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Stop Gun Violence

Gun violence occurs so often in the U.S that tragic gun-related news barely fazes the average person. In fact, sometimes it does not even warrant a reaction. According to an article on CQ RESEARCHER by a professor of international criminal law, Susan Ladika, “The United States has more assaults, deaths, and murders by firearms than any developed country in the world”. She also states that gun-related violence has been increasing steadily over the years. This begs the question what can we do about it? As well as what are we doing about it? I believe that we as a country need stricter gun control laws that would limit the number of guns a person can own, require a stricter licensing protocol to purchase guns, outlaw the purchase and use of powerful firearms such as assault rifles, and change the public perception of the usefulness of guns.

First, a large problem is the sheer number of firearms in the United States. According to Small Arm Analytics, a consulting firm based in S.C, in 2020 the number of guns sold in 2020 was up a staggering 65%. The number of firearms sold was so high that the FBI was not able to complete background checks on all the guns sold. In fact, nearly 300,000 guns had no background checks done at all. If the number of firearms sold was capped, then at the very least there would be background checks done. The fact that many people were able to bypass the very little security we have on guns shows how little control there is regarding guns. If even a single gun fell into the wrong hands, it could spell disaster, and it has time after time. For a country known for personal freedoms, it is important to ask whether we should, instead of just whether we can. Individuals must curb their insatiable appetite for guns because the more guns are in the

country, the more likely it is that one will fall into the wrong hands. An easy fix would be to limit each household to one firearm given they pass background checks.

Second is the need for stricter rules to purchase and use guns. There are some protocols regarding the purchase and use but they are lackluster at best. Such as federal mandates preventing felons and persons of interest from purchasing them. However, this is a bare minimum and is too easily circumvented. According to an article by Barbara Mantel, Garen Wintemute states, "40 percent of all firearm acquisitions, and at least 80 percent of those made with criminal intent, are made from private parties. No identification need be shown, no background check conducted, no record kept". With so many acquisitions not being traceable, it is almost as if gun violence is bound to happen. Such lax regulations make it all too easy to acquire a firearm. If a standard process existed to routinely check on the status of guns that people own existed, then perhaps maybe so many wouldn't be sold without record.

Third, it is important that guns meant for mass destruction not be sold for civilian use. The average American has no need for a gun that can shoot hundreds of rounds a minute or weapons that can inflict large amounts of damage. Are things such as a few moments of enjoyment worth someone being able to shoot up a crowd? I must admit even I watch the occasional video on Youtube of someone destroying a car with a gun or seeing what he can destroy, but I could live without it. I think we Americans focus too much on self-fulfillment rather than what is best for us. However, there are many people who disagree. Stephen P. Halbrook refers to licensing a firearm to "five years in prison for not registering to exercise a constitutional right". This is a greedy and selfish way of thinking that must change. Things don't seem so bright as of right now seeing as how laws reducing the licensing protocols are being passed often.

There lies a problem within how people try to combat gun violence. There are people who think the solution to gun violence is ... guns. According to an article by Christina L. Lyons, Michael Newbern states, “when we ban concealed guns on campus, we disarm lawfully licensed students, faculty or staff members from the time they leave home until they return”. This logic is just pandering to those who will do anything to keep their guns. A counterargument by Andy Pelosi states that “introducing firearms into an already high-stress environment is a recipe for disaster” and I tend to agree. I think during school people already rely on vices to cope, and violence does not need to be one of them. In order to reduce gun violence, we must stop those fighting against gun restrictions. To advocate for fewer restrictions makes you just as guilty as the shooter.

There is a particular issue that plagues the debate of gun use in America, which is politics. Gun use has been a pivotal issue within American politics and the way gun use is discussed has been associated with one’s political beliefs. Therein lies the argument that gun violence is not political issue, but a statistic one. Just as cardiovascular disease is a common cause of death in the United States, such is deaths due to gun violence. 2020 was one of the deadliest years that was seen due to gun violence, and the threat of school shootings has become all too common (Thebault, 2021). Beyond the politics lies a moral question of how much good outweighs the bad? Restricting gun laws does not infringe on one’s right when gun use has become sporadic and dangerous. The threat has proven to exist in the most extreme extent, such as the Sandy Hook Elementary School Shooting in 2012. It’s a sad truth to accept gun violence as an absurd reality Americans must face, although we witness the death of children in the safety of their school, restriction on gun use has fallen dangerously short.

Gun violence in the United States not only has an impact on American lives, but it also adds to the immense incarceration rate. A study shows that recidivism rate for gun offenders is 68 percent, whereas non-gun offenders are at 46 percent (Davis, 2019). Mass incarceration is a national issue that often involves the use of gun violence, which reflects the flaws of gun policy and restrictions. The use of guns has become abusive, with mass shootings remaining a common threat to the public. It's not a matter of one's Constitutional right, but the safety of the American public.

In conclusion, we must take the appropriate actions to prevent gun violence. At the very least, our actions can propel a future generation to successfully have the tools to combat such needless violence. Lowering the number of firearms a person can own, implementing stricter rules regarding the purchase and use of guns, restricting the type of guns a person can own, and changing the mindset of our fellow Americans is the key to protecting our future. It at the very least is the bare minimum you can do to protect your children.

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