

# South rife with illegal firearms

# Black executives lack mentor help

By Jesse Muhammad  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

(NNPA) — According to a new report, 10 states are responsible for the majority of the illegal guns shipped across state lines for use in crimes.

Nearly one in every three guns traced by federal agents in 2006 and 2007 during crime investigations was purchased in a state other than where the crime was committed, said the report, titled "The Movement of Illegal Guns In America: The Link between Gun Laws and Interstate Trafficking."

The 40-page state-by-state analysis traced data over the last two years released by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

The report, conducted by the Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and released Dec. 5, concluded that states that supply guns that are used in interstate crime at the highest rates have comparatively weak gun laws.

The top sources for guns used in crimes in another state were Georgia, Florida,

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Texas, Virginia, California, Ohio, North Carolina, Indiana, Pennsylvania and Alabama.

The researchers looked at per-capita exports of guns to determine which states were excessive suppliers of guns.

With population sizes factored in, southern states led the pack. West Virginia was the top exporter, with 41 illegal guns per 100,000 residents. Mississippi followed closely behind with 39 guns per 100,000, and South Carolina, at 31.

The national average was 11 guns per 100,000 residents.

Also, the average rate of fatal police shootings among states with the highest gun export rates was nearly three times that of the 10 states with the lowest export rates.

"Well, I have a problem with the term 'illegal guns' because in truth, there is no

such thing," countered James Dark, executive director of the Texas State Rifle Association.

"There are only legal and illegal owners. I think it is tough to try to correlate gun laws to these crimes that are being committed, because the ATF once reported that over 50 percent of criminals interviewed confessed to stealing the guns. What does that have to do with the gun laws?" said Dark to the *Final Call*.

Based on discussions with mayors, policy-makers, and current and former federal, state, and local law enforcement officials, the report examined five gun laws and the differences in crime gun export rates.

It recommended closing the "gun show loophole" or requiring universal background checks, purchasing permits for all handgun sales,

mandatory reporting of lost and stolen guns to law enforcement, stronger state laws that allow local government to regulate firearms and gun dealer inspections as solutions to the problem.

Only nine states and the District of Columbia require some form of background check for all handgun sales at gun shows. None of the states with the highest crime gun export rates require any checks.

"This so-called 'gun show loophole' allows individuals who are prohibited from possessing or purchasing firearms, such as convicted felons and persons with mental illness, to sidestep the background check and obtain guns from unlicensed sellers at gun shows," the report noted.

Only one of the states requires purchase permits for handguns. None requires reporting of lost or stolen guns or allow for local control of gun regulations. Five states permit or mandate gun dealer inspections.

Jesse Muhammad writes for the *Final Call*.

## Feds

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cent of those stopped.

The NYCLU has reported on the racial disparity in NYPD subway stops, saying that 90 percent of those stopped were Blacks and Latinos, who are just 49 percent of subway riders. The rights group said the highest numbers of stops were in White neighborhoods, such as Wall St. and midtown Manhattan.

"Race is the reason people are stopped," said a NYCLU spokesman, in a written state-

ment. Legal experts critical of the stop-and-frisk and subway questioning process aren't convinced the city is any safer.

"We are not anti-police. We must work with the police department to set a positive climate with law enforcement," Rev. Sharpton told a National Action Network audience. "But we must have appropriate and proper policing."

Anthony Miranda, president of the National Latino Police Officers Association,

told the *Final Call*, "The system must be cleaned up from the inside. The officers don't fear the internal system of discipline... Police officers must be made to understand that the decisions they make impact on the lives of others; and that police officers have a serious responsibility towards the communities that they serve."

Citizens must become proactive by demanding accountability through making the Internal Affairs Department effective, he added.

"We also must work with officers to defeat the mentality that it is 'them versus the community,' that they must segregate themselves from the community and only seek camaraderie with fellow officers."

Rev. Sharpton has vowed to pack the courthouse when the officers go to trial in the Michael Mineo sodomy case. He said, "The reason I know we can win for Mineo, is because we won for Louima."

Saeed Shabazz writes for the *Final Call*.

## Mayor

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tially with the same case that the federal prosecutor previously rejected as unworthy of prosecution.

"And this case comes after the mayor has been investigated longer than anybody that I've ever heard of except perhaps the people being held in Guantanamo Bay. And I think I can say fairly looking at the indictment that we've been presented with today that the indictment that she faces is ludicrous."

Weiner emphatically pointed to what he argues as being a ubiquitous hole in the state prosecutor's case, the

lack of a bribery charge against Dixon.

