

Sowell forgot to look at statistics

By: Mark S. Gailey – April 28, 2013

Thomas Sowell certainly shot himself in the foot (pun intended) by using gun control statistics from England to justify his stand against tighter gun control laws in the United States (E-R Opinions, Monday). His rationale was to state that "armed crimes skyrocketed" under increasingly severe gun control laws in late 20th century England.

Let's look at data that clearly trumps that claim: The most recent figures available indicate that there were 9,369 gun murders (which certainly constitute "armed crimes") per year in the United States (population of nearly 316 million) while the gun murders per year in the U.K. were 14 (out of a population of about 63 million).

For comparison's sake, that U.K. figure could be prorated to 70 gun murders if the population of the U.K. were to be 316 million.

A prorated 70 annual gun murders in the U.K. — compared to 9,369 annual gun murders in the U.S. — hardly constitutes what anyone would consider to be a "skyrocketing" rate. The reverse comparison would definitely be true.

One more concern with the "evidence" Sowell used in his commentary is his use of statistics on the defensive use of guns from the ultra-conservative American Libertarian think tank Cato Institute, whose co-founder was Charles Koch. Charles Koch and his brother have quietly given more than \$100 million to right-wing causes. I'd encourage Sowell to find a less biased data source to justify his arguments.

— Mark S. Gailey, Chico