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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

" Each year in the United States, guns kill more than 35, 000 people, a death rate much higher than in any other industrial nation.

Approximately 70 percent of the murders in the United States in 1997 were committed using guns" (Zimring: Encarta Encyclopedia). Why are these stats so absurdly large? What is being done to bring these numbers down? " Gun control is regulating the use of firearms and their ownership to reduce violence," says Franklin E. Zimring, a professor of Law and Director of the Earl Warren Legal Institute, University of California at Berkeley, and co-author of The Citizen's Guide to Gun Control. Guns and gun safety are important issues in the United States. Both Federal and State gun control laws have been passed. Proper storage of guns, gun safety classes, more efficient background checks, and increased penalties and laws are the beginnings of a safer America. Many people highly support the increased enforcement of gun laws and bills governing firearm users. Around the world, someone's young child is killed with a loaded gun every few minutes.

This is one of the leading causes of death in children. According to Alan Greene, MD, " about half of US homes contain firearms, and one in four gun owners keep their guns loaded and easily accessible. Not having a gun readily accessible is the safest choice.

If guns are a must-have, they should be emptied and locked up securely to prevent children from gaining access to the firearms. These guns should only be accessible by responsible adults." " The " Children's Access Prevention Act" holds adults who fail to lock up a loaded firearm, or an unloaded firearm with ammunition, liable if the weapon is taken by a child and used to kill

or injure him or herself, or another person," says Carl Levin, a U. S. Senator, who is a cosponsor of the bill.

" The Act also creates a gun safety education program that includes parent-teacher organizations, local law enforcement and community organizations." These safety measures are the first steps to reduce the thousands of preventable firearm deaths that occur each year. To own a gun, one must apply for a permit or license. One of the strategies for controlling guns requires the licensing of guns and waiting periods before purchasing a gun.

Under the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) managed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), firearm dealers are required to run a background check on the potential buyer, which may identify convicted felons and other individuals who are prohibited from owning a gun. This background check is known as the Brady Bill, which was adopted in 1993 by the Congress of the United States. In 1998, a new computerized verification system replaced the initial five-day waiting period requirement for the Brady Bill, making the background checks easier and faster. This bill has prevented countless numbers of convicted felons, other individuals, such as those with mental illness or a history of domestic violence, and minors from obtaining guns. Strict penalties and new laws to deal with those who are involved in gun incidents and fatalities have been discussed at recent Legislative sessions.

" These laws would work to prohibit high-risk guns from being acquired by anyone other than the police and would also keep high-risk people from obtaining firearms" (Zimring: World Book). " Since 1934, Federal law has

limited the sale and ownership of machine guns and sawed-off shotguns. These were considered to be high-risk weapons. Semiautomatic guns joined this list in 1994, and are called assault weapons in the legislation" (Zimring: Encarta Encyclopedia).

High-risk people are those whom authorities consider most likely to misuse firearms. Federal and state laws prohibit these people from owning guns. The laws also prohibit sales of firearms to minors. "Current bills passed by the United States Congress are the 'Protection of Lawful Commerce in Arms Act', which" prohibits civil liability actions from being brought or continued against manufacturers, distributors, dealers, or importers of firearms or ammunition for damages resulting from the misuse of their products by others", and 'Crackdown on Deadbeat Dealers Act of 2003', which is "to ensure greater accountability by licensed firearms dealers". Gun control bills passed in Congress pertain to the purchase, possession, and carrying of firearms" (NRA). They are becoming stricter, and will remain a hot topic in the Legislature as long as there is violence involving firearms taking place. Guns, when used in an unsafe manner, or when in the wrong hands, lead to numerous murders, suicides, and unintentional killings every year. Proper storage of guns, gun safety education, more