

There Is a Problem with Politics, Not Guns, in the United States

Gun Violence, 2015
From Opposing Viewpoints in Context

"Politicians ... have been more than happy to ignore the easily identifiable, but politically tricky, origins of [gang violence](#) and criminal activity."

In the following viewpoint, Michael Schaus argues that Chicago's high rate of [gun violence](#) coupled with strict [gun control](#) illustrates that the problem there is not about guns. Schaus contends that rather than being a problem of guns, the real problem in Chicago is the ruling politics of the last several years. He claims that progressive, liberal politics created a situation that led to gang violence and criminal activity. Schaus is the associate editor for *Townhall Finance* and the executive producer for Ransom Notes Radio.

As you read, consider the following questions:

1. Schaus claims that it is not too little gun control but a failure of what that has brought Chicago to a state of deterioration?
2. The author claims that it is unsurprising that Chicago has a violence problem due to what two factors?
3. What political party does Schaus claim has had a monopoly on Chicago government for many years?

Between Friday night, and Sunday evening [May 2-4, 2014], 28 people had been shot in Rahm Emanuel's gun control utopia (Chicago). Which, unbelievably, shows an improvement over the previous weekend, which tacked on more than 40 gunshot victims to the city's climbing statistics. And, heck, with the CPD's [Chicago Police Department's] recent scandal surrounding how they classify various crimes, it almost makes you wonder if these numbers are more "ballpark" figures than actual stats.

Gun Control in Chicago

It would be easy to begin writing an article aimed at the abject failure of gun control. But, truthfully, Chicago's failure goes far deeper than misguided (Bloomberg approved) regulation schemes. Since the days of [former Chicago mayor] Bill Thompson came to an end (nearly 80 years ago) the Democrats have had a monopoly on efforts to fix violence, gang activity, and inequality in the Windy City. And if you're thinking, "It doesn't seem to be working"... well, you'd be right.

Even Chicago's police superintendent seems to understand this (to an extent). Of course, being the good Progressive that he is, he glossed right over the primary culprits for Chicago's woes and instead focused on disarming the law-abiding citizens he has sworn to protect. Via WGN radio:

It's going to take a while to fix poverty and the breakup of the family unit, and education and jobs. But we can do something about [gun laws](#) today and we're just not doing it.

Right ... because *that's* the problem with Chicago: Too little gun control. I mean, heck, it hasn't exactly worked out that well so far, but why not double down? Right? The fact is, the failure of *Liberalism* has brought the city to its current state of deterioration. The Chicago model of unconstitutional restrictions on keeping and bearing arms has done little more than add fuel to the fire. Politicians, meanwhile, have been more than happy to ignore the easily identifiable, but politically tricky, origins of gang violence and criminal activity.

The Real Cause of Violence

Despite embracing the union-led concept of public education, nearly 80 percent of the city's 8th graders aren't proficient in reading and writing. And while schools are going without heat, electricity, or (in some cases) adequate security, teachers make a salary that is more than \$10,000 *higher* than the median Chicago *household's* income. Being one of the best-funded education systems in America, it borders on audacious absurdity when the unions start crying about not having enough resources. Especially when you consider the way Democrats are on course to spend the city into being the next Detroit.

Of course, all that tax revenue and debt was being used for a good cause, right? Wasn't that deficit spending, borrowing, and begging from the state and federal government (as well as the general public) supposed to help fund antipoverty programs, and create "shovel ready" jobs? Because, if that *was* the case, it seems kinda curious that Chicago has some uncomfortably high poverty rates when compared to other large US cities. This almost seems like a silly thing to ask, but: *Hey Democrats, maybe we could try something new?*

With an education system that has utterly failed inner-city [youth](#), and antipoverty programs that have done little more than spur an exodus of private capital, it's unsurprising to see violence sweep areas of Chicago like an epidemic ... especially when the "Progressives" downtown have managed to disarm most of the remaining *law-abiding* citizens.

The Failure of Progressivism

The lesson of Chicago is rather simple: Progressivism can't provide for the poor. Progressivism can't provide the masses with quality education, health care, or housing. And, Progressivism can't keep its people safe. While Democrats have taxed, spent, and regulated with relative impunity, Chicago continues to suffer misery and inequality on scales rarely matched by other US cities.

Chicago Democrat politicians continue to repackage, and resell, to the city's voters the very policy proposals that helped create their current plight. I often say that Progressives haven't had a new idea in roughly 100 years (seriously: health care, tax hikes, deficit spending ... it's all been tried), and Chicago is a prime example of Progressive monopoly in government. Each new administration promised its citizens the same policies as the previous administration, with "new and improved" projected results.

The only thing closer to [Albert] Einstein's definition of insanity was America's decision to elect a politician from that city to be president of the [United States](#) ... Twice.

Further Readings

Books

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- Daniel W. Webster and Jon S. Vernick, eds. *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis*. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013.
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- Adam Winkler *Gunfight: The Battle Over the Right to Bear Arms in America*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2013.

Periodicals

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- Nora Caplan-Bricker "Are Guns a Public Health Issue? Let Us Count the Ways ..." *New Republic*, April 3, 2014.
- Daniel Greenfield "America Doesn't Have a Gun Problem, It Has a Gang Problem," *FrontPageMag.com*, December 31, 2012.
- David Kopel "Guns in America: Arming the Right People Can Save Lives," *Los Angeles Times*, January 15, 2013.
- John Lott "Children and Guns: The Fear and the Reality," *National Review Online*, May 13, 2013.
- Dean Obeidallah "Gun Violence Is a Public Health Epidemic," *CNN*, November 8, 2013.
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