7 percentage points
White non-Hispanic	1,077	3.4 percentage points
Black non-Hispanic	132	9.8 percentage points
Hispanic	172	8.6 percentage points

Sample sizes and sampling errors for other subgroups are available upon request.

In addition to sampling error, one should bear in mind that question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of opinion polls.

**PEW RESEARCH CENTER
DECEMBER 2014 POLITICAL SURVEY
FINAL TOPLINE
DECEMBER 3-7, 2014
N=1,507**

QUESTIONS 1-7F2, 12a, 12cF1-12hF2, 18-21, 24, 30a-31, 36-38b, 40, 45-46 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE

NO QUESTIONS 3-4, 8-11, 13-16, 22-23, 25-29, 32-35, 39, 41-44, 47-52

QUESTIONS 12b, 17 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED

ASK ALL:

Q.53 What do you think is more important – to protect the right of Americans to own guns, OR to control gun ownership?

IF OPINION GIVEN (Q.53=1,2), ASK [N=1,466]:

Q.54 Do you feel strongly about that, or not?

	Protect the right of -----Americans to own guns-----				-----Control gun ownership-----				
	Net	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Not strongly</i>	<i>(VOL.) DK/Ref</i>	Net	<i>Strongly</i>	<i>Not strongly</i>	<i>(VOL.) DK/Ref</i>	<i>(VOL.) DK/Ref</i>
Dec 3-7, 2014	52	47	4	*	46	37	8	1	3
Jan 23-Feb 9, 2014	49	--	--	--	48	--	--	--	3
May 1-5, 2013	48	--	--	--	50	--	--	--	2
Feb 13-18, 2013 (U)	46	--	--	--	50	--	--	--	4
Jan 9-13, 2013	45	39	5	*	51	41	9	*	5
Dec 17-19, 2012	42	37	4	*	49	42	6	2	9
July 26-29, 2012	46	--	--	--	47	--	--	--	6
Apr 4-15, 2012	49	--	--	--	45	--	--	--	6
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	47	--	--	--	49	--	--	--	5
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	48	--	--	--	47	--	--	--	6
Jan 13-16, 2011	49	--	--	--	46	--	--	--	6
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010	46	--	--	--	50	--	--	--	4
Mar 10-14, 2010	46	--	--	--	46	--	--	--	7
Mar 31-Apr 21, 2009	45	--	--	--	49	--	--	--	6
April, 2008	37	--	--	--	58	--	--	--	5
November, 2007	42	--	--	--	55	--	--	--	3
April, 2007	32	--	--	--	60	--	--	--	8
February, 2004	37	31	6	*	58	46	11	1	5
June, 2003	42	--	--	--	54	--	--	--	4
May, 2000	38	--	--	--	57	--	--	--	5
April, 2000	37	--	--	--	55	--	--	--	8
March, 2000	29	--	--	--	66	--	--	--	5
June, 1999	33	--	--	--	62	--	--	--	5
May, 1999	30	--	--	--	65	--	--	--	5
December, 1993	34	--	--	--	57	--	--	--	9

ASK ALL:

Q.55 Do you think that gun ownership in this country does more to **[INSERT OPTION; RANDOMIZE]** or does more to **[NEXT OPTION]**?

Dec 3-7 <u>2014</u>		Dec 17-19 <u>2012</u>
57	Protect people from becoming victims of crime	48
38	Put people's safety at risk	37
5	Don't know/Refused (VOL.)	16

NO QUESTIONS 56-60, 62-65, 67-69, 71-73, 79-84**QUESTIONS 61a-66a, 70, 85a-89 HELD FOR FUTURE RELEASE****QUESTIONS 74-78 PREVIOUSLY RELEASED****ASK ALL:**

PARTY In politics TODAY, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

ASK IF INDEP/NO PREF/OTHER/DK/REF (PARTY=3,4,5,9):

PARTYLN As of today do you lean more to the Republican Party or more to the Democratic Party?

