

TRANSCRIPT PREPARED BY THE CLERK OF THE LEGISLATURE
Transcriber's Office

March 29, 1999 LB 476

enforcement activity, sentencing for violent crime and even television programming, they differ very markedly in their approach to handgun control. In Vancouver it's easy to own a rifle or a shotgun, but handgun ownership is restricted. In Seattle, as in most of the United States, it's pretty easy to purchase a handgun. Vancouver citizens, obviously then, own far fewer handguns for self-defense than their counterparts in Seattle as a result of those kinds of laws. Nonetheless, during a study interview of six years, between '80 and '86, rates of burglary, robbery, simple assault and aggravated assault in the two cities were remarkably similar. However, the rate of homicide in Seattle was 63 percent higher than the rate of homicide in Vancouver, British Columbia. Virtually all of this difference was due to a fivefold higher rate of handgun homicide in Seattle. The rates of "nonfirearm" homicide in the two cities were similar. I would suggest that these results would say that restricting access to handguns may actually reduce the rate of homicide in a community as opposed to having more handguns reducing the rate of homicide in a particular community. Also would like to talk a little bit about restrictive handgun laws as it relates to lower rates of suicide. One of the things that this particular study showed was...or looked at was the difference between the metropolitan area of Vancouver, British Columbia, and King County, Washington, which includes the city of Seattle, which I referenced earlier. Again, these two areas are very similar in most respects but, again, they've taken very different approaches to gun control. Rifles and shotguns are easy to own in Vancouver, but handguns are not. And in King County, again, it's real easy to purchase a handgun. During a three-year study, the overall rate of suicide in the two communities was virtually identical. The rate of firearm suicide in King County was 2.3 times higher than the rate of firearm suicide in Vancouver metro area, but the difference was offset by a 1.5-fold increase in the rate of nonfirearm suicide in Vancouver. The only exception was suicide involving teenagers and young adults, age 15 to 24. If you recall, I have talked about what message this particular legislation would send to young people and that the message was that if you have a gun you can solve your problems. And when I say that I mean that if you have a gun you can solve problems with other people and if you have a gun perhaps you can solve problems with yourself, and the