

# THE TWO SIDES OF GUN LEGISLATION AND CONTROL DEBATE IN UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of the current research is to contribute to deepening the conversation on gun legislation and control in the United States. Utilizing a method that is predominantly based on review of secondary sources, this study found that gun legislation and control remain a contentious issue that has divided the country into two sides. One notable finding of this research is that the number of gun-related crimes committed each year in the country is alarming and acceptable solution should among others include the strengthening of the Federal programs that target illegal firearms trafficking, increasing background checks for purchase of new firearms and renewal of existing ones and as well as tightening of existing gun laws.

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**Keywords:** Criminal justice; law enforcement; legislation, criminology; gun control; gun violence; United States

## **Introduction**

United States of America is already a country under pressure from many groups such as Coalition of Mayors Against Illegal Guns to address the incessant cases of gun violence and mass shootings which impact on the social, economic and public health well-being of the country. This is because deaths from guns constitute a serious national problem in the country and this has made Golden and Almo (2004) to conclude that shooting from guns is one of the leading causes of death among the young population in the country. Burton (2002) indicated that compared to other industrialized nations, the United States has a higher per capita rate of fatalities due to firearm violence. This problem is further exemplified by the fact that in the wake of the Newtown, Connecticut tragedy of December 2012, which resulted in the death of twenty seven people including the shooter, the United States president- Barrack Obama established a committee headed by Vice President- Joe Biden to look at both sides of the debate of gun control and legislation.

The committee was set up in attempt at seeking viable ways to address some of the concerns that led to the Newtown, Connecticut shooting and the numerous mass shootings that preceded it in the United States. The concern of widespread mass shootings in the country has also led the United States vice-president, to make a renewed call on the United States Congress to introduce legislation that would curb the concern engendered by gun violence and mass shootings across the country. The vice president noted that the pursuit of new legislation is with the aim of strengthening the current gun laws and to reduce gun deaths.

The need to revisit the current gun control laws in the country and close loopholes in the existing laws has further become urgent considering the fact that more than 8,000 Americans have been estimated to have been killed since the Newtown, Connecticut 2012 shooting according to the gun control campaign “No More Names”. Contributing to the debate, Singh (2000) noted that it is worth noting that the current alarming level of gun shootings in the United States is a recent phenomenon that correspond with the technological changes that resulted in the mass marketable, cheap handguns in the 1960s and it is not a permanent hallmark of American history. Therefore, scholars on gun violence and gun control have argued for the need to close loopholes in existing laws with the aim of blocking all possible supply routes of guns onto the streets and into the hands of criminals and gangs (Burton, 2002; Golden & Almo, 2004; Krouse, 2010; Vernick et al., 2007).

This study is a product of the response from the recent mass shootings in the United States and as well as the National Institute of Justice (2011) calls for additional research in the area of gun laws and regulation. According to Burton (2002) gun control supporters have consistently argued that the United States has significantly higher rates of gun violence because its gun control measures are not as strong as those found in other developed countries such Australia, Great Britain, and Japan. It is important to note that the National Institute of Justice has added to the body of knowledge on guns and gun control for more than two decades (National Institute of Justice, 2011). The agency has funded studies about firearms in the areas of technology, forensic sciences and social sciences. National Institute of Justice’s research has focused on some core areas which include regulations and policy, illicit gun markets, and intervention and focused deterrence.

As a result of the importance of additional research and efforts in the area of gun regulation and gun control, the National Institute of Justice organized the first meeting of a Firearms and Violence Research Working Group in 2011 with experts from federal agencies, research experts and practitioners to identify topical areas that, if addressed, would advance our understanding of firearms violence and lead to effective strategies that could

reduce gun-related violent crime (FBI, 2011). The group's articulated that firearms and violence remains a topic in need of more research on many issues, including the criminal use of firearms, reducing gun violence, improving data systems for studying gun violence, and the effects of policies and legislations on public safety (FBI, 2011).

### **Contribution/originality**

One notable objective of this article is to contribute to the debate on gun policies and legislation as suggested by previous studies such as the FBI (2011) and National Institute of Justice (2011) with the aim of contributing to forming a great basis for deepening the conversation on gun regulation and legislation, and as well as finding a lasting solution to incessant mass shootings in the United States. The current study's ability to deepen the debate on gun policies and legislation stems for its ability to examine the major divisions with regards to gun legislations and gun ownership policy which continue to polarize the American society and inhibit effective control measures geared towards addressing the problem.

It is important to note that Newsweek staff (1999) reported during a conversation on gun legislation and gun policy indicated that the flood of mail received support the argument that most Americans feel intensely about the gun issue, whichever side of the debate they are on. Therefore, in the current analysis equal weight has been given to both sides (those who favor deregulation of gun ownership policies and those who continue to agitate for stringent gun policies).