				(VOL.)	(VOL.)	(VOL.)	Lean	Lean
	Republican	Democrat	Independent	No preference	Other party	DK/Ref	Rep	Dem
Dec 3-7, 2014	24	31	39	3	1	2	17	17
Nov 6-9, 2014	27	32	36	2	*	1	15	16
Oct 15-20, 2014	24	33	38	4	*	1	13	17
Sep 2-9, 2014	24	33	38	3	1	2	15	15
Aug 20-24, 2014	24	31	37	4	1	4	15	16
Jul 8-14, 2014	25	34	37	2	1	1	16	15
Apr 23-27, 2014	24	30	41	2	1	2	18	17
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	22	31	41	3	1	2	17	17
Feb 14-23, 2014	22	32	39	4	1	2	14	17
Jan 15-19, 2014	21	31	41	3	1	2	18	16
Dec 3-8, 2013	24	34	37	3	*	2	17	15
Yearly Totals								
2013	23.9	32.1	38.3	2.9	.5	2.2	16.0	16.0
2012	24.7	32.6	36.4	3.1	.5	2.7	14.4	16.1
2011	24.3	32.3	37.4	3.1	.4	2.5	15.7	15.6
2010	25.2	32.7	35.2	3.6	.4	2.8	14.5	14.1
2009	23.9	34.4	35.1	3.4	.4	2.8	13.1	15.7
2008	25.7	36.0	31.5	3.6	.3	3.0	10.6	15.2
2007	25.3	32.9	34.1	4.3	.4	2.9	10.9	17.0
2006	27.8	33.1	30.9	4.4	.3	3.4	10.5	15.1
2005	29.3	32.8	30.2	4.5	.3	2.8	10.3	14.9
2004	30.0	33.5	29.5	3.8	.4	3.0	11.7	13.4
2003	30.3	31.5	30.5	4.8	.5	2.5	12.0	12.6
2002	30.4	31.4	29.8	5.0	.7	2.7	12.4	11.6
2001	29.0	33.2	29.5	5.2	.6	2.6	11.9	11.6
2001 Post-Sept 11	30.9	31.8	27.9	5.2	.6	3.6	11.7	9.4
2001 Pre-Sept 11	27.3	34.4	30.9	5.1	.6	1.7	12.1	13.5
2000	28.0	33.4	29.1	5.5	.5	3.6	11.6	11.7
1999	26.6	33.5	33.7	3.9	.5	1.9	13.0	14.5
1998	27.9	33.7	31.1	4.6	.4	2.3	11.6	13.1
1997	28.0	33.4	32.0	4.0	.4	2.3	12.2	14.1
1996	28.9	33.9	31.8	3.0	.4	2.0	12.1	14.9
1995	31.6	30.0	33.7	2.4	.6	1.3	15.1	13.5
1994	30.1	31.5	33.5	1.3	--	3.6	13.7	12.2
1993	27.4	33.6	34.2	4.4	1.5	2.9	11.5	14.9
1992	27.6	33.7	34.7	1.5	0	2.5	12.6	16.5
1991	30.9	31.4	33.2	0	1.4	3.0	14.7	10.8
1990	30.9	33.2	29.3	1.2	1.9	3.4	12.4	11.3
1989	33	33	34	--	--	--	--	--
1987	26	35	39	--	--	--	--	--

ASK REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS ONLY (PARTY=1 OR PARTYLN=1):

TEAPARTY3 From what you know, do you agree or disagree with the Tea Party movement, or don't you have an opinion either way?

