

Control in the united states criminology essay

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**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Griffin Stocks Mrs. Etheridge AP US Government March 1st, 2013 Gun Control in the United States One of the most controversial issues in America is gun control. Gun control has been a major problem in our country for decades. The issue of gun control began in 1791, with the passing of the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights introduced the Second Amendment, which guarantees Americans the right to bear arms. Over the years, many laws have been passed involving gun control. However, gun control is still routinely argued by politicians and Americans. As a result of the recent gun-related violence, this issue has remained an on-going problem in the United States. Common issues related to gun control are who should be able to obtain guns, should gun companies be responsible for gun-related issues, or whether the Second Amendment should be abolished altogether and leave the United States gun-free. Today, there are two types of firearms: small firearms and automatic weapons. Small firearms include guns such as pistols, shotguns, and rifles. The pistols come in three different types: single shot, revolver, or semi-automatic. The single shot pistol was a one shot and then reload gun that is not used today. The revolver is a pistol that holds are six to eight rounds in the chamber and the shooter must pull the hammer backwards in order to rotate the chamber. Once the chamber is rotated with a new bullet in its hole, the gun is ready to fire once the trigger is pulled. A semi-automatic pistol comes with a magazine that holds around fifteen rounds. The semi-automatic pistol works similarly to the revolver, but on the semi-automatic, the chamber does not spin and the new bullets come in from the bottom. The next small firearm is a shotgun. Shotguns come in many different gauges such as 410, 12, or 20. Shotguns can shoot a packet of shot. A rifle,

on the other hand, can only shot one bullet at a time but it also can come in many different sizes such as the 7mm-08, 30-06, or 30-30. Automatic weapons are the topic of discussion at the moment. Many are pushing to get these banned due to the occurring violence. These weapons can fire multiple rounds without releasing the trigger. Examples of automatic weapons are machine guns, submachine guns, or an assault rifle. Each of these firearms can hold plenty of ammunition due to their rapid fire. Many Americans oppose gun control due to the amount of deaths involving firearms each year. In 2011, firearms accounted for 32, 163 deaths in the United States. Of these 11, 101 were homicides, 19, 766 involved suicide, 851 were determined unintentional, and 222 were undetermined. Of the 15, 963 homicides reported in 2011, 11, 101 involved any type of gun. Of the 38, 285 reported suicides, 19, 766 involved guns. People can find other ways to end their lives besides firearms. People turn to firearms to take their lives because it is the fastest and easiest way. But they are not the only way people can kill themselves. People can kill themselves by overdosing on drugs or breathing in carbon monoxide. An unintentional death could include a hunting accident, a backfire, or a gun malfunction. The people who are able to obtain firearms are specified in the Brady Handgun Violence Act. The act was passed on November 30, 1993 by President Bill Clinton. The bill was passed due to Jim Brady. Jim Brady was the press secretary of President Ronald Reagan. An assassination attempt on the President was executed on March 30, 1981 in Washington DC. The assassin, John Hinckley Jr., shot the President along with Brady as they exited the Washington Hilton Hotel. Hinckley Jr., who later was confirmed to suffer from mental illnesses,

purchased the .22 caliber revolver in a pawn shop in Dallas, Texas. Hinckley bought the firearm before background checks were required to purchase a firearm. Hinckley gave a fake address on the registration form and presented an old Texas drivers' license. The drivers' license was his but he needed to prove that he was a resident of Texas, which he no longer was. But this was not Hinckley's first assassination attempt. In 1980, just four days before purchasing the firearms, Hinckley was arrested in Nashville, Tennessee while trying to board an airplane with the firearms. The flight was en-route to New York City, where the current President Jimmy Carter was also traveling to deliver a speech. After Hinckley's assassination attempt, Jim Brady was left paralyzed after being shot in the head. Secret Service Agent Tim McCarthy and Washington DC police officer Thomas Delehanty were also shot, but neither of the severity of Brady. Brady's wife, Sarah, fought to create a system that monitors a citizen before purchasing a firearm. The Brady system created a background check that must be checked by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) before the firearm dealer can release the weapon to the buyer. Since its signing in 1994, 107 million background checks have been conducted and 1.9 million attempted purchases were rejected. The Brady Act also prohibited who is allowed to purchase firearms. Ones that do not have any affiliation with the following credentials is allowed to purchase a firearm: Ex-convict, Substance abuser, Mental unstable, Illegal alien, Not honorably discharged from the Armed Forces, Renounced citizenship, Ex-felon, Sexual harasser, Stalker. The Gun Control Act of 1968 was signed by Lyndon B. Johnson with the intention of stopping interstate firearm transfers. This act excluded major firearm distributors such as Colt and Smith

