

Lawmen From 5 Big Areas Urge a Ban on Handguns

Washington

Law enforcement officials from five major metropolitan areas urged Congress yesterday to ban the manufacture, possession and use of all handguns, not just "Saturday night specials."

Only police and military personnel would be exempt from the ban.

At a Senate hearing on firearms control, officials from Los Angeles county, Boston, Atlanta, Newark and San Antonio said that licensing and registration of guns would not solve the problem because such action would not curtail the availability of guns, due to theft and illegal trafficking.

Registration laws "would be totally unenforceable and entirely too expensive," said Los Angeles county Sheriff Peter J. Pitchess, a strong advocate of outlawing

private ownership of handguns.

"Quite frankly, registration and licensing will accomplish nothing toward reducing the total number of guns in this country."

Responding to questions about whether owning a gun offers protection for citizens, Pitchess told a Senate Government Operations Committee hearing on gun control and presidential protection that statistics tend to dispute this belief.

According to the sheriff, in three out of four cases the owner of the gun is killed or injured by his own weapon.

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