

Prudence Phillips

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Professor Boylan

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Gun Laws and Violence

The premise of gun violence and gun laws is a topic that causes the most disagreement between people in not only American politics, but also in many countries around the world. While some people believe that a gun is necessary for self-defense – especially against the criminal minded gun owners — many also believe that the existence of guns just creates more problems and increases the rates of mass shootings around the country.

According to research carried out by Adam Mill in April 2018, the USA is by far the country that owns the most guns per 100,000 residents. If specifics are taken into account, there are way more guns than people in the country. With the number of guns in the US, it should have the highest murder rate in the world, right? Wrong. In fact, El Salvador, the country currently with the highest murder rate in the world, has only about 5,800 guns per 100,000 residents. This could make you conclude that the presence of guns should not be directly connected with murder and ‘responsible’ gun owners should be allowed to keep their guns. If this was the case, then everyone who buys a gun should be labelled ‘responsible’ until they pull the trigger at innocent lives. Meanwhile losing lives could be avoided if there are stricter laws concerning gun purchase and ownership put in place in a country.

A good example that effectively cancels out the ideology that guns and mass murder shouldn't be placed in direct correlation, is the Port Arthur Massacre (Australia) of 1986. This

event claimed the lives of 38 people and left 28 injured. It was regarded as the biggest mass murder of its time and it led to very strict gun control laws in Australia. The law that was put in place restricted personal ownership of firearms unless you had a firearm license. This license is only given to you if you can give a 'genuine reason' for needing a gun. Self-defense, which many criminals hide under, is not considered a 'genuine reason'. Since the implementation of these laws in Australia in 1986, no mass shooting has been recorded.

Gun laws do not have to be as strict as Australia's gun laws and people can be allowed to own gun for self-defense, which I believe is a genuine reason, but the current gun laws in the US require reconsideration and should be made stricter than they currently are. People who have intentions of purchasing a gun should be thoroughly examined before the guns are sold to them. If thorough background checks were done, people like the Florida shooter who is known to have mental or psychological issues wouldn't be allowed to purchase guns. If self-defense is stated as a reason for purchase, there should be proof of either threats or having residence in unsafe areas. Not just anyone above 18 should be allowed to purchase a gun. Genuine reasons also have to be stated in detail. Changes along this line can be implemented on the current gun laws. Though they are stricter, these slight changes can go a long way to protect the lives of innocent citizens of the country.

