

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Do your own research on gun statistics

By: Jim Voss – May 9, 2013

I read with interest the letter "Purpose of armed law-abiding civilians is to save lives" (May 2). In that letter, it pointed to several scientific studies that concluded 2.5 million crimes are stopped or deterred each year by gun owners. That number seemed high, so I did a little research.

Evidence of that study dates from the 1990s and has been challenged many times over the years. However, it has been a favorite talking point of gun advocates ever since. It took me two minutes of searching to find an eight-year study by the Cato Institute that directly contradicts those numbers. Keep in mind that the Cato study is actually in support of gun ownership, but concludes that "tens" of thousands of crimes are stopped or deterred each year by gun owners. Other articles by the Cato Institute suggest the highly inflated numbers may suffer from exaggeration or outright lies.

So, the bottom line here is to do some research yourself to make an informed decision. Do not believe statistics posted in letters, blogs or individual websites, by either side.

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