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The Gun Control Debate in the U.S.

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The Gun Control Debate in the U.S.

Gun control refers to the laws that define the controls on gun ownership and restrict particular kinds of firearms. Gun ownership is constitutionally protected in the United States. Still, murders committed with firearms are highly common. In this context, the gun debate has transformed into a fraught political issue pitting those who consider increased control a necessity against those who view the matter as an infringement of individual liberty. Those supporting increased gun control posit that limiting access to firearms will likely reduce crime. The conflicting argument is that increased gun control precludes law-abiding citizens from opportunities to defend themselves against criminals. The gun control debate in the U.S. has not yielded much for the citizens as parties on both sides refuse to take a compromising position.

Controlling firearms has been interpreted as a violation of the constitution, specifically concerning the Second Amendment. This part of the constitution is mostly inferred to mean that it guarantees arms for every citizen (Pomeranz et al., 2021). When the legislation came into being, the concern was that the administration would abuse its authority to impose its agenda on the different states. Therefore, the state militias needed to take up firearms to protect the states from a tyrannical federal government. Additionally, restricting assault weapons would have minimal impact on gun deaths since many of the deaths caused by guns are self-inflicted and are not from high-capacity guns. Moreover, most firearms are manufactured locally, and their increased sales help boost local economies and encourage innovation.

Even though guns are critical for personal protection and sporting activities such as hunting, gun control proponents insist that such events may not require individuals to use automatic weapons. Assault weapons have injured many people in mass shootings. Also, when

there is an accidental discharge, automatic weapons cause much damage. Mass murders committed with guns that have high-capacity ammunition magazines are common occurrences. Some of these happenings are not even revealed in the mainstream media, while those that attract national attention are exceedingly heinous. The killing of more than twenty people in an elementary school in 2015, in Connecticut, and the murder of forty-nine individuals in a nightclub in 2016, are some of the incidents that have caused a public uproar (Gale, 2022). In 2017, close to sixty people died in Las Vegas, while in 2018, fourteen students and their faculty members perished in Florida at Douglas High School (Gale, 2022). In 2022, twenty-one persons died in a shooting at Robb Elementary.

Despite the many deaths occasioned by gun violence, especially in schools, these incidents have sparked short-lived and fruitless discussions regarding the need for stricter gun control. Most politicians from the leading political parties opt to offer their prayers as they fear reprisal from the National Rifle Association. Politicians have evaded the issue of legislating reasonable measures, including a ban on assault weapons and expanded background checks. President Biden has issued several executive orders regulating certain firearms and encouraged states to pass “red flag” laws that control firearm possession for people considered a danger in society. The executive orders also control the supply of guns with no serial numbers, called “ghost guns.” However, many still believe that a lot should be done to keep schools, which are usually the main targets, safe. In a 2021 Pew Research poll, 53% of Americans wanted more gun control laws, and only 14% wanted less strict laws (Schaeffer, 2021). These figures indicate that many Americans wish for increased firearm regulations.

The gun control debate lingers as many schoolchildren and citizens continue to lose their lives. Parties on both sides of the political arena have disagreed on the best way to protect the American people. Some people believe that restricting firearms infringes on their constitutional rights. On the other hand, the majority of the people, as per the 2021 Pew Research poll, wish for increased control of guns. The eternal debate is likely to hurt the citizens the most.

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