



INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY,
AND ENVIRONMENT

***Ammunition Purchases in the
City of Los Angeles***

Greg Ridgeway

**with George Tita (UC Irvine),
Anthony Braga (Harvard),
Glenn Pierce (Northeastern)**

Background

- **Los Angeles Municipal Code 55.11(c) (effective 1998)**

No vendor shall sell or otherwise transfer ownership of any firearm ammunition without at the time of purchase recording the following information on a form to be prescribed by the Board of Police Commissioners:

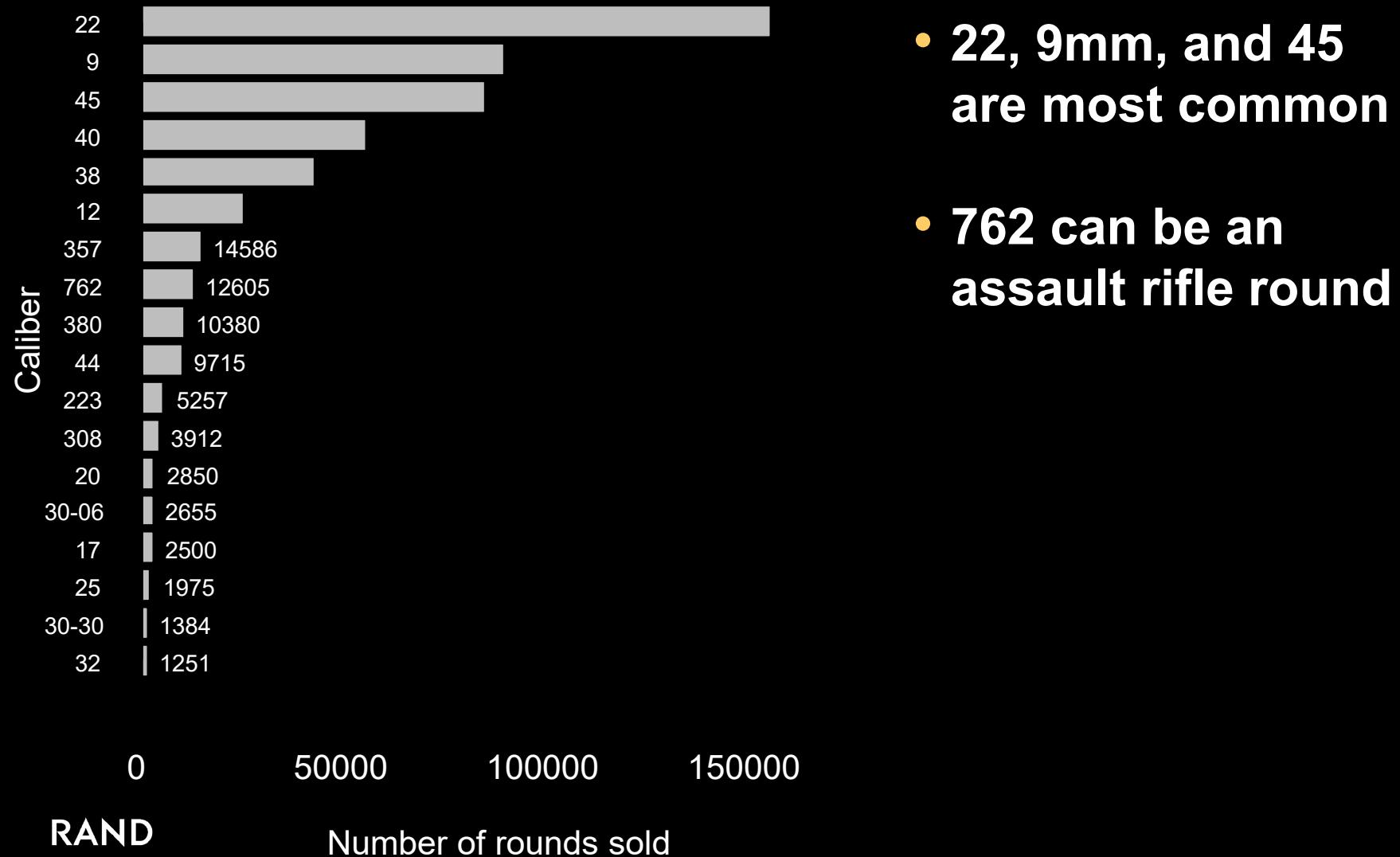
1. the **date of the transaction**,
2. the **name, address and date of birth of the transferee**,
3. the transferee's **drivers license or other identification number and the state in which it was issued**,
4. the **brand, type and amount of ammunition transferred**,

The vendor shall also at the time of purchase or transfer obtain the **right thumb print** of the purchaser or transferee on the above form.

