

# Gun control in schools research paper sample

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



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## **Abstract**

Violence in schools has passed the bullying phase for a long time. The access to weapons of any kind has led to violent gun attacks, ending up in killing innocent students and teachers. While there is no profile of the attackers that use schools for unloading their guns, public opinion requests for gun control policies. The Presidency also considers that gun control is a requirement for protecting the safety of the children and the national security in United States. The recent gun attacks that occur in the United States, which culminated with the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut, have prompted the President Barack Obama to set a gun control agenda, which is perceived as a violation of the second amendment (the right to possess and to bear guns) by the pro - gun lobby organizations, as a necessary action for restating the feeling of safety in schools, by teachers' officials and with mixed feelings by students, who consider that bad people will violate any law if they want to use dangerous weapons for harming others.

Key Words: violence, weapons, gun attacks, killing, students, teachers, schools, safety, gun control, second amendment.

Gun Control in Schools

## **Introduction**

In the context of the recent shootings that occurred in schools and culminated with the last year blood bath attack on Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, where 26 people, out of which 20 first grade students were killed, this paper investigates the effects of gun control policy, which was proposed by President Barack Obama's administration for preventing similar cases to occur.

This research paper will analyze the feelings of teachers and of the students, as well as the school environment, under the effect of the gun control policy. In addition to this, there will be presented some of the most dangerous armed attacks that occurred in the United States schools.

## **Sustaining Paragraphs**

Shootings in schools have severe outcomes in United States, where such incidents conducted to executing to death or severe injuries students and teachers. In 2001, a teenager from Pearl, Mississippi, kills his mother, by stabbing and then he goes to his school and shots with a rifle nine people, killing two of them. Another similar case occurred in the same year when a high - school student from West Paducah, Kentucky, shot at his classmates with a pistol, injuring five and killing two of his colleagues. One year later, two middle school boys (11 and 13 years old) have elaborated a plan of killing people in a school. They pulled the school's alarm fire and started

shooting at people going out of the building, injuring nine students and a teacher and killing five students. Earlier in 1998 another attack occurred in Springfield, Oregon, which ended with four students dead and 25 injured and in 1999 a massacre took place at a school in Columbine, when two senior students killed 12 students and one teacher and wounded 21 other students, with bombs, and other explosive devices to cause panic, allowing them to shot at people. The attackers committed suicide in the end (Gold, 2004). More recently, in December 2012, a 20 years old man killed 20 first grade students and six adults at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, entering the school's premises with three guns that he took from his house (CNN, "Sandy Hook").

Following this mass massacre event, the Sandy Hook Elementary School requested for arm guards in school. This request was supported by the National Rifle Association (NRA), which took the school's request further, proposing as a solution for combating the school shootings or violence of any kind, the National School Shield Program, aiming to install armed security in all schools (Lee, "Gun Control Debate").

The attack that happened in Sandy Hook Elementary School reached on the agenda of the President of the United States, Barack Obama, who took action regarding this tragedy, stating "We won't be able to stop every violent act, but if there is even one think that we can do to prevent any of these events, we have a deep obligation, all of us, to try." ("Now Is the Time"), proposing also a plan to prevent violent events.

The President's plan to reduce and prevent the gun shots in schools include four points: (1) Closing background checks for keeping guns out of desperate

hands; (2) Banning magazines with high capacity and the ones that commercialize military - style assault weapons; (3) " Making schools safer"; (4) " Increasing access to mental health services" (" Now Is the Time").

Arming teachers is not an action sustained by the President.

For supporting the point 4 of the President's plan, the states' involvement is requested, by providing FBI with the prohibiting records of individuals who fall under the category of " mental defective" - this action counts for \$50 million, which comprise the incentives for encouraging the states to contribute to this plan (Krouse, 2013).

Likewise, in the quest for preventing violent gun shooting events to occur in other schools, public debates propose legislative actions, among which the most salient is the United States' President proposal of requiring background checks for the firearms transferred intrastate, controlling the licenses of the guns from the persons who transfer them to the ones to whom they transfer the guns. The President Barack Obama also proposes the increase of penalties for gun trafficking (Krouse, 2013).

American laws offers the right to citizens in 31 of its states to wear guns, if their records are clean of any criminal act and if they prove to be mentally stable. This law constitutes a measure of protection against attackers, rappers, robbers, and so on. In fact, studying the impact of the concealed handguns on the United States' population, professor John R. Lott Jr. reached the conclusion that more guns leads to less violent crimes, sustaining his affirmation through a statistical evidence, according to which between 1977 and 1992, in the states that adopted the shall-issue laws (concealed handguns), the murderers were reduced by 8. 5%, the aggravated assaults

by 7%, the rapes registered 5% decrease, and the robberies a 3% decrease (“ More Guns Equal Less Violent Crime”).

