

so requires ducking the mailed fist of the state, go ahead.

Fair enough, but suppose that instead of armed revolt against the King, the colonists in 1775 had increased their disobedience of British laws? Browne would answer that if the people had maximized their opportunities for freedom instead of taking up arms, in time the spread between what it cost to control the colonies and what they yielded in taxes would have caused the King to abandon them in disgust. Maybe so. Or maybe the havens of freedom would have been exterminated one by one and today we would be saddled with a terribly invasive megastate. Which is where we are anyway.

A useful, thought-provoking book. ☐

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More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws

by John R. Lott, Jr.

University of Chicago Press • 1998 • 232 pages
• \$23.00

Reviewed by Dave Kopel

Gun prohibition kills people. Guns in the hands of responsible citizens save lives and make everyone safer—even the employees of gun-control organizations. University of Chicago economist and law professor John R. Lott, Jr., proves those claims beyond a reasonable doubt in his new book, *More Guns, Less Crime: Understanding Crime and Gun Control Laws*. Single-handedly, Lott has redefined the gun-control debate in the United States.

Lott first appeared on the national firearms-policy scene in 1996 with the release of his research about concealed-carry laws. As of 1985, only a handful of states allowed citizens to legally carry firearms in the streets and other public places for protection. But now, 31 states do so; except for Vermont and Idaho (outside Boise), which require no permit at all, all of the states have some type of “shall

issue” law. Under these laws, an ordinary citizen who passes a background check—and in some states, safety training—is issued a permit to carry a handgun for lawful protection.

Lott’s meticulous research far surpassed all previous work on the effects of those laws. He collected data from 3,054 counties in the United States over a 15-year period and examined changes in the rates for nine different crimes, not just homicide. He also accounted for the effects of dozens of other variables, including changes in arrest rates, changes in the age and racial composition of a county’s population, changes in national crime rates, and other changes in gun-control laws, including the adoption of waiting periods.

The results? Concealed-handgun license laws significantly reduce violent crime. The rates of homicide, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault fall between 5 and 8 percent. Crimes begin dropping immediately, but the full benefits of concealed-handgun laws take about three years to make themselves fully felt. The larger the percentage of the population with permits, the greater the drop in crime.

Lott also found a small but statistically significant increase in non-confrontational property crimes such as larceny. Apparently, concealed-handgun laws do not erase criminals’ appetite for other people’s property, but the laws do encourage the more rational criminals to acquire the property in ways that do not risk their lives.

More Guns, Less Crime includes additional research that Lott has conducted since 1996. For example, he found that after one state enacts a concealed-weapons law, crime rates in neighboring states without concealed-weapons laws tend to increase; criminals who live near state borders make sure to choose victims who can’t protect themselves.

The best antidote to guns in the wrong hands is guns in the right hands. Lott’s data show that states with concealed-handgun laws enjoy a 69 percent lower rate of mass murders in public places than states without such laws, all other things being equal.

Despite the high level of statistical sophistication in *More Guns, Less Crime*, the book is pleasant to read. Lott lays out the data in an accessible manner, building from simpler sta-

tistical models to more complex ones. The book serves not only as a guide to firearms policy, but as a readable introduction to multivariate statistical analysis.

The most interesting part of the book, however, is the chapter in which Lott addresses the criticism of his research. In marked contrast to the anti-gun researchers funded by federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Lott has made his data readily available to any and all researchers.

To the anti-gun movement, the statistics on crime deterrence are irrelevant. But anyone with an interest in rational firearms policy ought to thank John Lott for writing this excellent book. *More Guns, Less Crime* would be a fine gift for your state representative, local newspaper editor, or public library. □

Dave Kopel is research director at the Independence Institute, a free-market think tank in Colorado (<http://i2i.org>). His most recent book, with Paul Blackman, is No More Wacos: What's Wrong with Federal Law Enforcement and How to Fix It.

Medical Warrior

by Miguel A. Faria, Jr., M.D.

Hacienda Publishing • 1997 • 207 pages • \$23.95

Reviewed by Conrad F. Meier

Warning! If you have high blood pressure, consult your physician before reading *Medical Warrior*. Dr. Miguel Faria writes with such fervor and conviction about the looming dangers of a health-care system dominated by big government, big business, and big labor that people with medical problems may wish to read something far less provocative.

In this collection of his published essays, Faria offers us a depressing look at the continuing statist re-invention of our health-care system. Readers are introduced to an impending health-care dictatorship the author describes as “corporate socialism,” dominated by federal regulations and financed by billions of taxpayer dollars, but indifferent to the desires and welfare of individual patients. It is a frightful prospect.

Faria, a neurosurgeon who left Cuba as a child, sees events with the clarity that so often comes from having lived under tyranny. He writes that the proposals for health-care “reform” are “as much a threat to the preservation of the sanctity of the doctor-patient relationship, Hippocratic medicine, and patient and physician autonomy, as socialized medicine in the form of a single-payer system. . . . In fact, the failures and shortcomings of the managed care/managed competition scheme may lead in the end directly to the single-payer system, when the ‘free-market’ is erroneously blamed for the failure and collapse of corporatism in American medicine.”

The last of Faria’s essays in the book is dated July 1995, but events have validated his concerns. Beginning in 1996, with the formation of the National Health Policy Board, government intervention in medical care has proceeded apace. We have seen enactment of guaranteed issue of health insurance, price controls in the form of community rating, new unfunded health-care mandates, patient-access laws, Medicare changes that compromise seniors’ freedom to buy health insurance that they desire, Medicaid changes that force citizens out of fee-for-service and into restrictive managed care, and a \$40 billion federal program for children’s health care. Faria (and others) warned against taking this path, but the political urge to devise highly publicized “solutions” to health-care problems that are the result of previous interventions is just too powerful. More are waiting in the wings.

Faria has not only stood against the trend toward socialized medicine but also against the medical profession’s moves into peripheral social issues—for example, gun control. The American Medical Association has advocated restrictive legislation as part of its campaign against domestic violence. In the *Journal of the Medical Association of Georgia*, which he used to edit, Faria wrote that gun control was an attack on individual liberty that would do nothing to reduce violence. That temerity got him fired from the journal. His chapter “Editorial Lynching in the Deep South” recounts his battles with the Medical Association of Georgia and the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*.