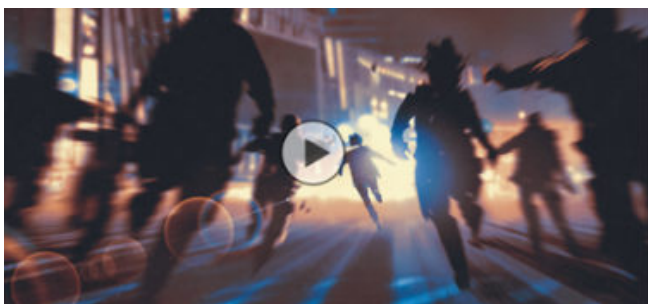


Smart Guns on the Horizon

As we head into the 2022 elections, one thing we can be sure of is that the gun control debate will once again come to the forefront. Gun control groups, lobbyists, politicians, and pundits just can't seem to accept the idea that not everyone is on board with their agenda. They are firmly convinced that they are smarter than the rest of us and that, as such, they need to protect us from ourselves. This justifies using any and every trick in the book in order to succeed in their mission of repealing the protections offered to us by the Second Amendment and taking guns out of our hands.

Actually, I've long felt that what the gun control cabal really wants is to repeal the laws of physics that allow firearms to function. Since they can't do that, even though they are firmly convinced that those laws are wrong, they've decided that the Second Amendment was written in error and has to mean something other than what it clearly states. After all, how could the Founding Fathers possibly give us such a privilege, knowing that we would surely use it to kill each other?

Another thing I see going on with those who support gun control is that they are projecting their own failings on the rest of us. They talk about how violent gun owners are, which is false in almost all cases. If we are as violent as they say we are, we would have taken them out long ago. Those who commit violent acts with guns are called criminals, and interestingly enough, most of them are Democrats.



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Today, we have 22 states that have some form of constitutional carry, compared to only one state a decade ago when I first started tracking it. That alone should show that the American people are not in favor of gun control. Yet, according to those pushing to take our rights away, that is the aberration, something they have to rectify in their greater wisdom.

Somehow the left has the idea that gun owners are against safety as if we all left loaded firearms sitting around the house where our children can get to them. Yet nothing could be further from the truth. Gun safety doesn't come from eliminating guns but from teaching people about them. My own mother, who hates guns to this day, insisted that my dad teach my brother and me to shoot when he brought guns into our home. Even as ignorant as she was about guns, she understood that the only way to ensure that my brother and I wouldn't have an accident with a gun was to make sure we knew what we were doing with them and how to handle them safely.

Maybe if that attitude had existed on the set of "Rust," Alec Baldwin wouldn't have accidentally shot and killed that cinematographer. But Hollywood being Hollywood, they let their hatred of the NRA and the political right get in the way, keeping them from hiring a NRA-certified firearms instructor to make sure their set and their usage of firearms on the set were safe.

Yet we, the law-abiding gun owners, are supposedly the bad guys.

If there's one thing we can be sure of, it's that the left won't stop their attacks on our Second Amendment rights. As we can see in places like California and Chicago, their answer to every misuse of a firearm by a criminal is to punish the law-abiding gun owners, but not one of their initiatives does a thing to stop criminal use of guns.

But there is one thing that the left is pushing, which does

show some potential for reducing accidental suicides and murders. That is smart gun technology. While often seen as something that has emerged in the last couple of years, this area of tech has actually been around for more than two decades. It has just had a slow start.

The basic concept behind smart gun tech is to have the gun recognize the owner of the gun so that it will only fire if the owner is the one handling it. There are many variants of this, including such as fingerprint scanners or guns linked to another device, such as a ring or watch. Just as some new cars won't start unless the key fob is inside the vehicle, this second category of smart gun needs the signal from its mating "fob" to unlock the gun's safety.

But will it Work?

A lot of what has held this technology back has been the difficulty in making it work correctly. I certainly wouldn't want to carry a gun for self-defense that I couldn't be sure would work when I needed it. That doesn't just go for smart guns, but up until now, it has been a very real concern. Apparently, the new generation of smart guns, which should hit the market this year, eliminates that problem. Maybe they've learned a thing or two from the automotive industry.

The other big thing that has held back smart guns is cost. Few gun owners, even first-time gun owners, are willing to pay \$300 extra for a pistol just to have that safety built-in. This also should be eliminated by the new generation of smart guns, which manufacturers boast won't be much more expensive than other comparable firearms.

Ok, But do Gun Owners Really Want

Them?

