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Eng 1010-007

November 1st, 2012

How is Gun Control Going to Stop Street Violence?

Our founding fathers gave all citizens of the United States the right to bear arms; should we still have that right? Each year in the United States, 31,224 people die from gun shots. Another 66,768 people are injured and still survive (Connick). When our country was started, guns were used for hunting and for protection from other countries. Now, guns are used for all sorts of things: war, sporting events, protection, hunting, violence, or to force your way upon others.

We now have people using those guns for more than what they are made for. On April 20th, 1999, two high school students at Columbine High in Littleton, Colorado opened fire on students and teachers, killing thirteen total, twelve students and one teacher. They wounded 23 others before they took their own lives. Having more stringent gun control laws in place could have stopped this horrific tragedy. On the other hand, our country needs firearms. They provide security in the home, the workplace, and the community. A gun would provide the most safety from a wild animal attack while you are camping with your family. Why should people that are responsible with their firearms, who go through all the necessary procedures, be punished and not be able to have their own personal firearms? How does gun control stop

terrorist attacks from happening? Why are the laws on guns now so lenient? Why should or shouldn't we control the sale of guns? This is a very complicated and important issue that needs to be discussed and figured out. When it comes to debates, gun control is as controversial as abortion and the death penalty. Many people say "guns don't kill people, people kill people." How do we keep guns out of these people's hands? We, as citizens of the United States, are all involved and need to find a way to answer these questions and also prevent those kinds of attacks from happening over and over again.

In the article "Guns R Us," Ray Ring states that four of the top ten states in licensed gun dealers are located in the west: Montana, Wyoming, Oregon, and Idaho. Idaho alone has 664 licensed gun dealers. In the past 15 years, most western states have made it easier for people to get concealed weapon permits. There is a lot of controversy over where to draw the lines. This topic has many different views. Many people believe that they shouldn't control guns at all. Then, of course, you have the opposite side of that guns should be controlled 100 percent of the time and nobody should have a personal firearm. And last but not least, we should be allowed to have personal firearms but just make the rules more stringent, so that we can keep the guns out of the wrong peoples' hands.

A lot of people who are against gun control bring up the second amendment which states "A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a Free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed." The country's founding fathers

developed and ratified the amendment to help guarantee citizens' rights to bear arms. We don't regulate any of the other amendments. Freedom of speech and freedom of religion aren't regulated; why would we regulate the right to bear arms?

As we all know, guns don't kill people, people kill people. The average American is 40 times more likely to be killed by gunfire than the average Englishman or Canadian. According to the NRA, this has nothing to do with the fact that guns are everywhere in America and are scarce in England and Canada. If the United States had the same gun murder rate as England or Canada, about eight-thousand people in America who were killed by gunfire in 2011 might still be alive today. If the United States had the same gun murder rate as England since 2000, one hundred thousand people who were murdered would probably still be alive today (Stone).

The following article tells a story of a man convicted of a felony who got his rights to own personal firearms reinstated.

"In February 2005, Erik Zettergren came home from a party after midnight with his girlfriend and another couple. They had all been drinking heavily, and soon the other man and Mr. Zettergren's girlfriend passed out on his bed. When Mr. Zettergren went to check on them later, he found his girlfriend naked from the waist down and the other man, Jason Robinson, with his pants around his ankles. Enraged, Mr. Zettergren ordered Mr. Robinson to leave. After a brief confrontation, Mr. Zettergren shot him in the temple at point-blank range with a Glock-17 semi-automatic handgun. He then

forced Mr. Robinson's hysterical fiancée, at gunpoint, to help him dispose of the body in a nearby river. It was the first homicide in more than 30 years in the small town of Endicott, in eastern Washington. But for a judge's ruling two months before, it would probably never have happened. For years, Mr. Zettergren had been barred from possessing firearms because of two felony convictions. He had a history of mental health problems, and friends said he was dangerous. Yet, Mr. Zettergren's gun rights were restored without even a hearing, under a state law that gave the judge no leeway to deny the application as long as certain basic requirements had been met.

Mr. Zettergren, then 36, wasted no time retrieving several guns he had given to a friend for safekeeping (Lou)."

This is why gun laws should be more controlling than they already are. If the gun laws were to be more controlled, Mr. Zettergren would have been denied his gun rights he would have never shot Jason Robinson. There is no telling if he would have killed him without a gun, but with a gun being used as a tool to do so, it made it much easier for him to kill this man.

