Questioning The Necessity Of Guns Essay, Research Paper

Questioning the Necessity of Guns; The Second Amendment

Every day in the United States ten children under the age of eighteen are killed accidentally by a gun, while another one hundred are seriously injured. Meanwhile every three hours a teenager uses a handgun to commit suicide. Seventy-five percent of all homicides in the U.S. are the result of handguns. Today there are well over 150 million handguns in America, and people who own handguns are more likely to kill a family member or a friend than a burglar. With so many reasons for gun control, it is undeniable that some restrictions need to be put in place; something needs to be done.

The necessity of guns in early America is obvious, as they were used for hunting and protection against wild animals, as well as against the Indians. The authors of the second amendment never imagined automatic assault rifles, or the protection of a large, well-armed police force. Times have changed. We no longer need a citizen s army, or protection against a tyrant government. While the amendment guaranteed the right to carry a gun, our interpretation of it has changed over the years, allowing for passage of regulation as the need arose. (Thomas Draper 96) 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, states the second amendment; the right to bear arms (constitution 2nd amendment). Shouldn t I have the right to have a child and not worry that when he goes to play next door with a friend, he doesn t get shot by the father s handgun. What about my rights?

The impossible task of passing gun restrictions is not due to lack of need or poof of it, rather because of political rivalries, the NRA and special interests in Washington. The National Rifle Association has been very effective in preventing gun control through lobbying, advertising, letter writing campaigns and large contributions to pro-gun political parties. It is estimated that eighty percent of all Americans want stricter gun laws, but apparently in Washington the NRA has a louder voice than the people do. It is our friends and relatives that are being killed to fight a war in politics. The pro-gun politicians fear that any compromise will mean only failure, so they refuse to make any improvement. The war over firearms has existed for over a hundred years and flares up whenever a big event occurs or crime breaks out. To tell the truth, firearm debates have been as American as the apple pie since the first settlers arrived (Thomas Draper 40).

Countless individuals feel that having a handgun in their home for protection is to their benefit. Studies show just the opposite. The majority of gun owners never actually use them against intruders. If you own a gun you are forty-three times more likely to kill a family member, than an intruder. Suicide is another big factor, out of 389 homicides related to guns in the home, 333 of those are cases of suicide. With such staggering numbers threatening gun owners why do people still find it necessary to own a handgun? The gun, if it does nothing else, gives the citizen reassurance (Thomas Draper 12). A poll shows that forty-six out of one hundred people have a gun in the home, of those individuals only forty-three percent have them loaded. So when an emergency presents itself the probability of a victim s ability to find and load the gun in time is unlikely. When weighing the pros and cons of owning a gun you need to think about the odds that go against you and your loved ones, versus the slight chance that someone may rob you. You could not be robbed of nothing more valuable than someone you love by a gun.

America has the one of the highest gun populations in the world, so naturally they may fall into the wrong hands, but they have a history of doing this too often. Criminals who use guns in violent crimes obtain their guns the same way innocent people do. These same criminals are often repeat offenders. Even after being incarcerated, chances are they will continue to commit violent acts. Studies conducted at both the local and national level indicate the overwhelming majority of murders are committed by people with previous criminal records (yahoo guncite gun homicides). How can this be prevented? Background check laws have been a big controversy, and so far have also been unable to pass. There is no logic in granting the right to own a gun to a citizen to who has proven they cannot handle this responsibility.

With such obvious reasons, as shown above, for gun control the question is can it work. The answer is yes. Many countries already have gun control laws that are strictly enforced. Australia requires a background check, and licenses that are usually only granted to businesses for security or to gun clubs. Canada, Great Britain, Israel, and Switzerland all have similar gun laws, although not as strict as Australia. They include background checks, ability to use for sport, and other laws. In 1988 the amount of people murdered by handguns in Great Britain was 7, 8 in Canada, Australia had 13, 25 in Israel, 53 in Switzerland, and a staggering 8,147 in the U.S. These numbers show undeniably that those laws are working. Looking at this global picture suggests that gun control laws do indeed work, countries with tighter gun control laws have fewer homicides ( Maggi Atkens 67). Even if the U.S. do not pass such laws like several other countries, they could at least pass laws such as the strongly supported child proof lock, or only allowing the owner of the weapon to fire it. We can learn from other country s examples, but what ever the laws may be, they are obviously needed.

People throughout history have feared change, and those who embraced have succeeded. People were hesitant to get women s suffrage and even more so to end slavery, but once people saw how wrong things were they changed them. Today we need to do the same thing, recognize the problem and fix it. Our future generations will look back and wonder why it took so long, much like we do on other issues. The easier we make it to kill someone or the easier it is for accidents to occur, the more likely it is for death by handgun rates to rise. There is no dispute as to whether some regulation is needed, but where the compromise needs to be met. It is our government s duty to help protect us from criminals getting a hold of guns as well as to protect us from ourselves and our mistakes. Think of all the lives that could be saved by just a few minor changes. Without taking away one s freedom, but by simply requiring certain regulations and safety locks we can save lives. It is unthinkable that we are so set on having every right be given without any common sense, that we are willing to make other innocent people and children give up their lives. To put it plainly, guns kill. And as studies show, they unfortunately kill the wrong people. Gun control will not take away your freedom; rather it will make our free country a safer place to live.

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