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## **Introduction**

Contemporary western society enjoys freedom and basic human rights on a scale so far unparalleled in the entire existence of our kind. One of the best, if somewhat controversial, examples of this freedom is the legal ability of individual to own firearms. It is easy to understand how the right to bear arms, the right to defend and survive, would have been fundamental, if not necessary, during some of the more recent chapters of human history.

However, since we shaped and changed the world we live in, since it ceased being harsh and hostile and our survival became less dependent on our ability to actually hunt our provisions, there have been more and more concerns about the liberty of individuals to own firearms for their personal use.

One of the main causes of current concerns is the gradual increase of gun-related criminal activity, a trend detrimental to society. The policy of gun control is a controversial subject. Opposing arguments have raised several ethical reasons concerning the gun control issue. In order to comprehend the different viewpoints concerning the future of gun control, it is crucial to explore the arguments on both sides while considering the ethical principles and common implementations of this constitutionalized right.

As mentioned earlier, in order to comprehend the ethical concerns of the issue of gun control, it is essential to consider all of the different perspectives. This is crucial, since most individuals feel we must either support or oppose the implementation of gun control. This simplistic approach oversimplifies the issue of gun control due to the complex ethical considerations concerning the topic (Pera and Van, 2005). The situation is

complicated even further by individuals who feel that the control should be partial and should not condone or abolish gun control fully. It is important to understand these points of view in order to comprehend the ethic impact of gun control on the society.

## **Arguments against Gun Control**

In an attempt to justify citizens' right to bear arms, we must ask ourselves if this right is merely constitutional or an ethical one, too. And in their justification of the right to own firearms, supporters argue that this is an ethical indeed.

Considering the argument that gun ownership is a fundamental right, the argument has to be convincing on the issue of private gun ownership. For instance, it is imperative to show how the issue is a fundamental right for an individual. For this to be possible, let us ponder on the meaning of a fundamental right. Fundamental rights are considered liberties, which are necessary, for everyone in the society, such as the right to vote, or be able to express one's opinions without the fear of prosecution. In this argument, private ownership of guns is seen as a fundamental right since it enables individuals to protect themselves and their property. It is ethically responsible for individuals to protect their lives and that of their close ones. Additionally, individuals are empowered ethically to ensure the security of their property. Therefore, individuals should be empowered to defend both their lives and their property. This can be achieved by enabling individuals to have access to guns, seen here as an instrument in repelling and resolving perilous situations. The validity of the argument defending the right of an

individual to own firearms is evident in situations where potential aggressors, who have access to dangerous weapons, attack an individual. In such instance, an individual being exposed to danger cannot counter the imminent threat. It has been argued that this scenario requires individual to be sufficiently armed to repel such threat. Such logic implicates that if individuals are refused the right to protect themselves using firearms, they are exposed to the danger of losing their property and lives.

This argument is countered by the fact that the society is affected detrimentally by the availability of crime through the increased availability of firearms. And again, it is argued that such assumption is flawed by presence of law respecting citizens in the society. After all, not all individuals who have access to firearms have malicious intentions. Therefore, if gun control is established, citizens who are law abiding will be impeded from protecting themselves effectively (Carter, 2006). The generalization that the availability of firearms in the society will result in an increase of crime rates is flawed and should not be the basis for the gun control policy. There are instances when government resources are stretched. This means that the government and its security apparatus cannot provide adequate security for all citizens. These instances expose the individuals to peril and, therefore; they require to be empowered in order to protect themselves (McCormick and Connors, 2002). This makes the availability of guns a fundamental right for individuals who are law-abiding since they cannot be directly tied to the stereotype that guns increase crime in the society. Considering this premise, it is apparent that gun control policy will shortchange individuals who are inclined to protect their families and property from danger during their daily endeavors

(Pera & Van, 2005). This is the case since most violent crimes in the U. S. are perpetrated using firearms. Considering the nursing standpoint on gun control, victims of violent crimes who protect themselves using guns have a strong possibility of being uninjured or lose their property than those who are unprotected. This will reduce the mortality rates caused by criminal activity considerably. In addition, if individuals who are law abiding are allowed to possess firearms, crime rates in the society will reduce significantly. Therefore, if arms are allowed, crime rates and mortality will be reduced significantly.

