

Divya Bhaskar  
Rio Americano High School, Sacramento

### The Convictions of an Anti-Gun Activist

Almost as appalling as the deaths of 26 innocent victims of the Connecticut shooting is the fact that in its aftermath, we still have no legislation banning handguns and assault weapons to prevent further uncalled for deaths. Congress has well surpassed the point in time for “debate” and contemplation regarding these bans; we need to implement them.

The statistics supporting legislative action for stricter gun control are overwhelming. According to the U.S. C.D.C., 5,740 children and teenagers were killed by firearms in 2008 and 2009. A gun within a household results in a higher likelihood of a death of a family member than the death of an intruder. Globally, the United States has the highest number of firearm-related deaths compared to other high-income countries. In the United States, children are thirteen times more likely to be killed by firearms than children of other developed countries, such as Italy. Statistically speaking, stricter firearm regulations are necessary to ensure a safer environment for the general public.

The National Rifle Association wields the Second Amendment as its major counterargument against these rising numbers. Though the Supreme Court upheld the Second Amendment, historical evidence renders this Amendment obsolete. The Second Amendment originated when colonies depended on every-day citizens to form local militia. Today, the United States has a well-established military, so citizens need not carry these weapons. This Amendment also allowed state militia and plantation owners to prevent slave rebellions. To argue that the Second Amendment establishes the right to bear arms in today’s context would be ridiculous. After all, America is a leader in progressivism, not a country that clings onto archaic, unreasonable practices.

Other proponents of gun ownership argue that citizens may possess firearms in case the government abuses its authority. This seems like a valid point, but only because Americans have adopted a romanticized mentality about guns. We think that the only solution is “to fight fire with fire.” Naturally, this only results in more violence. There are other ways to “fight back” without resorting to firearms. While the media and video industries glorify the use of firearms, our society largely underestimates the power of peaceful protest. In the past, writers have mitigated social injustices and completely revolutionized the standards of industries through works like *The Jungle*. Women and African Americans battled for suffrage utilizing the power of speech as their strongest weapon. Gandhi liberated a nation without the use of a single firearm. As a society, we need to change our perception of security and safety. For if we take no action regarding gun control, then we will continue to hear about the deaths of innocent people and children. Frankly, the next time I turn on the news I would like to hear Congress initiating bans on firearms, instead of uncalled for deaths. If we can learn anything from the past and statistics, it is that strong determination triumphs over firearms in the struggle to attain peace.