& Weston. This law prohibits citizens from selling a firearm to a buyer without knowing their criminal background. A good example of this is a website of Facebook. The site acts as an online yard sell and any user can post products on the site that they wish to sell. Some members of the site have seen firearms such as Uzis, shotguns, and rifles that are wished to be sold on the site. Selling of these firearms is against the law due to the Gun Control Act of 1968. This act was proposed following the deaths of some of our nation's finest leaders such as President John F. Kennedy, his brother and Senator Robert Kennedy, and African American activist Martin Luther King Jr. The Gun Control Act of 1968 set up the guidelines for what would become the Brady Act in 1994. The Gun Free School Zones Act of 1990 prohibited citizens from coming within 1,000 feet of a school zone. Although this law seems strict, there are many minor details hidden within. The law does not apply if it is one's own private property that is not associated with the school. The law also does not apply if one is instructed by his or her state or if the gun is unloaded and is locked in a container. The law has been challenged many times since its signing in 1990. There have been ten convictions under the Guns Free School Zones Act, including the most popular case United States v. Lopez in 1995. In this case, Alfonso Lopez Jr. brought a .38 caliber revolver to his school in San Antonio, Texas with the intent to sell the firearm for forty dollars. The principal of the school was tipped off that Lopez was carrying a weapon and Lopez was charged in violation of the Guns Free School Zones Act. He appealed his verdict, stating the Guns Free School Zones Act exceeded Congress's power under the Commerce clause. Lopez won the case after the case had it through the

Court of Appeals. Even though these laws have been put into place, firearms are still available, especially to teenagers. There was been many school shootings in the past 20 years, ultimately beginning with the horrific shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado. The Columbine High School Massacre took place on April 20, 1999, when seniors Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold opened fire on their high school. The two had been planning their attack for over a year before executing on this April day. The boys' intentions were to place two bombs inside the gym. The boys were to wait outside until the bombs blew up, picking off any survivors that ran from the burning building. Their plan went array when the bombs failed to detonate, making the boys alter their plans. They timed their attack during the first lunch period. As students began to exit classes and head for lunch, they fired into the crowd. As students and faculty retreated, Harris and Klebold pushed forward. As the police arrived, the two disappeared into the building and headed towards the library. Students were already taking shelter there, hoping to be clear of the shootings in the cafeteria. But this was not the case. Klebold and Harris ambushed the library, killing everyone in their path. The final death count that day added up to fifteen with a total of fifteen also injured. Harris and Klebody acquired their firearms through a few different sources. The two solely purchased two 9mm handguns and two 12-gauge shotguns. But these were not enough for the two. The boy got their older friend, Robyn Anderson, to purchase a rifle and two more shotguns at a gun show. And that still was not enough for them. They also purchased another pistol for five hundred dollars. After purchasing a total of four shotguns, the boys sawed off the barrels to allow for more room for their pipe bombs and

Molotov cocktails. On the day of the shooting, the two used two of the shotguns, one of the 9mm handguns, and a 9mm carbine. Klebold fired a total of sixty-seven rounds while his colleague Harris shot a total of one hundred and twenty-seven. The boys had violated the National Firearms Act by purchasing a firearm without the deal being done through the Federal NFA registry. This incident is important because it strengthened the importance of gun laws in the United States and the access of firearms to teenagers. Although the Columbine shooting shocked the world by being the first major school shooting, no other school shooting has been more deadly than the Virginia Tech Massacre in 2007. The shootings were executed by senior Seung Hui-Cho. Cho had been diagnosed with a severe anxiety disorder which should have prevented him from being able to purchase a firearm. Cho had been suffering from this condition since enrolling at Virginia Tech, but he failed to inform the university of his illness. After being convicted of stalking two females (which also should make him ineligible to purchase a firearm), he was declared mentally ill, but continued his education at Virginia Tech. Besides the fact that Seung Hui-Cho was mentally ill and was convicted of stalking, he was granted access to purchase the firearms responsible for the Virginia Tech Massacre. He began buying weapons when he purchased his first gun, a .22 caliber pistol, from TGSCOM Inc. TGSCOM Inc. has a recent history of selling firearms to mass murderers; their firearms were sold to the shooter in the Los Angeles Fitness shooting as well as the shooter convicted in the Northern Illinois University shooting. They have since shut down operations due to the attention drawn from its mistaken sales. Cho was given to background check in order to purchasing

the firearm, but he failed to disclose his mental illness, hereby letting him squeak by the Brady Act. After purchasing the first gun, Cho purchased a 9mm handgun from a gun shop in Roanoke, Virginia. Although similar to the Columbine High School Massacre conducted by Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, Cho's tactics were diverse. Cho began his attack on the morning of April 16, 2007. Cho began by arriving at West Ambler Johnston Hall at 7: 15. He shot the resident advisor, Ryan Christopher Clark, dead and left student Emily Hilscher fatally wounded. He headed back to his apartment to reload and prepare for his attack on Norris Hall. Cho arrived at Norris Hall and prepared his attack by chaining the entry doors so no one could leave the building. He then began shooting. Cho's attack lasted a total of nine minutes, killing thirty people and wounding twenty-three. As the police broke through the door and made their way up to the second floor, the shooting stopped and they found Cho lying dead on the floor with a bullet through his temple. The Virginia Tech Massacre assassin had taken his own life after taking away thirty others, students and facility included. Of the twenty-three wounded, seventeen were wounded by gunfire; others were wounded by jumping from the second floor of Norris Hall by trying to escape however they could. This shooting is important to our county because it stressed the impact of intense background checks before firearms can be sold. The most recent mass school shooting was the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School. The shooting took place on December 14, 2012. The massacre was executed by twenty year old Adam Lanza. Lanza was said to have suffered from personality disorder and Asperger syndrome, which results in significant difficulties in social interaction. These two disorders should have brought up

