Gun violence: The right to bear arms. Is it enough?

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 Today as a country we are faced with multiple issues that are changing our nation. One of the following issues that we are faced with at this time is our Second Amendment. The second amendment is found in the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights. The question now remains does the Second Amendment still applies to the issues and situations that we face now as a country. Are our gun laws enough? Are we abiding by the current gun laws? Are the gun laws our issue with gun violence or is it the owner of the gun? The Second Amendment is the foundation of our gun laws which qualifies everyone the right to bear arms; but is it enough? The statement the right to bear arms, as it stands, is not enough grounds to deal with the gun violence that we face today.

 When speaking about the right to bear arms we will first look at the process it takes to purchase a firearm. “Georgia gun law does not require a permit to purchase, registration of firearms, or the licensing of owners. A permit to carry is only instituted to firearms that can be legally categorized as handguns.” (Georgia Gun Laws, 2018). So how do you begin the process of ownership of a handgun? An application must be filed to the proper agency, which is typically the probate court in your local area, who will conduct a federal and state criminal background check on the applicate. With the results of the background check, being that there are not undesirable statements or history, license to carry a firearm will be dispensed. Next we will take a look at what the cost is for license to carry. The cost of obtaining firearm licenses is quite affordable. “While $75 is an average fee for licensing and fingerprinting, cost vary by county” (Firearms Lincenses, 2018). This also makes someone wonder rather or not the cost for obtaining your license, with it being so frugal, is also a factor in our countries gun violence. Finally, once the licenses is issued to the applicate the validation of firearm licenses is valid for 5 years. Are we missing an opportunity to take another look as this entire process? Should the cost increase? Should the statue of the validation be shorter? Should we provide more information about the applicate other than a state and federal background check? Are we really taking the necessary precaution when issuing someone the right to bear arms?

 There are also stipulations with purchasing a weapon. A judge has the ability to grant an applicate access to a firearm even if he or she has mental instability, drug abuse, or even alcohol abuse. Even though those are also a part of the criteria of not being deemed to obtain a license. A few to discuss are being a convicted of a felony, a misdemeanor crime within five years, unlawful weapons charges, and drug substance abuse. As it relates to minors Georgia law does state however that it is unlawful for a minor, being under the age of 18, to purchase a firearm. This does not mean that a minor cannot have ownership of a gun. What this means is that for a minor to possess a firearm his or her guardian must grant permission. The minor also have to be under the supervision of someone who is qualified to have a firearm. Having this stipulation in place allows the minor to participate in activities such as hunting.

With all of the information provided above really leads to the issue at hand which is that, as a country, we are being faced with such tragedy and hate. Within the past 8 years our country have been faced with brutality that contained gun violence. Just to name a few there was Travon Martin who was gunned down February 26, 2012. He was 17 at the time of his death and was unarmed. Also within that same year there was the mass shooting in Colorado on July 20. More recently in 2017 there was a mass shooting on the Strip of Las Vegas on October 1. Even within the current year “It’s not even two full months into 2018 and there have already been 17 school shootings- more than twice as many as this time last year” (Aiello, 2018). Gun Violence Archive provided the following Statistics:

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| --- | --- |
| Total number of incidents | 14,927 |
| Number of Deaths | 3,840 |
| Number of Injuries | 6,687 |
| Mass Shooting | 62 |
| Home Invasion  | 558 |
| Defensive use | 443 |
| Unintentional Shooting | 444 |

(Gun Violence Archive, 2018)

 Are we truly doing all that we know to do about this? What are we missing here? The Second Amendment was not intended upon that everyone can bear arms and use his or her new found freedom to do with the firearm as you wish. The debate now about our Second Amendment is rather it use is to protect a private right of individuals or the right that is strictly used through our militia organizations. The Second Amendment states that: 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. Reading this for what it is, this statement does not seem as if it is referring to the private individual. During this time it is believed that the government were using soldiers to subjugate the people. Therefore this brought about the adoption of the Second Amendment. So what is the purpose for the statement “the right to bear arms” to come into play when it relates to any type of gun violence? Could it be the financial, monetary side of the situation?

 The business side of gun purchases is quite inquisitive because I do not recall seeing various commercials for fire arms. Take a moment to think. While sitting and watching television have you seen a commercial that promotes guns? You also do not find large advertisements for firearms but yet the sales are skyrocketing daily. So, what drives the sales of firearms? “Sales this year were expected to plummet because pro-gun Donald Trump beat anti-gun Hillary Rodham Clinton. But the drop hasn't occurred. Gun sellers credit the rise in concealed carry permits, and concerns about terrorism as the driving forces” (Bedard, 2017). Is it the state of fear driving the following sales? It is the fact that it is really not that hard to become licensed to kill? How do we change the status quo?

 As it stands the Second Amendment does not fully cover the issues that we face today. Yes we have a right to bear arms in our country but do that qualify for what we are facing today. In the state of Georgia you have the right to protect yourself from great bodily harm. What does that qualify for? In the state of Florida you have the stand your ground law. Guns are misused based from movies, internet, and media of what we think guns are for. The intent was to have a right to defend oneself against someone who was coming up against you from another country as it relates to the Second Amendment. The issue now that we are faced with really and truly is not covered within the statement “the right to bear arms”. Our country needs to do something and we need to do something now. It is ok to protect yourself true, but how do you justify someone walking into a school full of children, or fans sitting listening to his or her favorite artist, or enjoying a date night with your significant other at the movies, and simply opening fire for whatever reason. It is not ok. We cannot continue to lean on the right to bear arms. We have to apply a stronger stipulations and consequences to the misuse of firearms.

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