

Rukshar Parwin

Ms.Natalie Rego

Composition II, 9U1

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Strict laws for Firearm regulations

Problem Statement: I believe the regulations around firearm make it easy to obtain Gun and make it accessible to people who should never own or have access to a gun. My reasoning for this take is because of too many recent incidents where innocents are killed because of gun violence. In my view, one death is too many and we should have strict regulations on who can possess firearms. The rules should include comprehensive background check along with limits on ammunition.

Proof: There are various sources that list multiple statistics to support gun violence problem. For this project, I would like to list two that helps visualize gun violence problem and also supports authenticity of the source.

My first source is the Gun Violence Archive (GVA) is an online archive of gun violence incidents collected from over 2,500 media, law enforcement, government and commercial sources daily in an effort to provide near-real time data about the results of gun violence. GVA is an independent data collection and research group with no affiliation with any advocacy organization. According to GVA data, “in first 16 days of October, there are 602 reported deaths due to gun violence.” (“Gun Violence Archive.”)

My second source is one of the leading online newspapers, The Week. The Week published an article in Feb, 2018 titled ‘US gun violence in six chilling statistics’ that presents gun violence problem using the visualization below:

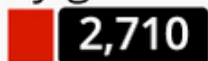
Americans killed by guns from 2014–2017*



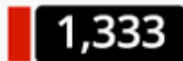
Americans killed by guns in 2017*



Children under the age of 12 killed/injured by guns from 2014–2017*



Mass shootings from 2014–2017**



Mass shootings so far in 2018 (as of 15 Feb)**



Mass shootings on school grounds from 2014–2017**



* includes intentional and accidental shootings, but not suicides

** defined as four or more people injured or killed, excluding the perpetrator

Source: Gun Violence Archive

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In mid Feb this year, a Texas high school has become the latest US campus to be struck by gun violence, as at least eight people lost their lives in an early-morning rampage in an art classroom. The unidentified gunman opened fire at Santa Fe High School just before 8am local

time on Friday morning. Some Santa Fe students who spoke to ABC in the aftermath of the shooting said they were shocked that their school had become the scene of a bloody shooting, but at least one teenager had a frighteningly blasé response to the attack: “It's been happening everywhere,” a girl identified as Paige told the station. “I always felt like eventually it would happen here. I wasn't surprised, I was just scared.” (Gillie, Rebecca) I feel the response of the teenager presented above is the sad reality of this situation. It has come to a state, where some people are not even surprised of this tragedy, they are sad.

Solution: Stricter laws to obtain a firearm and comprehensive background check on any buyer. I believe a tighter regulation would only contribute in lowering death and making community safer around the country. In current political spectrum, the law to carry a concealed weapon is rather relaxed. People on the left and left center argue that we should have a tighter gun control whereas people in the right and right center argue the rule should be relaxed. A person who argues in favor of second amendment suggests the law to carry concealed weapon is not new so the problem of gun violence is not due to the law but due to other factors.

Some people believe that the phrase in Amendment “the right of the people to keep and bear arms” creates an individual constitutional right for the citizen of the United States. To counter that argument, I did some research and according to the article published by Legal information institute by Cornell Law Institute, “in 1939 the U.S. Supreme Court considered the matter in *United States v. Miller*. 307 U.S. 174. The Court adopted a collective rights approach in this case, determining that Congress could regulate a sawed-off shotgun that had moved in interstate commerce under the National Firearms Act of 1934 because the evidence did not suggest that the shotgun "has some reasonable relationship to the preservation or efficiency of a

well-regulated militia" (Strasser) The Court then explained that the Framers included the Second Amendment to ensure the effectiveness of the military.

This precedent stood for nearly 70 years when in 2008 the U.S. Supreme Court revisited the issue in the case of District of Columbia v. Heller (07-290). The plaintiff in Heller challenged the constitutionality of the Washington D.C. handgun ban, a statute that had stood for 32 years. Many considered the statute the most stringent in the nation. In a 5-4 decision, the Court, meticulously detailing the history and tradition of the Second Amendment at the time of the Constitutional Convention, proclaimed that the Second Amendment established an individual right for U.S. citizens to possess firearms and struck down the D.C. handgun ban as violative of that right."

So, this is not something that is been in place for decades. There have been changes to gun control and many a times the law on tighter gun control was overruled by a small majority. In my opinion, people who are in the positions to make these decisions should look at Second Amendment's intended scope and consider this problem by keeping simple goals such as

1. Safety of fellow humans
2. Common good.
3. Make community safer

There are no disagreements on any side of the discussion on the 3 points listed and if the issue is tackled keeping few of these simple goals in mind, it will lead to fruitful discussion.

Proof of best solution: The statistics states one of highest deaths in USA is due to gun violence. A stricter law and comprehensive background check would help target core of the problem and help reduce fatalities.

To prove that it is the best solution, I researched on other developed countries with stricter gun laws. I came across a quote from Australia's prime minister that read "'We have an opportunity in this country not to go down the American path.'" (Beck, Katie) This made me interesting to research more about Australia.

In April 1996, 35 people were killed by a gunman, Martin Bryant, wielding semi-automatic weapons at a former prison colony and tourist attraction in Tasmania. This became known as the Port Arthur massacre, and it was a turning point for Australia.

The event appalled and galvanised the nation, helping to push Australia to enact some of the most comprehensive firearm laws in the world.

Less than two weeks after the Port Arthur massacre, all six Australian states agreed to enact the same sweeping gun laws banning semi-automatic rifles and shotguns - weapons that can kill many people quickly. They also put more hurdles between prospective gun owners and their weapons.

Australia has 28-day waiting periods, thorough background checks, and a requirement to present a "justifiable reason" to own a gun. Unlike in the US, self-protection is not accepted as a justifiable reason to own a gun.

In the 21 years since the laws were passed, about one million semi-automatic weapons - roughly one third of the country's firearms - were sold back to the government and destroyed, nearly halving the number of gun-owning households in Australia.

The number of Australia's mass shootings dropped from 11 in the decade before 1996, to one in the years since - the murder-suicide of a family of five in New South Wales in 2014.

Works Cited

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