
Problem Of Gun Violence In America

There is no question the United States has a big problem with gun violence, but there are multiple factors at play when the problem is analyzed. First, the many causes of gun violence make it hard to find one solution that would drastically lower the rates of gun crime in the United States. This is important because we must make many changes to help make the U.S. safer. In addition, gun control does not always have the intended outcome. It is unclear whether or not the majority of gun legislation affects the rates of gun violence in the U.S. Also, there are many trends in gun violence we must not ignore as we seek to find a solution. The vitality of these trends becomes evident when trying to create new legislation because attempting to create effective new laws without their acknowledgment is nearly impossible. Gun violence in America is such a complicated subject due to its causes, past gun control legislation, and the trends associated with it.

To begin, gun violence is generally at its highest in desperate areas. When people are desperate they tend to be impulsive, and the amount of firearms in the United States often facilitates the ill-advised actions of the desperate (Boen). Even mental illness is not a major contributor to gun violence (Emerson 1-2). While mental illness is a large contributor to firearm suicide, bursts of rage, and alcohol/drug abuse all contribute more to the epidemic of gun violence in the United States (Emerson 1-2). In reality, most gun deaths are related to the escalation of arguments between people (Torr 21). This means that most gun deaths are unrelated to felony crime (Torr 21). However, inner-city drug markets did play a role in the recent rise in the youth homicide rate (Kiesbye 31). Youth involved in drug markets often carry a handgun for protection (Kiesbye 31). This creates a violent cycle in a community because as more and more people carry weapons there is inevitably more gun violence (Kiesbye 31). The inner-city, often very impoverished, often have high rates of gun violence. Gun violence is heavily correlated with poverty (Kiesbye 23). Also, no race is exempt from gun violence because studies show that similarly situated people of any race have the same likelihood of being involved in gun violence (Kiesbye 23). This gives credence to the notion that if we can fix the problem of poverty in the U.S. we may also greatly reduce the amount of gun violence.

In addition to poverty, gun violence has a plethora of other contributors. Even watching violent TV programs has been shown to slightly increase a person's odds of being implicated in a gun-related crime (Kiesbye 54). "Right to Carry" laws have also been found to increase gun violence (Emerson 1-2). This result is the opposite of the intended effect of the laws (Emerson 1-2). The presence of gangs in an area also leads to gun violence. By the early nineteen-nineties, nearly all gang-related homicides involved a firearm (Gun Violence). This was a stark contrast to just ten years prior when both argument-related and gang-related homicides had the same likelihood of firearm use, about seventy percent (Gun Violence). Furthermore, drug use has made an impact on gun homicides in the U.S. The rise in the youth homicide rate was most likely caused by increased drug use in youth and the increase in the number of youth carrying handguns for self-defense (Kiesbye 28).

In the past, federal gun legislation has had largely mixed results. Most people believe the correlation between gun legislation and gun violence should be clear, but the evidence usually shows no correlation (Emerson 1-2). One popular idea on how to prevent gun violence is to

revise our current background check system, but the current system, called the “Brady Law”, has not had a major effect on the homicide rate (Emerson 1-2). However, the ideology behind pursuing an improved background system is sound because studies show effective laws printing high-risk individuals from purchasing firearms positively affect the homicide rate (Emerson 1-2). In the United States, gun control legislation has failed largely due to a few simple reasons (Gun Violence Opposing Viewpoints). Criminals are adept at exploiting existing loopholes in the law to get their weapons (Gun Violence Opposing Viewpoints). One of which is that private firearm sales are completely unregulated (Gun Violence Opposing Viewpoints). Also, most murder weapons are bought by a law-abiding citizen, so even if no high-risk individuals could buy a weapon, it may not greatly affect the homicide rate (Gun Violence Opposing Viewpoints). To give further evidence, many states with extremely different approaches to gun legislation have very similar rates of gun crime (Kiesbye 42). For example, even though Connecticut has much more stringent gun legislation than Colorado they have the same rate of gun violence (Kiesbye 42). Another popular idea on how to lower the rate of gun violence is to ban assault weapons. However, a study commissioned by the Justice Department tasked with researching the effects of the Clinton-era ban on assault weapons concluded that the ban had little effect on gun crime (Kiesbye 47).

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