"The single most important thing about this indictment is what it does not charge — the offense that every prosecutor looks for when he or she investigates a public official is bribery — that is the corrupt official who takes public actions for private gain," Weiner said.

"Even this prosecutor with all of his personal effort to get this public official and his overwhelming desire to prosecute her could not come up with a shred of evidence to justify a charge of bribery. There is no charge of brib-

ery in this indictment."

And then at one point Weiner stood up from the table filled with microphones and stepped to a chart and continued his assault against the state prosecutor's case against Mayor Dixon.

"I want to state here and now that Sheila Dixon's disclosure forms were 100 percent accurate and she did not fail to report any gifts on any of the disclosure forms that were required to be reported," Weiner said.

As he stood at the chart he specifically outlined sections of the city's ethics ordinance he says the state prosecutor

either erroneously interpreted or ignored.

"These charges are fatally deficient because they are based upon a fatally mistaken view of the law and of the requirements of the Baltimore City ethics code," Weiner said.

Ultimately, Weiner said he would move to have the charges against Dixon dismissed. "We intend to move for their dismissal at the earliest appropriate time," Weiner said. "And we fully expect that they will in fact be dismissed."

Sean Yoes writes for the *Afro-American Newspapers*.

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Black women face special challenges in their efforts to reach the top levels of corporate America, according to a new study.

Weaker or less strategic networks and inaccurate perceptions of their abilities are two leading barriers to their advancement to the positions of CEO, CFO or COO, according to the Executive Leadership Council, an organization for Black executives.

One percent of senior corporate officers are Black women, according to the ELC, compared with 3 percent for Black men, 14 percent for White women and 77 percent for White men.

The ELC questioned 150 executives, ranging from vice presidents to CEOs and board members from a variety of industries and locations, about reasons for the disparities. Thirty-one percent cited networking and 24 percent cited a perception gap as hindering the advancement of Black women. Fifteen percent cited racism.

Seventy-five percent of the respondents said it was important to have senior executives who are minorities in order to provide new ideas and innovation and better reflect the diversity of their customers.

"If you have the same group of people looking at the same issues, you will come up with the same solutions," said Carl Brooks, CEO of the ELC.

To overcome these barriers, Black women executives should seek challenging, high-profile assignments; create action plans for accomplishing their career goals; work with executive coaches; and take advantage of critical feedback, respondents said.

"At the end of the day, there is no replacement for outstanding performance," said Jerri DeVard, a Black woman who has worked for a variety of corporations and now runs DeVard Marketing Group in New York.

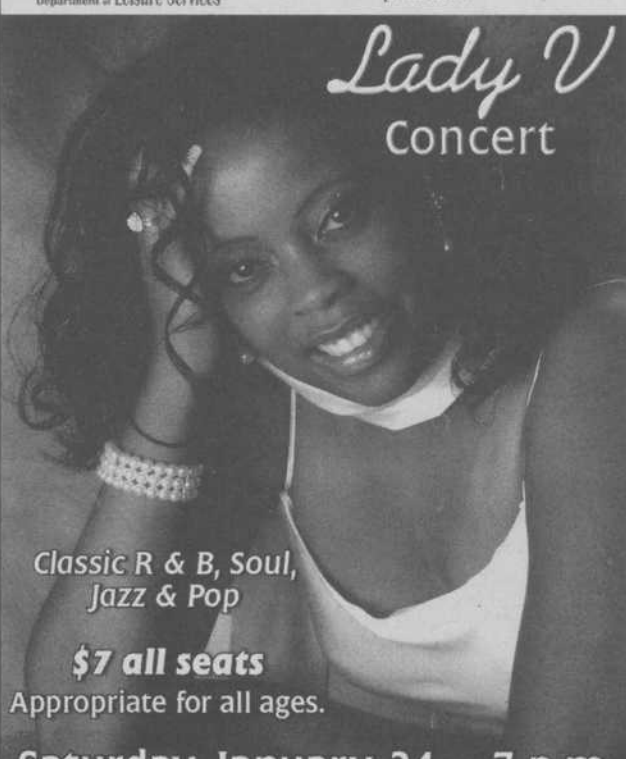
"But then there are all those intangibles, and sometimes those intangibles are more important than the performance. You need someone who can demystify those intangibles and say, 'These are the things that are getting in your way.'"

The study, released Wednesday, was conducted by Harris Interactive from Nov. 4 to Dec. 2. Due to its small sample size, it is not scientifically representative of the business community at large

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