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Gun Regulation

Gun control or regulation is a broad term which essentially encompasses the purchasing and selling of guns, while also limiting who may own and carry a gun (Smith). More recently in the United States, gun control advocates have been demanding that background checks should be carried out, as well as certain firearms should actually be banned (Smith). With that being said, there does need to be reform of some kind to gun laws, for the United States clearly has a national problem (Cole 2). The United States makes up approximately thirty-one percent of mass shootings globally, while only containing five percent of the Earth’s population (Meindl and Ivy 368). Regulating the right to bear arms alone will not prevent these acts of violence completely; however, it may reduce the severity. Gun rights should not be done away with entirely but should instead be regulated more strictly, for they actually help prevent crime and invasion (Pinnelli), they can be controlled in a way to prevent dangerous individuals from obtaining them, and the abolishment of the Second Amendment will only create a more intricate black market ("Black Market").

In the United States today, it is obvious there are psychotic individuals who use weapons of any kind to carry out their plans. If the general public was to have the right to bear arms taken away, small crime rates would go up, because there would be no line of defense for victims of home invasion or any similar minor assault. The yearly average for home break-ins is approximately 3.7 million households across the United States. Of those victims, more than 2.5 million used a firearm of some kind to scare off the intruder, while only eight percent actually shot the assailant (Pinnelli). If not for guns in those burglaries, the victims may not have been so lucky. Sure, gun control advocates can argue that without guns, the invasions would not have taken place in the first place. However, when a robber wants to commit a crime, they will do so by any means necessary, with or without guns. In those 3.7 million home invasions, only around eight percent involved a knife or similar object, while forty-one percent involved a firearm (Pinnelli). Guns can be seen as the great equalizer, for they create a level playing field when in a fight. By removing guns, the number of knife carrying intruders would most likely increase, which would in turn, leave the victim on the wrong end of an unfair advantage.

According to Kposowa, one of the main reasons why so many mass shootings, suicides, and similar acts occur in the United States is due to the relaxed regulation of guns (678). If a citizen is mentally inept to carry the responsibilities that come with owning a firearm, they should never receive one to begin with (678). The annual number of suicides for the United States in 2012 reached 40,600, which was the third highest rate across the globe (679). Of those suicides, over fifty percent were executed with a firearm of some kind (679). Compare these numbers to those of the United Kingdom, where only two and a half percent of suicides involved a gun (679). This is due to the process of obtaining a gun being much more thorough and decisive. In other countries, such as the United Kingdom, in-depth background checks and examinations of the buyer are carried out (679). If there is even one concerning detail that deems the individual unfit to properly handle the responsibilities accompanied by owning a firearm, the request is rejected (679). If there is one foreign nation the United States could learn about proper gun control from, Australia would be the prime candidate (Terrades 415-417). After a deadly shooting in 1996 in which thirty-five civilians lost their lives, the Australian government immediately responded with stricter gun laws (417). They also put bans on certain designs of firearms, such as semi-auto long barrel rifles, along with numerous other regulations (415). Since these laws were enacted, Australia has not suffered another massive shooting (

417). Just goes to show with a little more involvement by the government, acts of violence like mass shootings can be lessened, if not completely diminished.

In the United States, a problem that has practically always been prevalent is the underground or black market. This market involves “the illicit sale of commodities in violation of government rationing and price-fixing” (“Black Market”). Essentially, if a person desires to purchase anything the government prohibits the possession of, all they would have to do would get in touch with the black market. In the history of the United States, the event that stands out as being the most similar is the Prohibition Era of the 1920s and 1930s. This time in American history began with the enactment of the Eighteenth Amendment, which banned alcohol. As a result, large smuggling operations and gang leaders rose to power, which are still in place today, just not as large as they once were (Richardson). If the United States government were to completely outlaw firearms or substantially restrict them, this would give birth to a huge black market, and an incredibly dangerous one at that. On top of that, the United States government would not be able to tax the purchasing of these weapons. Pro-gun or not, it is undeniable that guns are a vital piece of the United States economy. According to Kposowa, eighty-nine percent of the population of the United States own at least one firearm (679). That is a huge amount of cash the government would practically be giving to dealers of the underground market.

In conclusion, the banning of firearms would only hurt the United States and its citizens. However, if they are not regulated, our country will only continue to experience extreme acts of violence. With the recent mass shootings, especially in the United States school system, there must be some change (Meindl and Ivy 368). Students should be worried about their next test, not whether or not their school is secure. Gun violence in the United States can be dealt with without the complete abolishment of the Second Amendment (Cole 5). Firearms need to be regulated, not banned, for the possession of guns in the American public lowers minor crime rates, unfit people can be prevented from obtaining them through a system of background checks, and the banning of weapons related to firearms would only increase black market activity.

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