## **Ethical and Moral Principles**

Considering the ethical and moral principles of gun control, the principles of veracity and fidelity are applicable in this situation. Fidelity dictates loyalty from the nursing professionals. This means that individuals should remain loyal to their coworkers and patients regardless of the consequences on the ethical and moral principles, which dictate their mandate. Considering the issue of gun control fidelity will require the nursing professionals to be loyal to the preference of the society. This means that the nurses will have to support the sentiments of the public concerning whether gun control should be implemented or not. It also means the nurses will have to compromise their ethical stand concerning the issue in order to be loyal to the patients. Therefore, if a patient is against gun control, the nurse under this principle will result in supporting the stand of the patient in order to maintain loyalty. If there are opposing views concerning the topic between the nurse and the patient, there will be a definite compromise on the ethical and moral stand of

the nurse.

Another principle, which is applicable in the scenario, is the moral veracity. Nurses are required to be honest regardless of the situation (Bosek and Savage, 2007). This will require a nurse to maintain the truth regardless of the repercussion to the patient. In this scenario, deception is not allowed; however, there are exceptions, which require the nurse to keep some information from the patient in case when not doing so could interfere with the recovery efforts or result in harm. The relevance of this theory on gun control is evident in the inclination of the nurses concerning the issue of gun control. In this scenario, the nurse is expected to be truthful about the significance of the policy on the health of the society. This will require the nurse to consider the facts and make a practical assessment of the situation when engaging the society on the issue of gun control. Therefore, the inclination of the nurse on the aforementioned issue will be based on the truth.

## **Arguments for Gun Control**

There are numerous arguments, which support, or even demand, the implementation of gun control. These arguments consider the detrimental effects connected to possession of firearms and their impact on the community. The high injury and mortality rates, which are associated with gun use, have been cited as the rationale for gun control in the society (Pera and Van, 2005). This means that guns have created a health crisis in the current society and have to be controlled in order to ensure the well-being of individuals. Such negative impact is a concern particularly in the U. S., where

the rates of firearms-related health issues are significantly high and have been one of the main causes of consideration whether the high availability of guns is a significant rationale for the aforementioned crisis. It is a fact that guns encourage gun related fatalities and injuries. Therefore, it is imperative that the relevant stakeholders implement gun control in order to ensure that the society is sufficiently protected.

Apart from domestic violence, the availability of guns in the society is instrumental in the increase of crime rates in the society. When the society allows the ownership of guns without effective policies and restrictions, individuals who have ill motives will have access to dangerous weapons. This will endanger the society, since the citizens will be exposed to criminals who have the capacity to inflict serious injury or fatalities. Such impact has been especially evident in the rise of the numbers of recent massacres, sadly including many in public schools. The number of the innocent lives lost can be only attributed to the ease of access of individuals to dangerous weapons including assault rifles. It is a profoundly clear indication that access to firearms is instrumental in facilitating criminal activity. Therefore, if stricter gun control guidelines are implemented, individuals will be better protected, since access of firearms will be limited and crime rates will be reduced. Incidents, like the Columbine school massacre, are a reminder of the terrible effects the right to bear arms can have. Even if nothing else does, this argument makes it apparent that gun control is essential for the society.

## **Ethical and Moral Principles**

The principle of non-maleficence is applicable in the argument for gun control. The principle supports the prevention of harm before it occurs. This is consistent with the aim of gun control, which is to control the harm resulting from gun use in the society (Daniels, 2004). This principle ensures that the mandate of nurses is to ensure that patients are not subjected to harm in their endeavors. This means that nurses should be proactive in ensuring that any possibility of bodily harm, as a direct result of gun related incidents is addressed beforehand, hence preventing the detrimental outcomes.

The second principle, which might be considered in the gun control issue, is justice. This dictates that the risks and benefits, which are realized in healthcare, are distributed among the population (Daniels, 2004). In this scenario, the risk and pros of gun control will be distributed in the society through the implementation of gun control. This will ensure that the society follows universal guidelines concerning the issue, since all individuals will be expected to conform to the control measures, thus giving a guarantee that no individual will be disadvantaged when guns are involved. Proposed policies will be instrumental in ensuring that individuals will be considered in the control measures; an actuality, which will in turn even the risks of individuals. If nursing professionals support this approach, individuals will be protected evenly from gun related fatalities and injuries better.

## Conclusion

In our current society, gun control is a big and controversial dilemma. However, it shouldn't be. As important as the right of an individual to bear arm may be, there is an even more fundamental right we all share, the right to live. The right of someone to own a hunting rifle, or even an assault rifle used for hunting, is in no way equal to the right of a small child to grow up. We are proud of our freedom and we often, in a hard-to-define way, find it justified, but we tend to forget that freedom is nothing without responsibility. In our time and age, in the light of our moral code we seem to be so proud of, maybe a slight shift in our views is needed. It seems "Do no harm" is not enough, not anymore. "Prevent harm done unto those who can not prevent it themselves", that should be our motto. That is the responsibility without which our rights and our freedom are not worth anything.

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