

Gun control

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



" 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." What does the second amendment to the Constitution to the United States really mean? Does every citizen have the right to own a gun? Should there be limitations on who can possess a gun? Gun right advocates believe they have the right to possess a gun without restrictions. Gun Control advocates on the other hand support more limitations on the accessibility of guns and also want to ban certain types of guns. They argue that the more guns there are the more crime there will be. Is either one of these arguments justified? Which party is right in their interpretation of the second amendment? Those in favor of the right to have possession of a gun say they have a gun for protection, and that guns do not cause more deaths. These advocates of gun rights use the fact that Switzerland with very little restraints on guns has very little crime. " Switzerland, through its militia system, distributes both pistols and fully automatic assault rifles to all adult males and requires them to store their weapons at home. Further, civilian long-gun purchases are essentially unregulated, and handguns are available to any adult without a criminal record or mental defect. Nevertheless, Switzerland suffers far less crime per capita than the United States an almost no gun crime" (Kopel 2002). Gun rights activists say that " Guns do not turn ordinary citizens into murderers" (Kopel 2002) Studies have established that less than one gun owner in 3,000 commits murder, and that one killer is far-flung from being a classic gun holder. Studies have also found that " two-thirds to four-fifths" of homicide offenders have previous arrest records (Kopel 2002). Every month the NRA magazine publishes a section called " The Armed Citizen." The section is full

of newspaper clippings about citizens who have successfully defended themselves against a crime. For Example, one of the stories featured in the magazine was about a man, who is in a wheelchair, who had been beaten and robbed in five break-ins over the past two months. One night when the man heard prying at his window he fired a shotgun, and wounded the burglar and scaring him off (Kopel 2002). This is just one success story from owning a gun. There are however many disadvantages to self-defense with a firearm. The gun control advocates focus on these aspects of the gun. Self-defense is the most common reason for owning a gun. Research has shown that a gun kept within a house is 43 times more likely to kill a member of the family, a friend, and rather than an intruder. Dr. Arthur Kellermann and Dr. Donald Reay published the following information in The New England Journal of Medicine: " A study of 743 gunshot deaths found that 84 percent of these homicides occurred during altercations in the home. Only two of these 743 gunshot deaths occurring in the home involved an intruder killed during an attempted entry, and only nine of these deaths were determined by police/courts to be justified" (Jason 2002). Approximately eleven percent of gun owners and about thirteen percent of handgun owners use their firearms for protection (Gun Control 2002). Guns were a major cause of accidents. In 1995, firearms were responsible for 1.5% or 1,400 fatal accidents. They were responsible for 2.7% or 181 of accidents that involved children under 14. There were 259 fatal firearm accidents for teenagers between the ages of 15 and 19 (Gun control 2002). Dr. Roth, a research director in Bethesda Maryland, says " In short, people are not always thinking rationally, and when there is a gun around, it is easier for an

irrational person to do greater damage" (Jason 2002). Guns are used as the primary weapon in many crimes. In 1989, approximately 60 percent of all murder victims were killed with guns (Jason 2002). In the United States during 1997, 15, 289 murders were committed. Out of these murders, the perpetrators used a firearm in 10, 369 of the instances. Also in 1997, people committed 7, 927, 000 violent crimes. Out of these crimes a gun was used in about 691, 000 times (Gun control 2002). Because of these accidents of self-defense or neglect and the number of crimes committed with guns, gun control advocates feel that many precautions need to be taken before anyone can own a weapon. The Brady Bill established on February 28, 1994 establishes a 5 day waiting period on handgun purchases when bought through a licensed dealer. It also requires that local authorities do a background check on handgun purchasers. Since the implementation of the Brady Bill, the number of violent crimes committed by firearms has fallen 25% as of 1997 (Gun Control 2002). Gun control advocates also feel that people who own guns should attend gun education classes (Jason 2002). In 1988, the NRA developed a gun safety program for school kids from pre-k through 6th grade. As of 1998, the program has reached nearly 10 million children. The goal of this program of course is none other then to teach children what to do if they should come across a firearm. The kids are taught to " Stop, Don't touch. Leave the area. And tell an Adult" (Gun control 2002). Since 1998, 37, 00 National Rifle Association instructors and coaches have conducted safety and proficiency programs that have reached nearly 70, 000 participants in a single year. The NRA has three gun safety rules. One, always keep the gun pointed in a safe direction (whether loaded or not). Two

always keep your finger off the trigger until you are ready to fire. And last but not least, always keep the gun unloaded until you are ready to use it (Gun control 2002.) Handgrip ID tagging is also on the list for gun control. This technology is still in the future, but it would be a good goal to work at. The theory for this is that each gun is "registered" to one-person palm print (the legal purchaser of the gun), and only that person can fire that gun. If by chance another person tries to fire, the gun simply will not fire. This will make stolen guns useless, and in turn people can not be harmed by anyone other than the gun owner himself (Jason 2002). This in turn will help the justice system a lot more. There would be no more mistakes on people being wrongfully accused of a crime they did not commit. In conclusion, I am not against the right to own a gun. I just feel that gun control laws should be stronger. For instance, I know that when you go to a gun show in many states you can just go in and buy a gun. There is not waiting period and there is not background check. This makes it easier for criminals to get hold of a gun. I also feel that after you've had a background check and are approved to own a firearm that you attend safety classes. Before my brother, age 15, could get a hunting license or permit he had to attend gun safety classes. These classes are extremely important. He learned things that may someday save his life. After doing this paper I noticed that many of the people opposed to gun control like the NRA, are actually helping the cause of gun control. For instances, the NRA goes to schools and teaches about gun safety and also has class for people to attend about precautions and safety. Attending one of these classes is a big part for the gun control advocates. So in a way the NRA is helping out gun control, even though they don't believe

in it. To sum things up, I feel that gun control is greatly need in today's society. There are too many people getting hurt or dying because of firearms. We need to set stricter limits on who can own a gun. We also need to have stricter sentences on imprisonment and the death penalty. If we as a nation really crack down on gun control, I feel, the number of deaths (either by accident or murder) will decrease drastically.

References (2002, April 9)
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