Key findings of the 1998 National Gun Policy Survey include:

- Three-fourths of gun owners support mandatory registration of handguns, as does 85 percent of the general public.
- Government regulation of gun design to improve safety is supported by 83 percent of gun owners and 75 percent of the general public.
- Seventy percent of gun owners and 80 percent of the general public favor mandatory background checks in private handgun sales, as gun shows.

The survey was conducted by the National Opinion Research Center (NORC) at the University of Chicago in collaboration with the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research with funding from the Joyce Foundation. The third in a series of surveys of American attitudes toward gun policies, it shows a continuation of an upward trend in public support for more control over firearms and more attention to making all firearms safer.

Other key findings include:

- Three-quarters of those surveyed want Congress to investigate the practices of the gun industry, similar to the hearings held on the tobacco industry.
- Sixty percent of Americans want licenses to carry concealed weapons to be issued only to those with special needs, e.g., private detectives. And 83 percent of the public believes that public places, including stores, theaters, and restaurants, should be able to prohibit patrons from bringing guns on the premises.
- Americans strongly support measures to keep guns from baby-sitters, 90 percent favor preventing those convicted of domestic violence from buying guns, 81 percent would stop gun sales to those convicted of simple assault, and 68 percent to those convicted of drunk driving.
- People are willing to pay higher taxes for measures to reduce gun thefts and root out illegal gun dealers, and they express a willingness to pay higher prices for guns that are designed for greater safety.
- Sixty-nine percent of those surveyed opposed gun sales to aliens from a country where those guns could not be legally sold. A total of 55 percent are against all gun imports.

Nearly nine out of ten Americans believe that illegal gun sales, sold on the street, are a major contributor to childhood trauma, that is, designed so that a child's small hands cannot fire them.

Eighty percent of the people asked say owners should be liable for injuries if a gun is not stored to prevent misuse by children.

When asked if there should be a mandatory background check and a five-day waiting period in order to purchase a gun, 82 percent of the people owning a gun, as well as 85 percent of the general public, agreed that position was a good idea.

Nearly one out of ten adults report having carried a handgun away from home during the last months. About half of those did not have a permit for doing so, and about half of the handguns were loaded. Just under half of adults who own a handgun obtained the gun through a "less regulated source," defined as pawnshops, private sales, and inheritance.

The data were collected in the fall of 1998, before the recent school shootings in Colorado and Georgia, but following similar highly publicized shootings in Arkansas, Kentucky, and Oregon. The telephone survey of 1,200 U.S. adults has a margin of error of three percent. The final report is entitled "The National Gun Policy Survey of the National Opinion Research Center: Research Findings."