Candidate 4 evidence

Gun control in the USA: should firearms be banned, retained, or more strictly regulated?

Introduction

Gun control refers to the laws, policies, and regulations introduced by the government in order to restict, regulate and monitor ownership, usage, sales and distribuion of firearm. The aim of gun control is to balance individual rights with public safety. As a result of this, gun control is one of the most controversial political issues within the United States, this is due to the USA having one of the highest civilian gun ownership rates in the world with about 32% of adults living in the US personally owning guns, and roughly 40% of people are living in household containing a gun, this is backed up by source A. The debate for the different ways to tackle the usage of guns originated due to the huge scales of everyday violence surrounding guns. According to source B within the United States the yearly gun violence averages of over 46,684 people killed with guns, including approximently 140 deaths and more than 200 people shot and wounded daily. There are three main solutions discussed to reduce gun violence. Banning guns, this is getting rid of guns and gun use completely in the USA, with this solution comes the hope of reducing gun crimes and reduce violence. Keeping guns, this is keeping gun laws as they already are in the USA, with this solution comes the hope of protecting consitutional rights, particulary the Second Amendment. Stricter regulations, this is introducing tougher laws on gun ownership in the USA, such as background checks, with this solution comes the hope of reducing gun violence while still allowing responsible citizens to legally own guns.

Solution 1 – Banning guns

One possile solution to gun violence in the USA is the banning of firearms for civillian use completely. This solution involves introducing new laws which make having ownership or usage of guns illegal, with the exeception of law enforcement or military use. If this law is broken, offenders will face punishments such as imprisonment, and heavy fines in hope to deter individuals from breaking the law. Supporters of this solution would argue that fully removing guns from society use, would significantly reduce gun related

deaths and violent crimes. Evidence from other countries which have settled with this solution such as Australia support this arguement. For example in 1997, Australia introduced strict gun bans after the Port Arthur Massacre. As a result of this ban, statistics from source C shows gun related homocides and mass shootings declined drastically by 2%, shifting from the original annual decline of 3% to the now decline of 5% in firearm deaths. Supporters argue that having fewer guns in avalibility, makes it harder for criminals to access weapons that could cause potential harm to others. Given that firearms are involved in majoirity of homocides in the USA, a ban could have positive impacts on the public, helping to give indivduals a sense of safety.

However, the banning of guns in the USA may violate human rights such as the Second Amendment. The Second Amendment is apart of the US consitution that protects the right of American citizens to own and carry firearms therefore, making a full ban is extremely difficult as gun ownership plays a massive role in American culture. In addition to this, banning guns could lead to an expansion in the illegal market, source D shows statistics from Australia which shows that although guns are banned, there is still an estimated of 260,000 firearms in the illegal market for sale, showing that criminals would still have access to firearms while law abiding citizens would be left disarmed.

Solution 2 – Retaining guns

Another solution is to keep guns by retaining current gun laws as they are, which allow legal ownership of firearms under the Second Amendment, but include regulations such as an age limit of 21 years old to buy a handgun and 18 years old to buy a long gun. Supporters of this solution argue that gun ownership is a consitutional right and that firearms are necessary for self defence, particulary in high crime areas. Individuals who agree with this statement believe that having a gun on them ensures public safety as they are able to defend themselves if needed. Statistics from source A show that 72% of gun owners buy and own guns mainly for protection and safety. Supporters also argue that criminals will commit crimes regardless of the law, therefore restricting guns mainly punishes law abiding citizens rather than the offenders, they believe that taking away the right to bare arms takes way their right to an equal fight.

However, evidence from source B suggests that the current gun system is failing to protect public safety. The USA currently has one of the worlds highest gun death rates of 46,684 yearly as shown in source B. The current firearm laws allow easy access to guns, making it extremly easy for anyone with the wrong intentions to obtain a gun. As a result of this innocent people suffer the conseqences, showing that retaining current laws does little to address these problems that occur everyday.

