

Molly Parsons
Davis Senior High School, Davis

Firearm Regulations: The Next Step Towards a Safer America

On December 15, 1791, the United States ratified the Second Amendment, which states "A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed". Under the Bill of Rights, citizens have the right to own arms for individual use. Since the implementation of the Second Amendment it has been constantly used in many arguments in favor of less firearm restrictions. At the time of its ratification, it was logical and reassuring to Americans because it protected them from the tyranny of a standing army and other turmoils that tend to arise during the early years of a country forming. However this is not the late 1700's, this is 2013. As Americans, we no longer fear that standing armies will take over our country or that Native Americans will attack citizens. While the right to bear arms has not become completely obsolete, it requires various adjustments in order to effectively protect American citizens. During the Revolutionary War, the standard musket had poor aim, could fire on average three shots per minute, and required constant reloading and maintenance. Guns have advanced significantly since the 18th century and are now capable of providing advanced aim, requiring little time or maintenance to reload, and firing significantly more rounds per min, often over one hundred depending on the gun. The handguns and assault weapons of today are astronomically more dangerous than the muskets and other guns that existed when the Second Amendment was created, and subsequently, require more regulations and restrictions on ownership. The United States has endured countless murders that have resulted from handguns and assault weapons falling into the wrong hands. Those in favor of loose firearm regulations often argue that it is people who kill people, not guns. While this statement is true to an extent, it fails to address that guns heavily facilitate murder. Of the approximately 16,000 murders that were committed in the United States in 2012, 68% percent of the murder weapons were firearms.

As a country, we have endured massacres at colleges, movie theaters, shopping malls, high schools, and elementary schools. We have seen countless innocent men, women, and children gunned down by murderers who often lawfully obtained firearms. As a country, we have wept for the enormous loss of life that results from these tragedies. We know that all of these massacres and murders have one common link, the perpetrator used handguns and assault weapons; yet we still allow these dangerous weapons to be sold. It's is overtly clear that the most effective way to reduce firearm related injuries and deaths is to implement more restrictions on firearms. But in spite of our country's reaction to the recent increase in firearm related injuries and deaths it comes down to a single question as to why we haven't created stronger regulations. Have we done nothing because we are ignorant of the facts or apathetic towards the victims and their families?