

# Gun control : for and against



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GUN CONTROL FOR AND AGAINST General Gun Control is perhaps one of the most contentious issues in America. It affects the life and liberty of hundreds of people most of whom are perfect law abiding citizens of this great democracy, where freedom, liberty and the pursuit of happiness are considered as legitimate national goals. The Second Amendment to the American Constitution provides legal rights to the people of America " to keep and bear arms". Like all generalized statements contained in constitutional decrees, these are subject to varied interpretations by those who intend to use it for their own political, business or legal gains. Thus gun control enthusiasts believe that this right does not extend to owning the military type of firearms which need to be classified as assault weapons and not guns per se with limited lethality. ([www. opensecrets. org](http://www.opensecrets.org)). Gun rights associations led by the National Rifle Association however deem these checks as impractical and hence feel that these controls should be done away with as they lack any benefit for the public at large. Within this large issue are a number of other sub sets such as the powerful lobby of arms manufacturers with multi billion dollar budgets, political interests and criminal biases for having an open gun culture in America.

#### Gun Control - Validating Restrictions

The Second Amendment, reads, " A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed". ([www. usconstitution. net](http://www.usconstitution.net)). The rising violence in society has resulted in this amendment drafted apparently to ensure the security of society and people an issue of debate and discussion. There is a need to understand the need for the 2nd amendment and then place it in context. It should be accepted that the amendment was created to ensure

that state militias were well armed as opposed to standing armies which Americans in the 18th Century detested being seen as imperialist policing arms for colonial subjugation. The American War of Independence saw much of the fighting being carried out by a national army supplemented by militias. Thus there is historical evidence to support arming of militias but not individuals. Today militias are no longer relevant and some form of a militarized force as the National Guard exists, thereby the relevance of the 2nd Amendment is limited if not invalid. Arming of militias is a concept, which has lost its relevance. It thus needs to be considered that the 2nd amendment was not intended to allow absolute possession of arms by all individuals but only selective by those the state required to maintain law and order without the burden of a nationalized-armed force. However applying the same regulations for arming individuals has only added to violence in society in the name of misplaced liberty. It should also be noted that there were fears of a tyrant coming to rule the nation and hence a need to arm the people to face tyranny was relevant. However with democracy having grown firm routes, leadership will emerge through the electoral ballot alone and there is no scope of any deviant leader emerging in countries as America hence fears on this account are also unfounded and there is a need to ensure that gun control is exercised.

Fear of terrorist attacks post 9/11 has also become an issue, however there is adequate law enforcement infra structure available to overcome such fears and hence there is no apparent necessity for arming each and every citizen. This way it would be seen that the state is abdicating its primary role of providing security to its citizenry by letting people arm themselves to protect against terrorists and criminals. There is no doubt thus that

reasonable restrictions have to be imposed on possession of firearms whether it is of licensing, prohibition of bores or more specific restrictions on possession.([www.usconstitution.net](http://www.usconstitution.net)). There could be other restrictions such as mandatory child safety locks, background checks and limits on the number of guns a person can possess. ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)). If the gun control activists have failed it is only due to the powerful money power of over \$ 17 million that has been contributed by the gun rights groups to political funding as opposed to \$1. 7 million contributed by gun control groups. ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)). This cannot be allowed to hold sway even on critical issues of human concern.

#### Gun Control - Avoidable Restrictions

The Constitution has provided us very stable and time-tested provisions for ensuring our safety and security. The 2nd Amendment is one such provision which has given the citizen legal authority for possession of firearms. Some over sensitized groups have been attempting over the years to deny citizens their right on the plea that allowing every individual to possess arms has led to violent crime. However these arguments are specious at best and not supported by any empirical evidence. ([www.opensecrets.org](http://www.opensecrets.org)). Fortunately the ban on assault guns has been allowed to lapse in 2004, despite the powerful lobby of gun control enthusiasts against it. It should be accepted that our honorable representatives in the House and the Senate have an ear to ground and understand the deep necessity to allow people to possess weapons thereby enabling them to defend themselves in times of crisis. It should be noted that 40 % of US homes have guns, the proportion in rural homes could be even greater as the requirement is much more in rural areas. ([speakout.com](http://speakout.com)). It is also to be noted that since 1939 after the

hearing on the case, " US v Miller", no other 2nd amendment case has been heard by the US Supreme Court highlighting that there has been no need felt by law to consider any such amendment. ([www. speakout. com](http://www.speakout.com)). Moreover there is a powerful logic to ensure that the right to self defense and gun use is not infringed by any restrictions on the freedom to possess arms given by the Second Amendment. ([www. govspot. com](http://www.govspot.com)). There are a number of groups including women such as Second Amendment Sisters, Inc. in the United States, which are devoted to gun rights out of conviction of its validity in the current environment. ([wikipedia. org](http://wikipedia.org)). It is not considered appropriate that rights granted explicitly by the constitution should be further curtailed rather than supported. If we see the experience of other countries with gun control, the argument for the same will appear totally redundant. For instance after the gun ban in the United Kingdom it is stated that violent crime and crime against property has risen over 800%. Street gangs are said to be on a rampage in several British cities. Australia has had similar experience with rise in violent crime to over 300%. Jamaica too has suffered. ([securityarms. com](http://securityarms.com)). Thus gun control can only seem to disarm the loyal, law-abiding citizen while the criminal continues to arm himself. A better option is to change the people and not the guns.([securityarms. com](http://securityarms.com))

#### References

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