

# Good example of essay on gun violence in the usa

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



Statistics show that despite the federal government's spending close to one billion dollars a year to stem crime in the United States of America and the criminal justice system's best of efforts to arrest it, gun violence still takes approximately 30, 000 lives a year and injures another 75, 000 if the reports from the Census Bureau and the Federal Bureau of Investigations are anything to go by. It does not help that the same is a regularly debated and dicey political issue that is ironically most common in poor urban areas frequently associated with gang violence, on most occasions involving young or juvenile adult males.

The government has many times without number attempted to regulate gun use through the popular and often divisive gun-policies which are significantly, if not entirely, influenced by the interpretations of Second Amendment of the constitution by various organs including the judiciary and which amendment has been subject of a lot of disquiet. It was not until recently that the Supreme Court in *District of Columbia v Heller* held that the Amendment serves to protect individual's right to possess a gun or any other firearm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defence within the home and within federal enclaves-a position which was restated in *McDonald v Chicago*. These policies coupled with the future-looking decisions of courts have been made and reviewed with the acknowledgment of the fact that most Americans own firearms and that such weapons can be dangerous if in the hands of civilians thus the need for regulation of ownership and use. According to the reports by the American Institute for Contemporary German Studies, the transactions revolving around guns including the sale, manufacture, distribution and related activities have undergone tremendous

changes for the better. Lawmakers, who remain the custodian of the law in as much as legislations are concerned, have since embarked on a number changes intended to set in reforms within the area of gun usage. The jurisprudence at least with the evolution of the law has tended to suggest that the law is not adequate. This is because despite the already implemented laws, gun violence continues to characterize the larger parts of the United States of America. By and large, the citizenry is still scared and afraid of the unknown. This only increases the imperative for a legislative reform. The legal position as it is cannot address the gun violence menace. The Second Amendment to the American Constitution, as legislated by Congress in 1791, extensively equips the state militia with the powers to bare guns. Indeed, the Second Amendment should be understood in the context of the intention of the founders. The idealistic intention of the founders was to ensure the state remained with a large portion of the residuary power. This provision has been a subject of intense debate in America currently. Some argue that the right to own a gun is equivalent to the broader right of self-defence, and further that individuals should be allowed to keep them on hand for personal protection. On the other hand, others argue that during the crafting of the amendment, the driving goal was to create a standing and formidable army, much like Switzerland today. But they argue that since the U. S. has a powerful army and a functioning internal police force to counter external and internal aggressions of any magnitude respectively, the original intent has since disappeared and the personal right to bear arms is no longer necessary or even desirable. The current jurisprudence points a direction where the former argument has

more weight or at least in the eyes of the court. The question that lingers therefore is “ What ails gun violence?”

There are several factors that contributing to or generating gun violence. These factors shall form the subject of the ensuing discussion. Easy access to firearms, reports and statistics show that despite the robust policing system in the United States and the clear provisions of the law as to who should hold guns, when and where, children still have easy access to weaponry and in particular, firearms. It is appalling to that many an American parent knowingly and willingly buys firearms for their own children. Even more shocking is the fact that it is apparently ‘ legal’ for gun manufacturers to design and market weapons to children. Ironically, there is in place strict laws preventing parents from allowing their children drive themselves to school but not one to stop the same parents from allowing their children easy access to lethal weapons and firearms. There are numerous laws both at state and federal levels ostensibly designed and crafted to keep guns away from children. However, the same are awash with glaring loopholes and enforcement so wanting that manufacturers have taken advantage and are shamelessly and actively targeting the underage and luring even more into the trigger-happy lifestyle-a trend which if not checked on may result in many more incidences of senseless impulse shootings. And, it seems, no tragedy of any magnitude including the shooting by a teenager, is serious enough to grab the attention of parents and or authorities the consequences of those shootings notwithstanding. Statistics show that every year, close to five thousand children lose their lives and tens of thousands more injured as a consequence of these rather

controllable 'accidental' shootings. Several cases of children including toddlers shooting themselves or their siblings with the family owned but irresponsibly-kept firearms have followed the Kentucky and Kansas tragedies which are crystal clear pointers to the consequences of under or unregulated custody of these weaponry and in particular where the bearers are not responsible enough to keep them from their innocent children. For instance, a six-year-old girl in Florida sustained serious injuries after being shot by her teenage brother while they were home alone. Further, a toddler in Arizona fatally blew himself in the face with a firearm he found stashed in his grandmother's handbag.

