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Cold Dead Hands

Columbine, Colorado, 1999 local high school; San Ysidro, California 1984 McDonald’s restaurant; Orlando, Florida 2106 Pulse nightclub; Philadelphia, Pennsylvania , 2014 Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital ; Anniston, Alabama 1991 Shoney’s restaurant ; and College Park, Georgia, 2009 college apartment complex are all places where mass shootings occurred that was either perpetrated or saved by a citizen with a firearm. Throughout history, there are multitudes of examples that either approve or contradict the need for gun control. The debate of gun control is one that has been at the forefront of the American conscious for quite some time; most of the time the debate ends in an intense argument. It does not matter if an individual believes that all guns should be confiscated and destroyed or it is one’s god given constitutional right to own and use a firearm, there needs to be a conscious effort on both sides to stop the fear and misguided information about guns and gun control. Whether people are sitting at the dining room table or in a political arena, saving lives and reducing crime are two important issues that arise when individuals start debating the gun control issue.

Before we can discuss today’s point views of both sides of the gun control debate, some light needs to be shed on the history of how the debate came to fruition. The gun control debate actually started before the penning of the second amendment. In *The Right to Bear Arms,* Sommers writes, the founding fathers were split into two groups, the Federalist and the Anti-federalist. The Federalist believed that for a more unified country, a stronger government presence was the right choice for the new nation. The Federalist also believed the government should have control of the national economy and military affairs. The Anti-federalist believed the government should be as small as possible and the individual states should have control of their own militia. (36). So as the story goes, with the ending of the American Revolution, no one had an issue with owning a gun because it was part of everyday life and survival. The firearm had actually played a great role in the history of securing the founding fathers freedom. The issue that the founding fathers took sides against was who should protect their new land of freedom. Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to a friend, wrote, “A bill of rights is what the people are entitled to against every government on earth.”(Sommers 37). Some of the founding fathers thought writing down privileges that were commonplace was a waste of time. To appease both sides of this debate, the founding fathers penned the Bill of Rights. The issue of the firearm control did not take precedent until the firearm started being purposed for intentions that are more devious and less on survival and protection.

In the 1800’s, during the industrialization of the United States, gun manufacturing became cheaper and easier. In addition, because of the new manufacturing techniques, different types of guns were being developed at an incredible rate. Citizen’s attitudes began to change during this time. Their attitude went from a self-defense of militia to personal self-defense (Magoon 38). Soon the attitudes toward the use of guns, especially the semi-automatic and automatic guns, turned to violence and personal gain. The first attempt to control gun legislation at a national level was the National Firearms Act of 1934. This law made it difficult to purchase machine guns and sawed off shotguns. Soon after this law, the pro-gun citizens formed the National Rifle Association to make sure there was a voice for the country’s gun owners (Magoon 35-38).

The debate of more or less gun laws still exists today. Anti-gun supporters believe that if more laws are created it would make purchasing a gun more difficult for criminals and in turn gun violence would decrease. Pro-gun supporters believe that more gun laws will only prohibit the honest gun owners from purchasing guns because criminals do not procure their guns through the lawful system. One of the Major gun-laws passed, which is still in effect today, is The Brady Law. The Brady Law stated that all gun purchases to un-licensed purchasers would have a five-day wait purchase (ATF). The pro-gun supporters once again stated that the Brady Law only stifled the rights of the lawful gun owners. Today anti-gun supporters want to ban assault rifles, put more restrictions on gun purchases, and close the gun show-purchasing loop. This loop does not require the five-day holding period for gun purchases. The present pro-gun supporters debate that there are already 20,000 gun laws on the books, adding one more will do no good. Of the 200 million guns in the U.S., only about 30,000 are involved in deaths each year. That is only .015 percent of all guns in America (Smith 186-188).

Anti-gun supporters believe that the existing laws have helped deter violence and save lives. Anti-gun supporters use other nations like Australia and United Kingdom to use as models for nations that have benefited from strict gun laws. The total homicides by gun have drastically declined in these countries (Kidprop). Pro-Gun supporters do not dispute these facts but debate that homicides from other weapons, such as trucks, knives, and bombs have increased. Pro-gun supporters also believe that more guns in citizen’s hands deter criminal activity. They cite Switzerland as a source. Switzerland gives every able body’s person, at the age of eighteen a gun. Switzerland has one of the lowest crime rates per capita (Bachmann). Anti-gun supporters believe that banning assault rifles would deter mass shooting from occurring. Gun supporters state that “assault” is a verb and is an action of a criminal who uses a gun to inflict violence and panic.

Although both sides have some valid points, there has to be a middle ground that both sides can agree. Why is there a gun that shoots 30 rounds in under a minute? Why should there be more laws that prohibit law-abiding citizens to purchase a gun that is obviously their constitutional right. I believe that gun control at its present state is unacceptable. I do not believe in more gun laws, but more gun education. With all the violence conditioning on video games, movies and internet these days, there should be a threshold where the citizens of this great nation say ENOUGH! The value of a life needs to be the backbone of our moral fiber, not just a level up on the latest on-line video game.

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