Solution 3 – Stricter regulations

Another solution is to introduce stricter gun regulations while maintaing the legal right to own firearms. This appoarch consists of strict background checks that look into criminal records etc, waiting periods, restrictions on certian weapons and "red flag" laws that allow temperary removal of guns from individuals who are seen as a risk. Supporters of this solution argue that having stricter background checks lowers the rates of gun deaths and homocide linked to the usage of firearms, this is suppored by source E which shows that stricter background checks reduced firearm homocide rates by 15 to 18%. Supporters also argue that stricter regulations balances public safety and individual rights, ensuring that law abiding inidividuals still have the right to own firearms arms hile reducing risks, evidence from source F shows that 88% of Americans including both gun owners and non gun owners suport the usage of background checks as they beleieve they hlp prevent dangerous people from legally owning guns.

However, stricter laws could potentially undermine the consitutional right to bare arms, with some campaigns and petitions such as the one shown in source G claim that government regulations are "slowly taking away our Second Amendmet rights" and making it more difficult for law abiding citizens to legally own firearms.

Evaluation

One source i used to collect information is an article titled "key facts about Americans and gun" by Katheriene schaeffer (source A). This source is accurate and reliable. This article was published by pew research centre, this makes te source accurate as information found within this website is heavily researched,

data based research. This source also uses large sample sizes for thier research, this makes the results and information found reliable as they can be generalised to the wider population.

Another source i used to collect information is a petition, published by change.org (source G). This source is bias as it only mentions information that supports their line of arguement that the government is taking away peoples Second Amendment rights. This source also doesnt have a publishing date which makes the source less realiable as the information within this source could be outdated.

Conclusion / Decison

In conclusion, while banning guns could reduce violence in theory and retainng current laws protects consitutional rights, neither options properly addresses the scale of gun violence in the USA. Based on evidence and analysis presented, I believe introducing stricter gun regulations is the best way to tackle gun control as it is the most efective and realistic solution. Stricter regulations reduces gun related deaths, imporves public safety, through the strict background checks which ensure no one who is flagged as a risk would have access to firerms, while still keeping the rights under the Second Amendment. I believe this approach is the best approach as it balances the strengths of banning guns and reducing guns, without the negative consequences of picking either side.

Modern Studies Higher Assignment: Research Evidence			
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number	

Source A
Author: Katherine schaeffer
Date published: July 24 2024
Title: key facts about Americans and guns
Name of publication: pew research centre
Website: https://www.pewresearch.org/short-reads/2024/07/24/key-facts-about-americans-and-guns/
highest civilian gun ownership rates in the world with about 32% of US adults personally owning guns, and roughly 40% living in a household with a gun
72% of gun owners say safety is the main reason they own a gun.

Source B
Author:
Date published: may 19th 2020
Title: Gun Violence in America
Name of publication: everytown research & policy
Website: https://everytownresearch.org/report/gun-violence-in-america/
Average number of people killed with guns in the United States yearly 46,684.
Everyday, nearly 140 people in the US are killed with guns and more than 200 are shot and wounded.

Source C
Author:
Date published: June 22, 2016
Title: Australia 20 years after gun reform: No masks shootings, declining firearm deaths
Name of publication: Science Daily
Website: https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/06/160622114743.htm?utm
1997 strict gun bans after Port Arthur Massacre, gun related homocides and mass shootings declined drastically, shifting from 3% annual decline to a 5% annual decline in firearm deaths.

Source D
Author:
Date published:
Title:
Name of publication:
Website: https://afp.gov.au/crimes/illegal-firearms-and-weapons?utm_source
estimates more than 260,000 firearms are in the illicit market.

Source E
Author: Micheal Siegel
Date Published: August 1 2024
Title: Universal Background Checks, Permit Requirements, and Firearm Homicide Rates
Website:https://www.ovid.com/journals/janop/fulltext/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.25025~universal-background-checks-permit-requirements-and-firearm
Back ground checks significantly lowered firearm homocides rates by around 15- 18% lower

Source F
Author:
Date published: September 09 2019
Title: Majority of Americans, Including Gun Owners, Support a Variety of Gun Policies
Name of publication: Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health
Website: https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2019/majority-of-americans-including-gun-owners-support-a-variety-of-gun-policies?utm_source
88% of Americans – gun owners and non gun owners support background checks to help prevent dangerous people from legally buying guns

Source G
Author:
Date published:
Title: U.S. Government Are Slowly Taking Away Our Second Amendment
Name of publication: change.org
Website: https://www.change.org/p/us-government-are-slowly-taking-away-our-second-amendment?utm_source
Slowly taking away our second amendment rights