Gun legislation and control debate study in the United States calls for further research because of the controversies that continue to exist with special reference to the differing conclusions from previous research (Burton, 2002; Krouse, 2010; Ludwig & Cook 2001; Obeng, 2009). Therefore, the usefulness of the current paper originates from its ability to contribute and extend our understanding of issues surrounding gun ownership, control policies and gun legislation in the United States by shedding more light on the two sides of debate. In doing this, the current endeavor is expected to be a worthy contribution to existing literature on gun laws. The current study may therefore have implications for researcher, policy makers and administrators seeking strategies to address the problem of gun deaths and finding amicable solution to the controversies that gun legislation has engendered in the country.

### **Research methodology**

Data for this research were derived from secondary sources. The methodology used is qualitative method with secondary research. Information was gathered mainly though secondary data with the use of both traditional

and computer-based literature on guns legislation and gun control. This involved utilizing previous researches and analyses of scholars; government documents; newspaper/magazines and as well as journal articles that are related to the subject of the study. The enormous information from these secondary sources attest to the prominence which Americans accorded the debate on gun legislation and gun ownership.

The qualitative technique adopted is exploratory in nature with the aim of providing clear understanding of the issues involved in the debate on guns legislation in the United States and review of information from articles, journals, books and other literatures used in the study. The qualitative statistical data used was extracted from the literature materials. The author acknowledges all the sources of the various materials utilized for the current study as listed in the references.

### **Review of existing literature**

Gun violence and deaths according to Burton (2002) is a concern for many citizens of the United States. As the above arguments suggest, finding ways to reduce that violence and deaths is one of the most polarized issues in the country. It has been estimated that more than 25 million handguns were in the country thereby providing clear evidence that the proliferation of handguns and their misuse are serious national problem despite counter argument (Burton, 2002). In spite of the massiveness of the situation, Burton (2002) concludes that it is a national disgrace that there is yet to be a workable nationally acceptable gun legislation in the country despite the support for such legislation by majority of the citizens.

It has been noted that in United States, guns that are bought with ease in one state are frequently carried into another and used to maim or kill (Golden & Almo, 2004). It is a situation that mayors of big cities in the country and gun control advocates around the country devote more attention to in the course of addressing the situation. It is also a cycle that those in favor of stringent government intervention are encouraging federal and state governments to break (Vernick et al., 2007; Krouse, 2010). It is important to note that congressional leaders in the country allowed a previous ban on assault weapons to lapse in 2004, thereby weakening federal laws formulated to reduce the numbers of guns in circulation and making it clear that no new restrictions would pass. New York City, for example, has addressed this problem in court (Welford, 2005). Presently, New York City is employing private investigators to visit gun stores and imitate or copy the behavior of straw purchasers. During such exercise, one investigator will make all the inquiries about the gun desired, while the other filled out the federal forms to undergo the Brady background check in an effort at going after the dealers to

ensure that they conform to the existing laws with regards to firearms sales (Cooper, 2007).

Krouse (2010) pointed out that the United States Congress has continued to debate the effectiveness and constitutionality of federal regulation of firearms and ammunition, with strong advocates arguing both for and against greater gun control. According to Krouse (2010), past legislative proposals have raised some questions such as what restrictions on firearms are permissible under the Constitution? Does gun control actually help reduce violent crime? Would household, street corner and schoolyard disputes become less lethal if firearms were more difficult to acquire? Or, would more restrictive gun control policies diminish an individual's ability to defend himself?

Contributing to the debate, the Supreme Court issued its decision in *District of Columbia v. Heller* and found that the District of Columbia (DC) handgun ban violated an individual's right under the Second Amendment to lawfully possess a firearm in his home for self-defense (Krouse, 2010). However, in the 110th Congress which constitute the legislative branch during the last two years of the administration of President George W. Bush, pro-gun members of the House of Representatives who were dissatisfied with the District's response to the *Heller* decision passed a bill that would have further overturned provisions of the District's gun laws (Krouse, 2010).

Proponents of firearm restrictions have advocated policy changes on specific types of firearms and components that are used primarily for criminal purposes, or that pose unusual risks to the public (Krouse, 2010; Piquero, 2009). Fully automatic firearms (i.e., machine guns) and short-barreled rifles and shotguns have been subjected to strict regulation since 1934. Fully automatic firearms have been banned from private possession since 1986, except for those legally owned and registered with the Secretary of the Treasury on May 19, 1986 (Krouse, 2010; Piquero, 2009).