Overview of the volume of sales

- All ammunition purchases in April and May 2004 from 11 ammunition outlets within the Los Angeles city limits
 - Number of rounds: 530,114
 - Number of boxes: 6,871
 - Number of transactions: 2,540
 - Number of purchasers: 2,031
- Not included: two police facilities, a garage ammo manufacturer, a gun range, and a sporting goods store

Rounds sold by caliber



***Ammunition purchasers are
younger than gun purchasers***

Age	Handguns	Ammo
21-24	9.0%	15.4%
25-34	23.5%	28.6%
35-44	25.3%	24.1%
45-54	24.1%	18.0%
55-64	12.9%	8.7%
65+	5.2%	2.9%

Most purchasers live in Los Angeles

LA city	LA county	Outside LA	Outside CA
70%	19%	9%	1%

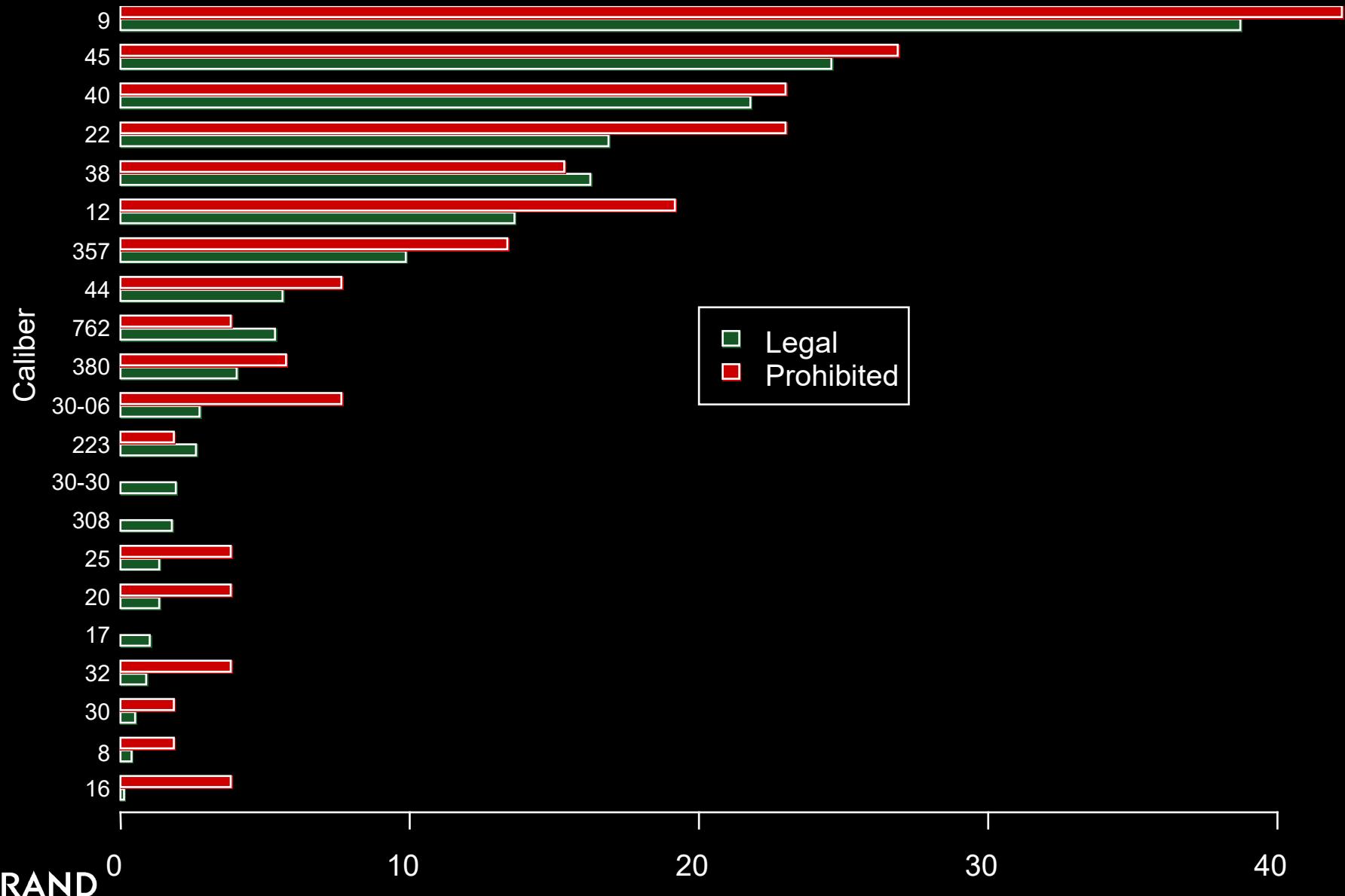
Purchasers with criminal histories

- 2,031 unique purchasers
- Many have criminal records
 - Number with gang affiliation: 7
 - Number with criminal record: $133/2031 = 6.5\%$
 - Number prohibited: $52/2031 = 2.6\%$
 - Number with felony: $30/2031 = 1.5\%$
 - Prohibited possessors purchase 3.3% of all rounds
 - Prohibited possessors make 2.8% of all purchases
- DROS denial rate for handguns in 2000 = 0.82%

Purchasers connected with crime guns

- 2,031 unique purchasers
- ATF collects data on recovered firearms
 - Number with traced guns: 51
 - Number of possessors of crime gun: 11
 - Reasons for ATF trace
 - Safe keeping (11), carrying concealed (7), illegal possession (7), weapon offense (4), aggravated assault (4)

Percentage of purchasers by caliber



Policy Implications

- California legislature aims to improve ability to track and trace ammunition (SB 357, AB 352)
- An instant background check for ammo likely would push ammunition transactions to straw purchasers and garage reloading
- Police can scan ammunition logs, easily obtain search warrants for prohibited purchasers, and follow the ammunition to the guns



INFRASTRUCTURE, SAFETY,
AND ENVIRONMENT