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VIEW FROM THE WEST

AND BEYOND

Better to ban walks in rain than pellet guns

By: Marty Gobin

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In the wake of the tragic death of 13-year-old Cody Shuya, Canada's leading gun control advocate is calling for the government to interfere with something as trivial as pellet-gun ownership.

Wendy Cukier, president of the Coalition for Gun Control, recently told the Winnipeg Free Press that pellet guns can kill and are a safety problem. She cites a 2005 Canadian Pediatric Society report entitled Youth and Firearms in Canada to prove her point, and says that the report details 11 deaths caused by pellet-gun injuries.

A quick investigation of the report Cukier cites, however, reveals some surprising details. The death data were not compiled in 2005. *Nor were they compiled by the Canadian Pediatric Society.* And the data definitely doesn't come from Canada.

The report that Cukier cites gets its death data by referring to a separate report, written by an Akron, Ohio-based doctor in 1990. The original report, entitled Fatal Nonpowder Firearm Wounds: Case Report and Review of the Literature, details American deaths, not Canadian deaths.

So why would Cukier use a report about a report, instead of referring directly to the source? The answer should be obvious to anybody who *reads the Ohio report.*

Out of the 11 deaths in the original American report, only one of the deaths involved a pellet gun that wouldn't already be regulated in Canada -- a Daisy Model 1200 carbon-dioxide pistol. The remaining deaths were all committed with pellet guns which, although unregulated by most states in the U.S., already are treated as firearms in Canada.

The 11 deaths in the original report occurred between 1956 and 1990 -- that's 34 years, or less than one death every three years. If anything, the original report is damning evidence the pellet guns that are treated as firearms in Canada ought to be deregulated, since pellet guns rarely cause deaths.

But it gets better.

If we take an average of the U.S. census population data between 1950 and 1990 (population data are only taken every decade), we find that the odds of an American having been killed by a pellet gun not regulated by Canadian law at some point during that 34-year sample period was 1 in 201,840,615. That's an annual chance of death of 1 in 6,862,580,910 -- more than the Earth's annual population at any point during those 34 years. Keep in mind that these odds assume the population consisted of the same people and nobody died during

that period, meaning the actual odds are even more outlandish.

To get an idea of what a 1 in 6,862,580,910 chance of death by Canadian-unregulated pellet guns is, compare those odds to what the National Weather Service says the annual chance of an American being struck by lightning is -- 1 in 400,000.

That means that during any given year in that time period, it was over 17,000 times more likely that an American would be struck by lightning than killed by a pellet gun exempt from Canadian regulation.

So there it is. Wendy Cukier doesn't refer to the original report, because Canadians would realize that the Coalition for Gun Control would be doing more for public safety by banning walking outside during thunderstorms than by calling for more controls on pellet guns.

Of course, the crusade against pellet guns isn't about actual safety. It's about an ideological war against personal choice, in which the left is attempting to ban everything they don't personally see any value in. If they can convince the Canadian public to accept more pellet-gun laws despite the all but zero risk of death, one can only imagine what the next ban or regulation will entail.

One thing's for sure, though: they won't try to ban any of the more dangerous activities they participate in themselves, such as walking outdoors during a storm. After all, it's not their own freedoms they object to -- it's the freedoms of every other Canadian that ought to be restricted.

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