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California Legal Gun Sales on Record Pace

No one seems to have an answer as to why sales are up.

By [TERRY COLLINS](#) | Friday, Jul 27, 2012 | Updated 4:40 PM PST



Gun Violence, also said it's difficult to pinpoint a cause for the increase.

“The gun industry is always trying to carve out new markets and a lot of the marketing is an attempt to get them to consumer bases they haven't reached yet and I would suspect that is driving it towards women and other groups,” said Van Houten, whose group was founded after a 1993 mass shooting in San Francisco's 101 California office tower that killed nine people, including the gunman.

Michel said that buyers remain concerned that President Barack Obama will support more gun controls, a trend that emerged when he was elected four years ago and is resurfacing as he seeks re-election.

“Now the Obama factor is coming back into play again,” Michel said. “Because while there weren't quite as many gun control efforts in his first term as originally feared, people recognize there will be more if he gets a second term in office.”

Van Houten said the fear and misinformation has had an impact on legal gun sales, along with the possibility that legal gun owners are stockpiling firearms.

“But, just looking at overall sales numbers doesn't tell you who's buying them and what their motivations are,” Van Houten said.

Overall, gun sales have been rising steadily in California since 2003. Last year, Californians legally purchased 601,246 guns compared to 498,945 in 2010. The 2011 figure was the highest gun sales total since 1993 when there were a record 642,197.

Traditionally, handgun sales far surpass those of rifles and shotguns. But that changed after 2000, when state lawmakers restricted buyers from purchasing more than one handgun a month.

However, there are no such restrictions for rifles. So, when more than one long gun is purchased at a time, the state records it as a single transaction, which means California's annual total could be underreported.

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