In spite of these incessant, persistent and avoidable gory tragedies, the gun industry is not only shamelessly fighting legislative efforts bent on keeping these firearms out of reach of children, they continue to market these lethal weapons to children openly and without a shred of fear of the underlying consequences. Predictably, the lily-livered legislators are making it easy for them.

The law clearly prohibits sale of weaponry including firearms by dealers to people who are or they believe to be or they have a compellingly reasonable cause to believe are underage. It is clear therefore that you are not allowed to sell or deliver a gun to someone, including a rifle if you believe that someone is a minor. Ironically, the company that manufactured the rifles accidentally used by a boy on his sister still remains in business in Kentucky. Some responsibility sharing should have least seen the company close shop at least on matters concerning children products. Socio-Economic background, to people living in poor and working-class neighbourhoods in

the United States of America, gun violence was a major concern well before Sandy Hook. Black and Latino communities heavily laden with the recession, housing crisis, and lack of viable jobs, pressure to feed their families, organised crime and gun violence go hand in hand. Due these unequal and discriminatory conditions, therefore Blacks are more likely to be the victims or perpetrators of violent crimes. Statistics further indicate that homicide rates among Blacks were six times higher than among whites. However, African Americans tended to favour gun restrictions at least going by the information gathered from the public. Reports observe that Africans desired a tougher and tighter legislative regime on gun uses as compared to their white counterparts . At face value, the idea of letting many more citizens hold gun licenses seems like a good one. But when both state and federal governments and their security agencies are the ones in charge of solving the menace, the picture can look grim and worrisome for areas synonymous with gun violence.

Low spending and budgetary allocation, it is however sad to state that the governments, both state and federal, have side-lined the fight against gun-violence and their approach to it is rather reactionary than proactive. The congress debate on the same is not any objective thus posing a further hurdle to the implementation of the restrictions. These coupled with the rather nerving sentimental attachment American citizen have with their guns, provide a whole block and even a bigger hurdle to stemming further violence to the same citizens who, interestingly are always at the forefront in condemning such attacks.

Further, no comprehensive research has ever been conducted by the

government on the causes, management and effectiveness of the restrictive laws or measure on gun violence in the United States save for medical research conducted and documented by doctors and psychiatrists who have made efforts to understand, at least from a psychological and medical perspective, the likely causes of the shocking rates of gun violence among teenagers. According to The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, over 20,000 fall victims to gun or firearm violence every year in the United States.. The lethality of guns, as well as their easy accessibility to young people, is the key reasons why firearms are the second leading cause of death among young people ages ten to nineteen. Only motor vehicle accidents claim more young lives. The youth gun deaths are predominantly due to homicides while suicides account for about thirty percent and unintentional shootings for about 7% of those deaths. Recent research estimates the economic costs of gun violence against children and youth at approximately \$15 billion per year. Studies further suggest that children exposed to gun violence in whichever way can experience negative psychological effects. The effects have far reaching consequences on the social, political and economic developments of the affected children. All of these effects could make children and youth more prone to violence.

The David and Lucile Packard Foundation propose vide their report that to reduce youth gun violence, four strategies are essential. The strategies inform the subject of the ensuing discussion. Reducing children's unsupervised exposure to guns, research indicates that educational efforts geared towards discouraging children from holding and or playing with firearms around them are of little effectiveness. Therefore, parents are

advised to exercise stricter parental observation and regulation especially for the categories that elect to store their guns in the homes. The same must be left unloaded for purposes of safety.

Engaging communities and strengthening law enforcement, although research in this area is limited, available evidence suggests that community leaders can promote young people's safety by sending unequivocal messages to youth that gun violence is not an acceptable way to resolve conflict. Law enforcement agencies can partner with community leaders in this effort through community-based policing approaches, which emphasize close collaboration between police and citizens to prevent crime before it occurs.