However, most of the attacks that occurred in the schools mentioned above were committed by school students, who shot at their colleagues. The minors are not allowed to use or to possess guns and they have used their parents’ armament, which they have at home, for protection against criminal acts, being encouraged to possess them under the state’s amendments. In the case of the attacks that occur in schools, coming from students, minors, who are not allowed to have guns, their parents’ right to possess arms seems to have encouraged children and teenagers to act violently, killing their colleagues and their teachers, their own parents in some cases and even themselves, ultimately.

The gun control discussions and debates lead to implementing civic education for children and teenagers. Schools’ staffs are developing programs to learn students about the significance of gun control programs, on their safety. Through exercises and brainstorming, students are being thought about the effects of guns and they are prompted to propose solutions for avoiding armed attacks in schools (Marshall & Gonchar, 2013).

Evoking the Sandy Hook Elementary School tragic event, mass media presents other responses to the gun control policy. As such, as a reaction to the gun control new policy imposed by President Obama’s administration, which imposes the limitation of buying armament by applying background checks to the gun buyers in order to assess their criminal record and their mental state, and which forbids the selling of military guns, the National Rifle Association is advocating for arming teachers and installing armed guards to

protect schools, limiting like this the attackers to attempt to enter those schools for killing innocent people (Stolberg, 2013; Liang, 2013).

The disputes between the parties that sustains the gun control and more severe checks for the ones who hold guns or want to purchase rifles and the ones that claim that gun control is a violation of the second amendment (which guarantees the right to keep and bear arms) creates confusion in schools.

Although the leader of National Education Association (NEA), Dennis Van Roekel, and the President of American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Randi Weingarten praise the gun control agenda advanced by President Obama, they still have to face the National Rifle Association's lobby pro - gun, which recommends both armed guards in schools and armed teachers, trained on how to respond to gun violence in schools (Gruenberg, 2013).

While the two parts of the dispute argue and sustain their points, the schools are outside the gun control policy and they are unguarded, as the program proposed by the National Rifle Association recommended, besides Colorado, Connecticut and New York, where the bill proposed by Obama administration was implemented (DeLuca, 2013).

Students have mixed fillings regarding the gun control policy. While some of them support the fact that President Obama restricted the military - style assault weapons, considering that civilians would not need to have access to those kinds of armament, others consider that the bill Obama is proposing is a waste of time and money, because dangerous people will continue to pursue their desire to own guns, no matter what the law says (Chehade, 2013).

In fact, the opinion that laws cannot control who gets guns is sustained by both junior school children and by senior students. “ If guns were banned, bad people would still get them somehow and someway” (Isaac Griffin, junior school student in Chehade, 2013).

Students believe that the bill that President Barack Obama’s administration proposed seems more like an ideology, than like a real policy. In theory, the elements are connected and follow a natural path. Nevertheless, in practice, the plan “ it will not work” (Retcofsky in Chehade, 2013).

On the other hand, teachers and parents think that schools should be safe places, where children should feel comfortable, in a safe and secure environment, away from any gun threat

As long as students are not entirely convinced by the gun control policy, they cannot feel safe in schools. In the meantime they perceive the gravity of dangerous people carrying around weapons, and the dimensions of the tragedy that they may cause. Living with mixed feelings, they follow their paths to the school each day, knowing that what happened in Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newton, Connecticut can happen in every school from United States. The 20 children dying that December 14, 2012 day could happen again, with more or less victims falling at the hands of one dangerous man, and each student can be the next one shot dead.

## **Conclusion**

The fact that the officials are proposing new laws to limit the possession of guns does not control the killings or the mass attacks, as the students’ opinions reflected. Teachers’ officials, on the other hand, supported the actions proposed by Obama’s administration to respond to school terrorist



acts. Teachers' aim is to make schools safe, so that children to feel comfortable coming to school and their parents not to worry that something bad might happen to them.

The fact that one of the points that Obama's gun control agenda includes refers to banning the military - style weapons magazines is perceived as a positive outcome, by students and teachers alike. The effect of this point of the gun control policy on schools' environment is that the schools' staffs and the students feel that they are more protected by the military - like attacks. But are they really outside any danger? Students' opinions seem to state the opposite and while the teachers are aiming not to alarm students and their parents by stating that they consider the gun control policy to be efficient, the school environment is still under continuous threat of gun attacks that might be conducted by a madman or a very dangerous person, a terrorist group, a former student or, who knows, even a current student, as the history of school shooting indicates.

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