

Handgun ownership as a rightful law essay examples

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The US is one of the most liberal countries with regard to laws concerning the purchase and possession of guns. Its policy on guns allows virtually anybody who wishes to acquire a gun to do so. Although some people claim that allowing civilians to own guns helps to deter burglars, research indicates that the negative effects of this outweigh its usefulness. The availability of guns among the general public results in a number of social problems. It leads to an increase in violent crimes such as robbery and assault. It also leads to an increase in the rates of homicide. An increase in guns among members of the public is harmful to society. The potential harm posed by guns clearly outweighs any potential benefits. Guns in the hands of civilians are clearly a hazard to the nation. The US policy on gun ownership is too liberal and this has resulted in many deaths and injuries. Restrictive laws would inevitably lead to a reduction in firearm crimes and criminal activities. Handgun ownership among civilians should therefore be outlawed for the safety of the society.

Background

In the US, there are more than two million guns resting in the hands of civilians. 38% of American homes have at least one firearm and 16% of all adults own handguns. The implications of this are far-reaching. Hundreds of thousands of people die annually from gun-related deaths. This includes homicides, unintentional deaths and suicides. Thousands of others receive non-fatal gun-related injuries. Fire-arm related crimes also appear to be on the increase. This is causing the government 100 billion dollars annually. One of the worst shooting incidents in American Universities occurred at Virginia Tech University in 2007, where Cho Seung-Hui used two handguns to

kill thirty two people before turning the gun on himself. He had legally acquired the guns without any restrictions. More than 1500 people die in intimate partner violence every year in the US. These are just a few of the many incidents that resulted from civilians being in possession of guns. In most of the states in the US, it is quite easy to legally acquire a gun. One needs to be above the age of twenty one years and living within the state where he wishes to purchase the gun. There are certain conditions which would disqualify a person from purchasing a gun. These are: (1) Felony; (2) if he is a fugitive; (3) if he is addicted to substances; (4) if he is suffering from a mental disorder; (5) if he is living in that region illegally; (6) if he was discharged from the force dishonorably; (7) if he has a restraining order; or (8) if he is convicted of domestic violence.

Guns and Crime

Research shows that availability of guns leads to an increase in crime. States which tend to be more liberal in allowing guns also tend to have higher crime rates. In Canada, gun-related crime rates are relatively lower than in the US. This can be attributed to their restrictive policies on acquiring and using guns. Whereas the American system tries to protect individuals and not infringe on their freedoms, the Canadian policy considers the greater good which is the safety of the society at large. In Canada, one needs a permit to own and use a gun, and another permit to transport it from one location to another.

In Canada one cannot purchase a gun unless he needs it for his occupation; is a collector; is a member of one of the approved shooting clubs; or is able

to prove that he needs it for security purposes and the police are not able to protect him from that particular matter. This permit also takes quite long to process and one has to undergo many bureaucratic processes. Such restrictive policies discourage many people who would have otherwise acquired gun from purchasing them.

There are people who believe that arming people could lead to a reduction in crime. People who subscribe to that school of thought believe that the knowledge that most people own guns could discourage armed robbers from breaking into houses as the owners could be armed. This type of thinking is erroneous because availability of guns is what brought about the burglaries in the first place. If guns were not so readily available there would be fewer incidences of armed crime. There are also those who believe that the availability of guns and crime are in no way related. Research has however proved this to be untrue.

Conclusion: Disarming the Public

The government should come up with ways through which it can reduce the number of guns in the hands of civilians. One of the ways through which it could do this is priming. The media plays an important role in influencing people's decision. Finding popular media personalities or politicians to discourage people from the purchase and use of guns could help in reducing people's interest in guns. They should also educate the public on the dangers of civilians owning guns.

The government should also have more restrictive policies that will discourage people from acquiring guns. Modeling Canada's example would

be a good place to start. The government should also be keener on implementing these gun restrictions. It should have a more thorough mechanism for carrying out background checks so that people on probation or people who are likely to have ill intentions do not get access to guns. This will ensure the safety of law abiding citizens. Protecting the citizens is of great importance, and infringing on the rights of a few is a small price to pay if this is to be achieved. The result of this is a safer nation and fewer near-death incidences.

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