

Example of research paper on gun control: how much is too much

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The U. S. administration has made it clear that it wants more stringent gun control laws, a move that has been followed by most states. The cause of this aggressive campaign is the rise in the number of shootings taking place at American schools. Those in favor of stricter gun control laws believe that they will lead to a reduction in gun related crime. However, these measures have been faced with protests on the part of gun owners as well as gun associations. This section of the society argues that, instead of reducing crime, gun control will only take away the ability of innocent civilians to defend themselves against perpetrators. The result of this opposition has led the government, especially in the state of New York, to review gun control. On September 12, 1994, President Bill Clinton approved the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, making it a federal law. Included in this Act is the Federal Assault Weapons Ban or AWB which prohibits the manufacturing of semi-automatic firearms or assault weapons bearing specified features . However, when the Act became void after 10 years as per the ‘ sunset’ provision, it was not renewed. There have been constant debates and attempts to have the AWB renewed, although none of the proposed bills have been presented before the House. The sunset provision, however, is not a part of New York’s State law. As such, the ban is still in place here. Further, on January 15, 2013, the governor of New York – Andrew Cuomo – approved the Secure Ammunition and Firearms Enforcement Act, also known as the New York Safe Act . This Act introduces more stringent restrictions aimed at enhanced gun control.

It should be noted that the recent changes to the New York gun control laws were made with the aim of preventing shootouts such as the one in Newton,

Connecticut . According to the new law, the maximum magazine capacity of civilian arms has been reduced to a mere 7 rounds, down from 10. New York will also be following the 23 Executive Orders passed by President Obama. In a similar response to the horrific shootout at Sandy Hook Elementary School in which 20 children and 6 adults were brutally murdered by a gunman, President Obama has issued 23 executive orders aimed at bringing down violent crimes through gun control . However, those who oppose these measures argue that gun control will not result in lower crime rates, nor will it serve to protect innocent civilians who are mostly unarmed. Most of the 23 executive orders will not serve any purpose except to increase tax spending and wasting resources and manpower on an ill-directed initiative.

A Presidential Memorandum was issued to make federal information to be made available for background checks will not ensure that guns are issued to reliable citizens. This measures aims to make guns available only to those who have been deemed to be ‘ safe gun users. However, in the case of Adam Lanza, the shooter of the school massacre, the assault weapons did not belong to him but to his mother, who had acquired them legally after undergoing a background check. Lanza killed his mother to acquire the weapons. Laws and the ‘ illegal’ nature of his act would not have stopped him. Hence, all the executive orders aimed at bolstering the background check system become irrelevant in cases where premeditated attacks occur. The president also requires a revision of gun locks and safety standards under the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This law aims to ensure that all guns have locks in place to prevent them to be used by untrained people. However, most guns already have locks that work. This order cannot

force people to lock their weapons. Further, a gunman can easily find information through the worldwide web on not only how to unlock any gun but also how to operate it. If a person is intent on killing someone, locks will not stop them. The president also issued order that ban the sale of military style weapons. This would include the AR-15, which is similar to an AK-47. It was first misreported that Lanza had used an assault rifle in his shooting and hence this ban was included in the orders. However, it should be noted that Lanza did not use the AR-15, he used 4 perfectly legal handguns. He also tried to buy the gun but was denied. Hence, having assault class weapons removed from gun stores does not really serve the purpose of bringing down crime.

Another order asks for magazine capacity to be brought down to 10 rounds instead of 30. Those who favor stricter gun control believe that this will prevent mass shooting while enabling gun owners to defend themselves. However, changing magazines requires just a few seconds, barely enough for potential victims to tackle the gunman or run for cover. If, like Lanza, the perpetrator has multiple handguns, they would have several rounds at their disposal regardless of the legal limit. If a person has planned a massacre, he will quite obviously be prepared to shoot over a dozen or more people. If the intent is to murder one person, then 10 rounds are more than sufficient. Hence, limiting the number of rounds in a magazine is pointless .

The president also aims to provide ‘incentives’ to schools that hire school resource officers. This law is meant to safeguard schools that are willing to make the investment. Those who oppose gun control, however, argue that it will not protect all schools. Instead, if the president had revoked the Gun

Free Zones Ban, allowing teachers and administrative staff to carry concealed weapons, they would be much better equipped to defend themselves as well as students. A great example can be seen in Joel Myrick, assistant principal at Pearl High School, Mississippi, who used his .45 semi-automatic to subdue and restrain a gunman who killed two students and injured 7 in 1997. Calls for banning guns were raised back then but did not prevent the December 2012 shooting in Connecticut. If school staff was allowed to carry weapons, schools will not have to make any investments and the government will not have to spend tax payer money on 'incentives'.

Another reason given by those against gun control is the scope of such laws. Criminals are unlikely to opt to purchase a registered weapon; it is law abiding citizens who do so. Hence, stricter gun control laws would result in fewer citizens bearing arms to defend themselves, while criminals who target them will still have access to arms through the black market. Instead of protecting citizens, gun control would leave them all the more vulnerable to attacks, as an unarmed civilian is more likely to fall victim of a premeditated attack than one who owns weapon. Gun control would, hence, not have a substantial impact on lowering violent crimes.

While it is reasonable that some measures be taken to bring down gun related crime and the enhancing of gun control laws has its fair share of supporters, it may not be the most effective solution. On the contrary to the notion that gun control will reduce gun related crimes, studies have found that the higher the number of civilians bearing arms, the lesser the rate of gun related crime would be. The recent changes made to the gun control

law in the US hold little bearing as far as preventing gun related violent crimes are concerned. They may eventually deny innocent civilians the basic right to defend themselves against attackers. At the end of the day, criminals do not commit crimes by within the legal framework, which is an insensible proposition. Hence, laws aimed at curbing legal sales of guns, lowering magazine capacity or making background checks more stringent will not deter repeats of Pearl High School or Sandy Hook Elementary. Efforts to curtail gun related crimes would be better directed towards hitting the black market hard, forming an effective social support system for the mentally ill, and eliminating environments that drive people to commit such insanity. Focusing efforts towards imbuing a higher sense of responsibility among citizens from a young age will prove to be a more effective means of reducing gun related crime.

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