Gun activists believe that by lowering the clip size or only allowing a clip that holds 10 bullets will decrease gun crimes. This is called the McCarthy Approach. Kenneth Barnes, the founder of Reaching Out to Others Together (ROOT Inc.), has a reason for working to prevent gun violence. "My son was murdered in Washington D.C., in 2001 by a 17-year old guy who had murdered at least two other people," he said. He still feels that the McCarthy Approach is

the wrong approach. He believes McCarthy's bill is reactive, instead of being proactive. "The argument is that if we lower the clip size, someone can jump on the assailant... to me, that's crazy. In other words, we know [shootings are] going to happen again. That legislation will not stop one person [from] getting shot in America."(Cinnick)

In this newspaper article it reports "a toddler fatally shot himself after finding a gun in his parent's car. According to Jackson, Mississippi authorities, the 3-year-old was sitting in the car at a gas station when he found the gun in the front seat and shot himself in the face. Police questioned the boy's parents, but no charges have been filed." These aren't freak accidents. More than 500 children die annually from accidental gunshots. Some shoot themselves, while others kill friends or siblings after discovering a gun. Here are more scary stats: Americans own 200 million firearms, and 35 percent of homes contain at least one gun. Last year, a study conducted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that more than 1.7 million children live in homes with loaded and unlocked guns. A recent study published in the Archives of Pediatric and Adolescent Medicine found 39 percent of kids knew where their parent's guns were stored, while 22 percent said they had handled the weapons despite adult's warnings to stay away. If you do own a gun and think your kid won't get to it, think again. Age was not a factor in whether children had played with the guns; 5-year-olds were just as likely to report doing so as 14-year-olds. (Momlogic.com "Guns Kill 500 Kids Each Year"). Should we have guns in the home when children find them so easily? This is a viewpoint used by those who are for

gun control. These people would like to see very strict gun control laws, even banning fire arms in our country.

After the attempted assassination of President Ronald Reagan in 1981, Congress passed a widespread gun control law in 1993, known as the Brady law. The new law required a 5-day "cooling off" period before their customers could bring home the gun. Gun shops also had to turn in information about their customers to law enforcement for a background check to make sure the customer was eligible to buy a gun. In 1998, the 5-day waiting period and background check was replaced by a same-day background check known as the National Instant Check System (Roleff). As you can see this gun control law is still in effect today. Hopefully this will save guns from getting into the wrong hands.

The gun control groups support a registration list of all firearms with their owners so that police can trace guns that have been used in crimes. As of now, you can go to a gun show and buy a personal firearm through a licensed dealer without having a background check done. Gun control supporters also believe that this loophole should be done away with and a background check should be done. Automatic weapons and assault rifles should be banned, as well as armor-piercing bullets. In addition, some activists are trying to make gun manufacturers legally responsible for any deaths caused by guns they have produced and sold. Additionally, they would like to make parents responsible for their child if the child finds and uses a gun.

Gun control activists need to stop trying to destroy the gun culture. There are more than 250 million guns in United States. Even if the U.S. government banned gun ownership and stopped all gun manufacturing and importation, they would still need to collect and confiscate all those weapons. Doing so would require wholesale violations of Fourth Amendment rights. The probability of getting rid of guns in America is practically zero.

The gun culture is made up of diverse, complex subcultures. Many different types of people own guns. Contrary to popular stereotypes, members of the gun culture are not all potential terrorists, unemployed skinheads hanging out at gun shows, or menacing warrior wannabes in camouflage gear. Not every gun owner is a member of the National Rifle Association; in fact, some gun owners dislike the NRA. Gun owners come in all shapes and sizes: police officers, soldiers, farmers, ranchers, doctors, lawyers, hunters, sport shooters, gun collectors, feminists, gay activists, and black civil rights leaders. Most of the shooters I know are normal members of their local communities. They have regular jobs; they go to neighborhood picnics and PTA meetings; they have children and grandchildren. They interact with their co-workers, bosses, employees, neighbors, friends, and families in socially positive ways. Despite their differences in background and lifestyle, all these individuals have thoroughly integrated guns into their lives. Gun control supporters need to recognize that America's gun culture has deep roots in American history. Pro-gun ideology has deep roots in America's political culture.

Even if the NRA were to magically disappear tomorrow, the gun culture would remain. The people who make up the group are simply not interested in giving up their arms.

Guns and the gun culture are so intertwined with American culture that many Americans perceive guns as completely normal. Most gun owners have common, unexciting experiences with guns all the time. Claiming that gun owners are mentally ill won't change the fact that most gun owners are ordinary people.

This is a very delicate issue and emotions run high when you talk to people with strong feelings for or against guns. If gun laws were more controlling, then we wouldn't have people with mental illnesses like James Holmes (shooter in the Colorado movie theater during Batman) causing harm with personally owned firearms. So, we should just outlaw guns and not let those guns into the wrong peoples' hands. Then again, why should the people who responsibly obey all the firearm laws be punished for what others do? Clearly, gun control is a sensitive topic. By researching this topic, Americans can be informed of the current laws that help regulate the sale of firearms. Those who own firearms can do all they can to be as responsible with their firearms, and those who don't own guns might want to get them before they are no longer available.

Guns are tools used by people either to do good or bad. If we educate ourselves and can keep firearms out of the wrong hands, including our children's hands, the rate of the accidents that happen involving a firearm will go down tremendously.

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