Gun Violence

We live in a country where we have to be in constant fear of guns. “Americans own 40 percent of the world’s civilian-owned firearms (Repeal the Second Amendment).” Whether it’s in a car, in a movie theater, or even at a children’s school, our history has shown us that you never can be too cautious when it comes to gun violence.

Importance

People like to say that guns are a necessity in order for one to protect themselves from another armed man. However, if we could restrain potential criminals from obtaining guns, there would be no need to have one at all. Even if you own a gun and your use for it is purely for protection, that doesn’t change the fact that it is a weapon that you are bringing into your home, or even carrying around with you which puts the people around you in danger. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) an average of ninety-three Americans is killed with guns daily and out of those, seven of them are children or teens under the age of nineteen (Gun Violence by the Numbers). “The murder rate in America is 15 times higher than in other first-world countries; the majority of these murders are committed with guns (Repeal the Second Amendment).” There have been numerous mass shootings over the past decade and if the U.S doesn’t do anything to restrict guns in the U.S, the situation can only get worse.

Background

The main problem with trying to eliminate guns is the 2nd amendment. The 2nd amendment states:” 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 (Repeal the Second Amendment).” This law has helped and
continues to help protect the pro-gun citizens. Nevertheless, all of the amendments can be interpreted in many different ways and was written so long ago that many people believe it should be disregarded. One thing that has already improved gun control is background checks. “Background checks are a central component of America's efforts to keep guns from criminals: since their inception, they have blocked over 3 million gun sales to prohibited purchasers” (Gun Violence by the Numbers). Because of this statistic alone, I believe background checks are a very important resource we are using and think we should increase the requirements for it. It is scary to think about what could have happened if those 3 million people had gotten their hands on these weapons. How many more people wouldn’t be alive today, because of gun violence? Another method that has been proven to work was one of the nation’s toughest gun control laws in the District of Columbia. In 1976, the law banned handguns, automatic firearms and high-capacity semiautomatic weapons (Repeal the Second Amendment). Although the law was not 100% effective, it helped prevent nearly 50 deaths per year, according to one study published in The New England Journal of Medicine (Repeal the Second Amendment).

**Underlying Causes**

It is often said that guns don’t kill people, people kill people (Repeal the Second Amendment). Which is true, however by eliminating the use of guns by unqualified people you can eliminate the chances of mass shootings occurring as well as tragic accidents that occur from having these weapons in your homes. Often times reasons for mass shootings as well as other shootings such as suicide are caused from mental health issues. Although you can’t fix the fact that there will always be those people struggling out there, you can limit their resources to commit these crimes. Though, if our society continues to ignore the fact that America needs these stricter gun laws and continues to hide behind the 2nd amendment instead of actually making a change, these issues that we have seen arise over the past decades will only get worse.

**Policy Options**
Although the thought of getting rid of guns all together is tempting, it is also very unrealistic. Even if it became illegal to own a gun in the U.S, it would be impossible for the government to physically enforce that law, making the citizens who choose to abide by the law more at risk and unprotected.

There have been many discussions and debates about what should be done to help regulate this gun problem. Some ideas that came out of these discussions were universal background checks, closing gun show loopholes, revising the 2nd amendment, mental health background checks, plus many more (Possible Policy Alternatives). I think a lot of these ideas could be really great starting points in gun regulation and that putting even just one of these laws in place could really make a difference when it comes to gun violence, saving many lives.

Solution

I propose that we adopt the method of gun control that was used by Australia in 1996 when they were facing a similar problem to what we are today. Australia had been having high numbers of shootings in the late 1900’s, but it wasn’t until after suffering an awful firearm massacre in Tasmania that they decided they had to do something about it (Chapman). At that horrid day in Port Arthur there were 35 deaths and multiple people left wounded, Australia almost immediately took action. Australia came up with gun laws that banned rapid-fire long guns, which had a history of being used in massacres like this one. Not only that, but the government also purchased back 643,726 newly prohibited semi-automatic and pump-action rifles and shotguns (Chapman). These laws were extremely successful and because of them Australia went from 13 mass shootings in 18 years, to zero shootings in ten and a half years (Chapman). I think that making rapid-fire long guns was the best move made here because there is absolutely no need for someone to own one of these weapons. If you truly feel like you need a gun for your protection, you can still own a smaller, less powerful gun. Secondly, I think the buyback law was also ingenious because it gives the people an incentive to sell back their guns. This way, overall the
people are happy because they got their money back and they can feel safer. In my opinion, it would be amazing if the U.S could follow in Australia’s footsteps and save thousands of lives.
Works Cited