BASED ON REPUBLICANS AND REPUBLICAN LEANERS [N=660]:

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion either way	(VOL.) Haven't heard of	(VOL.) Refused	Not heard of/ DK
Dec 3-7, 2014	34	9	55	2	1	--
Nov 6-9, 2014	31	10	57	1	1	--
Oct 15-20, 2014	32	8	56	2	2	--
Sep 2-9, 2014	38	10	50	1	1	--
Aug 20-24, 2014	34	10	53	*	2	--
Jul 8-14, 2014	35	12	50	2	1	--
Apr 23-27, 2014	33	11	54	1	1	--
Jan 23-Mar 16, 2014	37	11	50	1	1	--
Feb 14-23, 2014	36	9	54	1	1	--
Jan 15-19, 2014	35	12	52	1	*	--
Dec 3-8, 2013	32	9	57	1	1	--
Oct 30-Nov 6, 2013	40	9	48	2	1	--
Oct 9-13, 2013	41	11	45	2	1	--
Sep 4-8, 2013	35	9	54	1	1	--
Jul 17-21, 2013	37	10	50	2	1	--
Jun 12-16, 2013	44	9	46	1	2	--
May 23-26, 2013	41	7	48	1	3	--
May 1-5, 2013	28	8	61	2	1	--
Mar 13-17, 2013	43	7	47	1	1	--
Feb 13-18, 2013	36	9	52	1	3	--
Feb 14-17, 2013	43	9	45	1	2	--
Jan 9-13, 2013	35	10	51	2	2	--
Dec 5-9, 2012	37	11	51	1	*	--
Oct 31-Nov 3, 2012 (RVs)	40	8	49	1	2	--
Oct 4-7, 2012	38	9	50	1	3	--
Sep 12-16, 2013	39	7	52	1	1	--
Jun 28-Jul 9, 2012	40	9	47	2	1	--
Jun 7-17, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
May 9-Jun 3, 2012	36	9	53	1	2	--
Apr 4-15, 2012	42	8	48	1	1	--
Mar 7-11, 2012	38	10	49	2	1	--
Feb 8-12, 2012	40	7	51	1	1	--
Jan 11-16, 2012	42	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 4-8, 2012	37	8	52	1	1	--
Dec 7-11, 2011	40	9	48	2	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Nov 9-14, 2011	41	9	49	*	1	--
Sep 22-Oct 4, 2011	37	11	51	1	1	--
Aug 17-21, 2011	43	7	49	*	1	--
Jul 20-24, 2011	40	7	51	*	1	--
Jun 15-19, 2011	42	9	47	1	1	--
May 25-30, 2011	37	7	52	1	3	--
Mar 30-Apr 3, 2011	45	9	46	*	1	--
Mar 8-14, 2011	37	7	54	1	*	--
Feb 22-Mar 1, 2011	41	9	48	1	1	--
Feb 2-7, 2011 ¹	43	8	47	1	1	--
Jan 5-9, 2011	45	6	47	1	1	--
Dec 1-5, 2010	48	5	45	1	1	--

¹ In the February 2-7, 2011, survey and before, question read "...do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the Tea Party movement..." In October 2010 and earlier, question was asked only of those who had heard or read a lot or a little about the Tea Party. In May 2010 through October 2010, it was described as: "the Tea Party movement that has been involved in campaigns and protests in the U.S. over the past year." In March 2010 it was described as "the Tea Party protests that have taken place in the U.S. over the past year."

TEAPARTY3 CONTINUED...

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No opinion either way</u>	(VOL.) <u>Haven't heard of</u>	(VOL.) <u>Refused</u>	Not heard of/ <u>DK</u>
Nov 4-7, 2010	51	5	42	1	1	--
Oct 27-30, 2010 (RVs)	58	5	27	--	1	9
Oct 13-18, 2010 (RVs)	54	5	30	--	1	10
Aug 25-Sep 6, 2010 (RVs)	56	6	29	--	*	9
Jul 21-Aug 5, 2010	46	5	36	--	1	13
Jun 16-20, 2010	46	5	30	--	*	19
May 20-23, 2010	53	4	25	--	1	16
Mar 11-21, 2010	48	4	26	--	1	21

Key to Pew Research trends noted in the topline:

(U) Pew Research Center/USA Today polls