concerns when Lanza's mother kept her weapons around the household that her accessible to Adam. Out of all the school shootings, the Sandy Hook shooting has to be the cruelest. Lanza began his rampage by killing his own mother four times in the head before he left their home to head to the elementary school. Upon arriving at the school, Lanza used his mother's rifle to shut through the front door. And that is where the killing began. Lanza was halted at the entrance by the principal and the school psychologist. He did not listen to what they had to say and shot them dead. He then moved his way on to the classroom. " Most of the shooting took place in two first grade classrooms near the entrance to the school, where he killed fourteen in one room and six in the other" (Wiki). Lanza shot a total of twenty-six civilians at Sandy Hook Elementary School, twenty being children and six were women employed by the school. " Of the twenty children killed, eight were boys and twelve were girls between the ages of six and seven." (Wiki) A whole new debate has begun due to the shooting at Sandy Hook. President Barack Obama has already said that he will make gun control one of his main priorities in his second term in office. Since Obama is a democrat, he will probably be pro-gun control, meaning he is for taking our weapons away. In the most recent State of the Union address, President Obama spoke on behalf of Sandy Hook and gun control: Of course, what I've said tonight matters little if we don't come together to protect our most precious resource: our children. It has been two months since Newtown. I know this is not the first time this country has debated how to reduce gun violence. But this time is different. Overwhelming majorities of Americans -- Americans who believe in the Second Amendment -- have come together around

common-sense reform, like background checks that will make it harder for criminals to get their hands on a gun. Senators of both parties are working together on tough new laws to prevent anyone from buying guns for resale to criminals. Police chiefs are asking our help to get weapons of war and massive ammunition magazines off our streets, because these police chiefs, they're tired of seeing their guys and gals being outgunned. Each of these proposals deserves a vote in Congress. Now, if you want to vote no, that's your choice. But these proposals deserve a vote. Because in the two months since Newtown, more than a thousand birthdays, graduations, anniversaries have been stolen from our lives by a bullet from a gun -- more than a thousand. One of those we lost was a young girl named Hadiya Pendleton. She was 15 years old. She loved Fig Newtons and lip gloss. She was a majorette. She was so good to her friends they all thought they were her best friend. Just three weeks ago, she was here, in Washington, with her classmates, performing for her country at my inauguration. And a week later, she was shot and killed in a Chicago park after school, just a mile away from my house. Hadiya's parents, Nate and Cleo, are in this chamber tonight, along with more than two dozen Americans whose lives have been torn apart by gun violence. They deserve a vote. They deserve a vote. Gabby Giffords deserves a vote. The families of Newtown deserve a vote. The families of Aurora deserve a vote. The families of Oak Creek and Tucson and Blacksburg, and the countless other communities ripped open by gun violence -- they deserve a simple vote. They deserve a simple vote. (Obama, State of the Union) But if President Obama ever does ban firearms, there are going to be millions of angry Americans, many of whom belong to the NRA.

The NRA, or National Rifle Association, is an organization devoted to fighting for Americans to keep the right to bear arms. The National Rifle Association is based on the idea that Americans are titled to their firearms due to the Second Amendment of the Bill of Rights. The NRA is anti-gun control but for stricter laws on who is allowed to own a gun (Wiki). Following the Sandy Hook shooting, the NRA proposed the idea of putting actually police officer to protect students in every school across the nation. This proposition may cost some money, but the protection is badly needed. Although firearms can cause a threat to society, people are going to find others ways of committing crimes. I understand how some gun control could be useful, but it would not help the cause to take away our guns and leave use unprotected. Take the 2001 Dartmouth College murders. James Parker and Robert Tulloch bought SEAL 2000 knives and killed their college professor and his wife. It's not the fact that guns are bad; it's the fact that some people use them in a bad way. Common issues related to gun control are who should be able to obtain guns, should gun companies be responsible for gun-related issues, or whether the Second Amendment should be abolished altogether and leave the United States gun-free. After researching the topic, I believe that the government is absolutely correct on who should be able to obtain guns and I believe that gun companies should not be punished for the recent violence; it's the owner's responsibility on how they conduct themselves with the firearm. And finally, the Second Amendment should not be abolished because it has been the right of the people for over two hundred years and it cannot be changed in a blink of an eye. Guns are the backbone of this country, and without them, we are defenseless.