Opponents of gun control vary in their positions with respect to specific forms of control, but generally hold that gun control laws do not accomplish what is intended (Krouse, 2010; Philip & Maume, 2007). They argue that it is as difficult to keep weapons from being acquired by "high-risk" individuals, even under federal laws and enforcement, as it was to stop the sale and use of liquor during prohibition (Krouse, 2010; Philip & Maume, 2007). In their view, a more stringent federal firearms regulatory system would only create problems for law-abiding citizens, bring mounting frustration and escalation of bans by gun regulators, and possibly threaten citizens' civil rights or safety. Some argue that the low violent crime rates of other countries have no connection with gun control, maintaining instead that multiple cultural differences are responsible (Burton, 2002; Krouse, 2010; Philip & Maume, 2007).

Gun control opponents also reject the assumption that the only legitimate purpose of gun ownership by a private citizen is recreational (i.e., hunting and target shooting). They insist on the continuing need for people to possess an effective means of defending their person and property, and they point to studies that they believe reveal ways in which gun possession lowers the incidence of crime (Cooper, 2007). Additionally, those against gun legislation and regulation indicated that the law enforcement agencies and indeed the criminal justice system in the United States do not demonstrate the ability to present a sufficient measure of public safety. Antagonists of gun regulation further believe that the Second Amendment includes a right to bear arms as a defense against potential government tyranny, pointing to examples in other countries of firearm restrictions being used to curb dissent and secure illegitimate government power (Burton, 20020; Branas, Richmond, Culhane, Have & Wiebe, 2009; Krouse, 2010).

The gun control advocates have further intensified the current debate on guns legislation and control. In doing so they noted that the opposition do not have a clear understanding of issues involved, misinterprets the Second Amendment, and lacks reasonable concern for the problems of crime and gun violence (Kleck, 2004; Krouse, 2010). Also, those opposed to gun legislation and control measures have argued that those advocating gun control are naive in their belief in the power of federal regulation to solve social problems, are bent on disarming the American citizen for ideological or social reasons, and are moved by irrational hostility toward firearms and gun enthusiasts (Kleck, 2004; Krouse, 2010).

It is important to note that firearms, and the freedom or regulations surrounding their possession and use, has always been a controversial issue in the United States (Koper & Roth, 2002). Gun-related issues have a high degree of prominence in elections and at the ballot box (Joslyn & Haider-Markel, 2000). However, those arguing for increased gun regulation often cite the frequent involvement of guns in homicides and suicides, with public health researchers being particularly articulate in this regard (Vizzard, 2000). Countering the gun control arguments mentioned above, others bring up the importance of allowing individuals the ultimate self-protection against criminal attacks that guns afford to those who possess them (Vizzard, 2000).

Webster, Vernick and Bulzacchelli (2009) found that over 80 percent of criminal possessors of firearms were not lawful retail purchasers. Violent criminal offenders commonly obtain firearms through an illicit market that includes acquaintances, family members, and street sources. But investigations of gun trafficking found that federally licensed retail firearm sellers are a prominent conduit for the dispersion of firearms to criminals and gun traffickers (Webster, Vernick & Bulzacchelli, 2009). Contributing to the debate, the Bureau of Justice Assistance (2002) suggested that continuation

and strengthening of the federal government program that target illegal firearms trafficking is important as it has consistently shown the ability to reduce the number of guns in circulation and as well as incidents of gun violence. This program which is already in existence in places like New York City, California, Oakland has the ultimate goal of enhancing the ability of state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct more comprehensive background investigations on applicants for new or renewal federal firearms licenses.

According to Blumstein and Piquerno (2007), most gun control laws are designed to prevent dangerous people from obtaining firearms, often by establishing regulations and penalties to deter illegal sales by retailers. Less frequently, states also regulate sales by private sellers for the same reason. However, the federal government does not regulate private sales, and its regulations over retail firearms dealers are generally loose. Oversight of firearm dealers by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives is limited by law and resources. But a handful of states have comprehensive regulations over firearms sellers and attempt to enhance compliance with frequent audits and undercover stings (Krouse, 2010).

Vernick, Hodge, Jr., and Webster (2007) found that laws designed to reduce gun violence may infringe upon certain individuals' interests in gun possession, but they further the contention that a majority of the population seeks to live in a safer society with a reduced risk of gun-related violence. Lowering a society's risk of gun violence offers individuals increased options regarding where they will live, work, attend school, and enjoy leisure activities by eliminating the threat of violence from a number of areas (Vernick et al., 2007).