Changing the design of guns, studies indicate that requiring product safety features on guns could reduce unintentional shootings among children and youth. In addition, emerging technologies that would enable manufacturers to personalize guns could prevent unauthorized users like teenagers or thieves from operating the weapons.

In one national study of male high school sophomores and juniors, 50% of respondents reported that obtaining a gun would be " little" or " no" trouble even though federal law bans most minors from holding or bearing weapons or firearms. Laws regulating gun sales should be stringent to ensure fewer weapons are accessible to youth. The social, economic and physical impact of gun violence against children and youth is unacceptable. Regardless of one's position regarding adult ownership and use of guns, aggressive efforts are needed by both the federal and state governments working together with local communities and parents, to reduce youth gun violence in the



United States.

Statistics from Federal Bureau Investigations and the National Rifles Authority show that Massachusetts has one of the lowest per-capita gun-death rates; a rate is far below the national per capita gun-death rate of 10.19 per 100,000. This is attributable to its good and strong gun laws and low gun ownership rates. In comparison however, Mississippi has a relatively higher gun-death rates due to weak gun laws and higher gun-ownership rates. According to Violence Policy Centre's Legislative Director Kristen Rand, Massachusetts' low gun-death rates stands as a proof of how long term, comprehensive firearm regulation can increase public safety and thus protect families and by and large, communities.

Modern gun control efforts began in 1968 following the enactment of the Gun Control Act, which effectively granted the federal, state, and local law enforcement officials increased powers in regulating gun control in the effort to fight and stop crime altogether. It made it illegal to sell or deliver firearms or ammunition. There are however exceptions to this law related to employment, ranching, farming, target practice and hunting. The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act of 1993 amended this Act by requiring the purchaser of a firearm from federal firearms licensees to complete a background check. It is instructive to note that the Act was actually a reaction to the unfortunate shooting of Brady during the attempted assassination of Ronald Regan. The would-be assassin was a mentally unstable man who had obtained a revolver from a pawn shop in Dallas, Texas.

Canada, in comparison to the United States, has relatively lower rates of gun

violence with only 15 per cent of the households holding firearms and a miserly 2.9 per cent owning short guns. Gun death rates are also higher in the United States standing at 10.2 per 100,000 people compared to Canada where the rate is 4.2 per 100,000 people. Studies have linked the gun ownership rates with the gun-death rates since countries with higher gun-death rates also had higher gun-ownership rates per capita. The rate of gun violence has been studied comparatively. In Vancouver, British Columbia, it was noted that the rates were significantly lower despite the similarity in circumstances with say New York in America. The difference has been associated with issues of accessibility of the guns. While accessibility was way easier in America, Canada has been loaded as being less explosive of guns to unauthorized users.

Having substantially canvassed the issues of gun violence in the United States of America, it is essential at this juncture to conclude the paper's observations. As it stands, gun violence has been a serious issue in the nation. In that respect, it is noteworthy that a policy mishap could be fatal and detrimental to the people of the United States of America. Stakeholders are increasingly confronted with the need to ensure the competing interests are balanced. At the end of the day, the law must not give with one hand and take with the other hand. It must stand in the middle and offer a solution that seeks to address the deep leanings in the matter. While consensus on the way forward continues to remain elusive, the common factor is the fact that all parties are affected during instances of gun violence. In addition, the random nature of the attacks makes it even more difficult to tell the party at risk. In that respect, the matter of gun violence should be correctly

considered as matters of common interests. Like all matters of common interests, it is imperative that stakeholders reach a bipartisan solution that would effectively address the issues. In addition, in the spirit of public participation and public acceptability, the people at the grassroots level should be given more say in matters concerning the use of guns. The legislators should thus be as consultative as possible. Further the matter gun violence education should permeate all schools and learning institutions. This would be intended at informing the coming generations of the American nation's struggle with gun violence. It would be essential for new knowledge to be provided in respect to observing controversial provisions such as the Second Amendment against electing to isolate the constitutions at times when it is deemed convenient. Ultimately, the decision remains with the citizenry. The citizenry have the opportunity to make the necessary reforms work. It is not the beauty in the speeches and in the legislations drafted, ultimately, the fact of the matter lies in the action undertaken. The popular aphorism, " guns do not kill, people do" is essential in concluding this paper.

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