Surprisingly, there is some evidence that at least some gun owners are warming up to the idea of smart guns. While I have no interest in them myself, I might have a different attitude if I had small children living in my home. In that case, I can see where it would be useful to have any loaded gun that was not on my person, either safely tucked away in a gun safe or built with technology that would keep my small children from accidentally shooting that gun. The key here is safety.

Serious gun owners are all about safety, so if there is anything that might convince them to try using a smart gun, it is the safety potential they provide. But at the same time, smart gun owners understand the risk that comes along with that safety. With the gun only keyed to their personal use, family members cannot use their pistol to defend themselves.

Even so, according to one report, the safety that smart guns provide is starting to cause gun owners to change their opinion about them. In a recent poll by Morning Consult and reported by Gizmodo, 55% of gun owners and 39% of non-gun owners said they would be comfortable using smart gun technology. That's a huge increase over the previous poll, taken in 2019, where only 5% of gun owners surveyed said they would be very likely to purchase a smart gun.

To be honest, my first reaction to this was that it was left-wing propaganda—both mediabiasfactcheck.com and allsides.com rate Gizmodo as being left-leaning. But Morning Consult, the organization that did the study, is rated as one of the least biased websites.

So What's Going on Here?

First, as with any survey, we have to look at the actual questions asked. This new survey asked the question of whether

an individual would use a smart gun, whereas the 2019 survey asked if they would be likely to purchase a smart gun. I don't care how you spin the story, those aren't the same thing. I would use a smart gun if someone handed me one to try out, but that doesn't mean that I would buy one. Nor does it mean that I would depend on one for my personal protection. I don't have that much confidence in the technology, and until it is demonstrated to be infallible in real-life applications, I won't have that confidence.

There's also a huge difference between using a gun and carrying it as your daily carry for self-defense. I own guns that I use but never carry, as do many other gun owners. Some people just collect guns. Others like having a backup around. Either way that doesn't constitute using the gun for self-defense, especially carrying it for that purpose.

I strongly suspect that the figures in this recent study were strongly influenced by the way the questions were asked. Looking at Morning Consult's poll results and conclusions, it's clear that they removed the personal element from the study as much as possible. Asking questions about whether someone supports the idea in general isn't the same as asking if they would pay money to buy it.

A quick look at Morning Consult's article about their poll makes it seem that half of gun owners and half of society, in general, are in favor of smart guns and want to see them take over the handgun market. However, the wording of some of their questions leaves a lot in question. For example, they state that "nearly half of gun owners, public overall, back regulated legalization of smart guns." Just what does that mean?

Looking below that heading, the first paragraph talks about states that have passed laws in favor of smart guns, such as the New Jersey law that passed in 2002, which mandates that once personalized smart guns were available anywhere in the

United States, all handguns sold within the state of New Jersey would have to be smart guns within 30 months.

Yet it's easy to see that "regulated legislation of smart guns" could have more meanings than that. The statement is muddy enough that people will interpret it according to their own personal beliefs. So I, as a gun owner, would say that yes, I want these guns regulated, meaning that I want some legal controls put on them, preventing them from taking over the handgun market. Yet, in their study, that would come out as I being in favor of all handguns being required to be smart guns.

As always, anything having to do with statistics can be made out to mean whatever the person interpreting those statistics wants it to. In this case, I would be one to throw out this polling data, not because I don't agree with it, but because I don't agree with how it was gathered. It appears to be a poorly run poll, just as many others which are run today.

Is There a Place for Smart Guns?

But that doesn't fully answer the question of whether or not there is a place for smart guns. I'm going to go out on a limb here and say there is. There are plenty of people in this country who are not accomplished marksmen or even interested in becoming decent shots, yet they want a gun for protection. Those people are less likely to treat their guns with the respect they should, taking pains to ensure that no accidents can occur. A smart gun would probably be the ideal choice for those people.

That doesn't mean by any means that everyone needs or should be forced to use a smart gun. I carry concealed and am licensed to do so, even though I live in a state with constitutional carry. I've had my license since well before constitutional carry was passed, and I intend to renew it when the time comes. Having it gives me some advantages, especially

in carrying my pistol in other states.

But I don't leave my pistol lying around where others can get to it. When my grandkids come to visit, my pistols are either securely holstered on my person, where I have direct control over them, or put safely away where they can't get to them. There is zero chance of one of my grandkids picking up one of my guns and shooting themselves or someone else. I make sure I keep it that way.



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