



## Cato Institute study says armed citizens prevent thousands of crimes

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Researchers at the Cato Institute have reviewed eight years worth of news reports about shooting in self-defense and conclude, "the vast majority of gun owners are ethical and competent, and tens of thousands of crimes are prevented each year by ordinary citizens with guns."

The conservative Washington, D.C. think tank has released "Tough Targets: When Criminals Face Armed Resistance from Citizens," just a few days after [Wisconsin's first instance](#) of a concealed carry permit holder shooting at an armed robber, at a Milwaukee grocery store. In fact, the incident is already on the Cato Institute's [interactive map](#) that accompanies the report.

[The report's](#) authors argue that because only when a citizen actually shoots a criminal subject does the incident make the news, there are likely thousands of times when the mere display of a legal weapon stops a crime from happening. But the study also acknowledges that prior estimates range widely, from less than a million to more than 2 million a year. So the authors instead turn to about 5,000 news reports of defensive gun use to draw conclusions about the actors, their circumstances, motivations and outcomes. While concealed carry proponents will likely see the collection as a kind of greatest hits of the 2nd Amendment, there are few counter-examples.

"Not every defensive gun use ends well— the data set identifies 36 incidents in which a defender was killed," the report states.

Analysis and history accounts for about a third of the 58-page report, while short summaries of defensive shooting makes up the rest.