

Introduction

On September 13, 2004, the federal ban on assault weapons is scheduled to end. As this date approaches, increasing attention has focused on the gun industry's almost complete success in evading the ban. Based on the research conducted for this report, the Violence Policy Center (VPC) estimates that **there are more assault weapon manufacturers and assault weapons available for sale in America than ever before.**

Contained in this study are more than 40 companies that are currently marketing new assault weapons for sale legally in the United States. Many of these companies either did not exist, or did not manufacture assault weapons, prior to the 1994 ban.^a

Semiautomatic assault weapons manufactured by these gunmakers include: "copycat" AK-47s, AR-15s, UZIs, Galils, MP5s, and FN/FALs; semiautomatic versions of "classic" weapons such as the Tommy Gun and Sten; and, various hybrids.^b New AK-47s equipped with high-capacity ammunition magazines that can hold 20, 30, 40, or more rounds are common and can be purchased for less than \$300.

At the same time, new assault weapon models that did not exist when the 1994 law was passed, such as the \$199 Hi-Point Carbine used in the 1999 Columbine massacre, have been introduced and are selling briskly.

The VPC estimates that **more than one million new assault weapons have been manufactured for sale in the United States since passage of the 1994 law.**^c

If the 1994 ban is simply renewed, and not strengthened, every single one of the assault weapons pictured in this study will remain on the market, legal for sale to the American public. Simple renewal of the ban will do absolutely nothing to address the threat posed by these weapons.

^a Estimate taken from Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) production figures, analysis of gun industry trade publications and general readership gun magazines, and annual attendance at the S.H.O.T. (Shooting, Hunting, and Outdoor Trade) Show, the annual trade show for the gun industry.

^b Because of the transient nature of the gun industry and the lack of reliable, comprehensive information on firearms manufacturing in the United States, it is impossible to offer an exact number of manufacturers currently producing "copycat" assault weapons as well as the actual number of such guns manufactured. For this study, the Violence Policy Center collected information from manufacturers attending the 2004 S.H.O.T. Show, reviewed advertisements by gunmakers in industry trade publications and consumer gun publications, and surveyed the Internet for manufacturer web sites.

^c The VPC estimate is taken from ATF production data, 1995 to 2001, and relies primarily on gunmakers who are known to manufacture only, or primarily, assault weapons. This is an extremely conservative estimate and does not take into account the large numbers of assault weapons imported into the U.S. since 1994. Production data from ATF is extremely limited. Long guns are reported only as rifles or shotguns. In addition, in 2004 the U.S. Congress banned for at least one year the future release of firearms production data to the general public.

This study contains four sections.

Section One: *A Flawed Law* details how virtually from the inception of the 1994 law America's firearms industry has easily evaded the ban's intent and bragged of its success in manufacturing "copycat" or "sporterized" assault weapons. The section also briefly details the findings of a 2003 Violence Policy Center analysis of Federal Bureau of Investigation data which found that from 1998 through 2001, one out of five law enforcement officers slain in the line of duty were killed with an assault weapon, including "copycat" versions of banned weapons and assault weapons not covered by the original law.

Section Two: *Legislation That Would Effectively Ban All Assault Weapons* offers a brief summary of federal legislation—the "Assault Weapons Ban and Law Enforcement Protection Act of 2003"—that has been introduced in the U.S. Senate and House that would strengthen current law and address the industry's subversion of the 1994 ban. The legislation is based on California's 1999 state assault weapons ban, which, unlike federal law, addresses the "copycat" issue.

Section Three: *Assault Weapon Manufacturers* contains brief profiles of 42 gunmakers that currently market post-ban, "copycat" assault weapons as well as new assault weapon types. Each profile contains available company contact information (address, telephone, fax, and web address) as well as examples of the assault weapons sold by the gunmaker.

Section Four: *A Listing of Assault Weapon Manufacturers by State* is a chart listing the state and city of each of the 42 current assault weapon manufacturers.