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Is Gun Control and Effective Way to Control Crime

Mass shooting incidents, such as that of a 19-year-old Florida high school student who murdered 17 students, have continued to fuel debate over policy-making that would control gun ownership in the nation. (Team Trace, 1). The goal of all suggestions on addressing the country's gun violence issues is to curb the growing case of gun shootings and other gun-related deaths from across the nation. States as Alaska, Alabama, and Louisiana have been stated to have four times more gun homicide and violence cases than Hawaii and New York where strict gun laws have been implemented. Other proposers for tighter gun laws have continuously called for everyone to use common sense. Their primary argument is that the less the guns, the less the violence in the country. It is a reflection of the supply-reduction strategy on gun ownership. ^[5] On the other hand, contenders of strict gun laws such as the National Rifle Association have continuously cited the Second Amendment act calling for a demand-reduction plan that will have criminals using guns being given harsh sentences to discourage other criminals. The paper supports the adoption of gun control legislation as an effective solution to ending the significantly growing rate of gun-related crime in the country.

Following the growing occurrence of mass shootings around the world, most of the victims continued to call for guns to be taken away from gun owners around the country. The increase in the availability of firearms in the world, according to Metzl and MacLeish (242), has made it possible for children to possess weapons. They also claim that children have access to the guns of their parents and therefore are more likely to commit a crime.

Calhoun (73), on the other hand, suggests that the supply-reduction policy decreases the number of individuals in possession of weapons and thus reduces the likelihood of a criminal finding someone to rob them. In this case, the criminal, unable to meet the gun ownership requirements before they are allowed to possess a gun, will be unable to steal it from those who qualified to own a gun. In addition, Prasad (1) argues that suicide rates in the country have risen by 25%, with almost 45.000 suicide-related deaths recorded in 2016. The explanation behind the rise in suicide rates has been attributed to an increase in the availability of weapons to the public. As a result, guns have turned out to be the country's most common suicide weapon.

Public questions have been raised about the degree to which the country's gun control laws are enforced to prohibit individuals who are mentally ill, not of the right age, and offenders from possessing weapons. Beckett (1) compares the process of purchasing a gun to buying a beer. Allegedly, it is much easier for a citizen in the country to get a gun than a beer. To support his argument, he raises the issue of an 18-year-old, restricted by the law not to buy alcohol until they are 21 years old, is allowed to own a gun. As a result, the common feature of most of the mass shooting across the world is that the shooters had access to AR-15 military-style rifles at a very young age. Even though one has to be at the age of 21 to purchase a handgun, teenagers across the world already have access to AR-15, which, like other military rifles, can cause many people to die when they are in the wrong hands.

In this case, it does not matter if one is legally allowed to own a gun since military rifles, capable of causing an immense amount of deaths, are easy to purchase from any licensed dealer. Therefore, to prohibit anyone from possessing a gun as long as they are over 18 years old, gun control with more rigorous checks is required.

Furthermore, there have been arguments that people privately owning guns in the country do not reduce the cases of shooting since it increases the risk of one being shot.^[2]▶

According to Callaway's (1) study report conducted in Philadelphia and Pennsylvania, up to 677 cases of shooting in Pennsylvania include victims who were in possession of a weapon at the time and place of the shooting within a period of two and a half years. The results were different in the case of Philadelphia when the same study was carried out on people of the same ethnic background, sex, and age as those in Pennsylvania. In this case, the strict gun laws in Philadelphia reduced the risk of people being shot. In another study conducted by Branas et al. (2035), people owning guns were 4.5^[6] times more likely to be shot when compared to those without guns. The rates were almost similar when Branas et al. (2036) investigated the likelihood of one dying because of possessing a gun than when not having one. Therefore, it has been argued that the tendency of carrying a gun increases the chances of one trying to defend themselves in an attack, hence increase the risk of being shot. In this scenario, as they carry their weapons, there is a high chance that the gun owner will be shot or involved in a shooting than when they are unarmed.

Moreover, numerous legislatures arguing in favor of the gun control laws have continuously contrasted the amount of weapon ownership in the country and the outcome of the gun legislation of the country.

According to analyses done by Schaeffer (1), America is currently with the highest number of people owning guns.^[0] Unsurprisingly, the country is also ranked at the top when it comes to the number of gun deaths record annually.^[1] The analysis provides a direct correlation between the number of guns in the country and the number of gun-related deaths. In this situation, the more people own weapons;^[5] the more people are shot to death. In addition, a comparison between the United States and 26 other developed nations in the world shows that, on average, Americans had 15 times more gun-homicide cases than other nations (Lopez 1). A similar situation is observed when the comparison is made between states in the country with strict gun control laws and those without. Therefore, gun control laws aimed at cutting down

the number of privately-owned guns in the country will considerably lower the number of gun-related deaths.

Contenders of the gun control laws have refuted the idea of introducing strict rules that prevent people from owning guns to reduce crime in the country. Nuwer (1) argues that guns are not the cause of death but the people who use them. On the other hand, Goldstein (1) presents politicians' arguments stating that the government should be looking at alternative measures to gun control, such as long sentences for people who use firearms to commit crimes. He adds that such a strategy would not sacrifice the owners of non-criminal weapons and would discourage crimes involving gun shooting. It should be noted, however, that the events of gun shooting start with the shooter getting hold of a gun first. In this case, a reasonable approach is to stop them from owning the gun in the first place. In addition, in most situations, offenders or persons who plan to commit crimes are driven by motives that supersede the conscious fear of taking someone else's life. Hence, alternative methods, such as long prison sentences, would also not be practical in stopping people from using their weapons to commit a crime.

To conclude, gun control laws will serve best in reducing the suicide and homicide cases in the country. They would be useful in decreasing the number of firearms available to criminals while making it very difficult for individuals to purchase them legally from a licensed dealer at the same time. A supply-reduction approach will also reduce the easy access to guns as a suicide tool, thus lowering suicide and gun crimes. In addition, being unarmed minimizes the likelihood of one getting into a gunfire exchange, thus minimizing the chance that they will be fired. Therefore, the legislative arm of the government should implement gun control laws as a means of ending gun-related crimes.

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