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Millions of Women Start Buying Guns

BY ZUSHA ELINSON

Turn-Back Program At Border Quashed

BY ALICIA A. CALDWELL

A federal judge in Washington has ordered the Biden administration to stop using a public-health law to turn back families who enter the U.S. illegally from Mexico seeking asylum.

U.S. District Judge Emmet Sullivan put his own order on hold for 14 days, to allow the government time to appeal.

If the ruling goes into effect, the Biden administration would be forced to allow thousands of migrant families caught crossing the border illegally to stay in the U.S. while they wait for asylum or other humanitarian protection claims to be adjudicated, a process that often takes several years to complete.

The border policy was implemented by former President Donald Trump in March 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic took hold. At the time, Trump administration officials said a public-health law known as Title 42 gave the government the authority to turn back to Mexico any migrant caught crossing the border illegally, regardless of their country of origin, to stop the spread of Covid-19. Since then, about 1.1 million people have been turned back to Mexico, including roughly 118,000 people traveling as families. Judge Sullivan's ruling came in a lawsuit filed by the

SAN DIEGO—Close to half of all new U.S. gun buyers since the beginning of 2019 have been women, a shift for a market long dominated by men, according to a new study. The preliminary results from the 2021 National Firearms Survey, designed by Deborah Azrael of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and Matthew Miller of Northeastern University, show an estimated 3.5 million women became gun owners from January 2019 through April of this year. About four million men became gun owners over that period, they found.

For decades, other surveys have found that around 10% to 20% of American gun owners were women. The number of federal background checks for gun purchases hit a record in 2020 of 21 million, according to an analysis of federal data by the National Shooting Sports Foundation, an industry trade group. Researchers and gun-store owners attributed the jump to fears driven by the Covid-19 pandemic and the protests, sometimes accompanied by violence, that followed the police killing of George Floyd, as well as the divisive atmosphere around the 2020 presidential election.

The National Firearms Survey polled more than 19,000 adults. It is one of the largest nationally representative, population-based surveys on gun purchasing ever conducted, Dr. Azrael said. In addition to its findings on gender, the survey found that now gun buyers were



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Dakota Adelphi, left, who runs the San Diego chapter of A Girl and A Gun, and other club members take target practice.

firearms since 2019 were 71% male and 74% white.

After seeing women coming forward with stories of sexual assault and harassment as part of the #MeToo movement, Wendy Hauffen, chief executive of the gun-rights advocacy group San Diego Gun Owners, said she decided to found NotMeSD in 2019 to combat sexual assault and domestic violence through more women carrying firearms.

About 400 women have gone through the program, which pairs them with women men-

shooting her in the head in 2017, according to court records. "If any type of situation like that ever happens again, I just want to be better protected," Ms. Johnson said.

At first, the sound of her gun would give her flashbacks to getting shot, she said. But now, she said she feels safer having the handgun to protect herself and her five children.

Elaine Pierce said she decided to sign up for NotMeSD after she watched protests against police brutality devolve into looting and burning

company owner said. With a gun, "you drive into a riot, which we've seen on TV, at least you have a fighting chance."

The fear of getting caught in a riot was so frequently stated by new gun owners at the San Diego chapter of A Girl and A Gun, another shooting club for women, that chapter founder Judi Wells said she recorded a radio show on how to survive such a situation.

At a recent chapter meeting at a local range, Ms. Wells, 64, led five women in target shooting drills. "Two to the

rates and that domestic abuse against women is more likely to turn deadly when the abuser has access to a gun.

"We are aware of the research," said Dakota Adelphi, who runs the chapter. "That's what education is for."

The gun industry tried for decades to sell firearms to women with little success. Much of its strategy was known in the industry as "shrink it and pink it"—producing smaller handguns in brighter colors. Now, the industry is designing handguns that are easier