Tighten Gun Control And End The Shed Of Young Innocent Blood Essay, Research Paper

Tighten Gun Control and End the Shed of Young Innocent Blood

On December 6, 1999, a thirteen-year-old boy at Fort Gibson Middle School in Oklahoma wounded five classmates. The seventh grader fired randomly with a 9mm semiautomatic handgun at unsuspecting students outside waiting for the morning bell. I don t know, was the response he gave authorities when asked why he fired and injured his fellow classmates (Yardley, 1). Even more alarming was the horrid incident about a year ago back on April 20; two teens, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, entered Columbine High School and gunned down twelve students and a teacher, also wounding twenty-three others (Drummond 8). These incidents of school violence shock and appall us, especially considering these were the latest of a series of violent attacks / murders by adolescents at school. Between 1992 and 1998, totally excluding the violent outbreak in 1999, 225 school related violent deaths were reported (Marlin 169). If this problem is not solved, America s death toll (of children!) will only increase. Schools must realize that beefing up security is not the solution; the one child not focused on will be the one to bring in the pistols and handguns. America s educational facilities would not have to look like military bases if all teachers and parents stopped the problem at its root. We must fight adamantly for stricter gun control, so that these deadly weapons never infiltrate our precious children s lives.

To fully understand the problem, we must first review the history of violence in schools. In a study in 1940, public school teachers were asked to rank the top seven disciplinary problems. Some of their top seven included talking out of turn, chewing gum, cutting in line, and running in the halls. Fifty years later in 1990, the same question was asked of our public school teachers; their responses included robbery, rape, assault, and vandalism (Marlin 169). Schools have gone from the playgrounds of the innocent to the front battle lines of the corrupt. All students and parents of school-aged children face the possibility every day that they (or their children) may never return home from school or may be the victim of an awful assault that would make them never want to return to school.

Many feel that stronger security will stop the violence. However, metal detectors didn t help the three students in Fayetteville, Tennessee gunned down in the school parking lot in May 19, 1998 (Manzo, 18). Metal detectors are good in thought, but armed guards cannot stand at the entrances waiting for a student to walk in with a loaded weapon. By the time someone apprehends the student, he could ve already pulled out the weapon and claimed several lives. These only work with constant surveillance and are easily avoided. There are usually several entrances to the school that students would not normally go through i.e. maintenance doors, emergency exits, and kitchen entrances; most schools would not want to fund metal detectors for rarely used entrances with money already scarce.

Other people insist that lack of values teachings in the classrooms has caused increased school violence, which is probably also true. A famous slogan of the NRA is Guns don t kill people, people kill people. However, today s concept of political correctness unfortunately removes most values teachings from classrooms. In Stone v. Graham, the United States ruled that posting of the Ten Commandments violates the first amendment s Establishment clause, which prevents the endorsement of any religion by a government body, schools being government funded (Stone 6). Since our government has basically banned a document that says thou shalt not kill , we are forced to create an environment that makes it difficult to kill; we can do this only by instituting strict laws with harsh punishment concerning gun control.

According to a report issued by the Department of Education, over 6000 students were expelled in 1996-1997 for bringing guns into the public schools. Even more alarming, a 1995 survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control found that two in 25 high school students reported having carried a gun in the last thirty days (Rashten, 132). A simple step to curbing these outrageous statistics is to eliminate the sales of handguns altogether. Hunters and sportsmen can defend rifles or shotguns, but can anyone think of a real purpose for a handgun? For protection from attackers in the home? A rifle or shotgun could easily ward off an attacker, but fortunately, are not easily concealed. Handguns are easily concealed, and their sole purpose is to kill people, very alarming, considering that the U.S. Senate estimates that Americans own at least sixty million handguns (Rashten 132).

Perhaps less drastic, gun manufacturers could make only smart guns for sale to the general public. One idea is a radio transmitter wristband that must be worn when firing. As long as the shooter wears the wristband, he can fire instantaneously. Without it, the gun is useless. This wristband would be quickly identifiable by innocent bystanders. It would also be very time-consuming to pull out the hidden bracelet, put it on, and then fire the gun. Maryland Governor Glendening has voiced that he wants a mandate for only personalized guns to be sold in Maryland after June 1, 2003. Smith and Wesson has a pistol with a fingerprint scanner lock in the workings. Yes, the gun could be stolen, but any attempt to disable the lock would destroy the gun. Our gun manufacturers should produce these instead of easily concealed junk guns, cop killer bullets, and mail order parts for assembling untraceable guns without serial numbers (LeDuc A01). The Consumer Product Safety Commission was created to protect our people against unreasonable risk for injury by consumer products in 1972, yet gun lobbyists made sure that guns were not part of their jurisdiction. They can regulate toys, clothes, and lawn mowers, but not a product marketed to kill (Gun Industry Reform 3). With the ten million dollars that Clinton has proposed to dedicate to research in this wonderful technology, hopefully we can get some products on the market that are consumer safe. (LeDuc A01).

Lastly, gun dealers must ensure that only those legally authorized to own a gun gain access. This can occur by theft from dealers with inadequate security, bulk purchasing by organized gun traffickers, or by simple negligence in checking identity. Also many guns are provided to the illegal market through gun shows, where background checks are almost nonexistent and sales are virtually unregulated. The Columbine killers used guns purchased from a gun show by an eighteen-year-old friend.

I wish it had been more difficult. I wouldn t have helped them buy the guns if I

I had faced a background check.

-Robyn Anderson, purchaser of guns used at Columbine High School

(Handgun Control 5)

David Koresh, the Branch Dividian cult leader, purchased at least two hundred automatic and

Semi-automatic guns from Texas gun shows, not to mention thousands of rounds of ammunition (Private Sales at Handgun Shows 10). These private dealers are exempt from the Brady Bill, which requires a background check for gun purchases. These dealers must be made to conform to the same rules as any other reseller. After all, an unrestricted purchase resulted in the largest mass school killing the United States has ever seen last year at Columbine.

American children are the most at risk of death by firearms than any other industrialized nation. In only one year, firearms killed no child in Japan, 19 in Great Britain, 57 in Germany, 109 in France, 153 in Canada, and 5285 in the United States (The School Shootings and Beyond 1). The adults of our great nation must take action to curb these horrendous statistics, which includes serious design changes or complete banning of handguns and more restriction on the sales of firearms into illegal markets. Our society is on a steady path downhill, and will unfortunately bury the children of the future with them unless something is done quickly. What is more important, revisions in an already corrupt gun sales market or our children s lives? Maybe the parents of the Columbine victims might have the answer.