Krouse (2010) pointed out that United States' gun policies are often prescribed or stipulated by the gun industry and a small percentage of the population who are gun enthusiasts, which presents its own set of ethical issues. Some argue that the government should seek other, less restrictive regulations than the licensing provisions enacted in countries such as Canada. Engaging in public education campaigns on gun safety, or narrowing licensing provisions to a smaller subset of handguns or a more selective group of gun owners, are options which might infringe upon fewer persons' rights and interests in gun ownership. The efficacy and cost effectiveness of these interventions are uncertain, and they may be less likely to result in substantial reductions in gun violence or related harms than more restrictive licensing (Krouse, 2010).

According to Vernick, Hodge, Jr., and Webster (2007), restrictive licensing for handguns represents a classic ethical dilemma. Some individuals may be harmed in order for the community to become generally safer. Safer communities, in turn, enhance the well-being of most individuals. In this

way, restrictive licensing is comparable to mandatory vaccination laws (Vernick et al., 2007). Some individuals will suffer harmful side-effects from the vaccine, but most will not. Because the community will benefit from reduced infection rates and so-called herd immunity – with enough persons vaccinated, the virus is unable to gain a foothold – mandatory vaccination laws are routinely justified on ethical and legal grounds (Vernick et al., 2007).

Kirtsen's (2008) study focus on the contributions of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and their role in strengthening gun laws and reducing crime engendered from gun use. The findings indicate that it is important that civil society take the lead in putting the issue of armed violence on the political agenda - both at the national and international level - first by raising public awareness about the nature and extent of armed violence (i.e., identifying the problem), and second by putting forward solutions to addressing the problem, ranging from mechanisms to improve controls over the supply of weapons to community-based violence reduction programs.

Weaver's (2009) examination of the controversies surrounding gun control analyzes the identified circumstances by which the Second Amendment to the Constitution allows for an individual to lawfully possess a handgun. In the majority opinion of the Court, Justice Scalia states, "the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to possess a firearm and to use that arm for traditionally lawful purposes, such as self-defense within the home" (Weaver, 2009, p. 2).

Weaver (2009) also indicated that this potentially landmark decision addresses (at least in part) the longstanding question over whether the right to bear arms mentioned in the Second Amendment applies to individuals, or whether it exclusively authorizes states to arm militias. More specifically, the Heller decision overturned the 1976 ban on handguns in the District of Columbia, which prohibited the possession and registration of handguns, and invalidated the requirement that other firearms (e.g., rifles and shotguns) stored within the home must be (a) unloaded, and (b) disassembled or equipped with a trigger-locking device (Supreme Court of the United States, 2008).

Contributing to the debate, Kleck's (1997) findings indicate that the proposed gun control measures are not adequate as they would have been unable to prevent the Columbine shooting and many of the other mass school shootings that occurred in the late 1990s. Therefore, instead of proposing gun control measures, it is important to include the extension of background checks on gun purchasers to cover transactions between private parties as well as those involving licensed dealers, as this could prevent casually

motivated gun acquisition by convicted criminals and other high-risk persons (Kleck, 1997).

Through the use of General Social Survey (GSS) data, Kleck and Kovandick (2009) developed a multi-level analysis to examine the relationship between an individual's decision to own a handgun and his or her city's (a) homicide rate and (b) police strength level. The cities in which respondents lived were identified using special supplementary codes provided by the National Opinion Research Center so that information about surrounding cities could be attached to each GSS respondent. Logistic regression analyses indicated that the likelihood of handgun ownership is increased by higher local homicide rates. The effects are not mediated by the individual's own victimization experiences or fear of crime. Kleck and Kovandick (2009) also found that positive macro-level associations previously found between homicide rates and gun ownership may be indicative of homicide effects on handgun acquisition rather than the reverse. As a result, the bigger city police forces in the United States have been moving towards the policy of discouraging handgun ownership, supporting the idea that the provision of greater collective security reduces the felt need of the citizenry to provide their own protection.

### Guns related statistics

Table 1. Estimated Murder Rates and Firearms, 1993-2011

Year	Estimated Murder Victims	Rate per 100,000 of the Population	Estimated Firearms-Related Murder Victims	Rate per 100,000 of the Population
1993	24,526	9.5	17,073	6.6
1994	23,326	9.0	16,333	6.3
1995	21,606	8.2	14,727	5.6
1996	19,645	7.4	13,261	5.0
1997	18,208	6.8	12,335	4.6
1998	16,974	6.3	11,006	4.1
1999	15,522	5.7	10,117	3.7
2000	15,586	5.5	10,203	3.6
2001	16,037	5.6	10,139	3.6
2002	16,229	5.6	10,841	3.8
2003	16,528	5.7	11,037	3.8
2004	16,148	5.5	10,665	3.6
2005	16,740	5.6	11,363	3.8
2006	17,309	5.8	11,731	3.9
2007	17,128	5.7	11,631	3.9
2008	16,645	5.4	11,029	3.6
2009	15,399	5.0	10,301	3.4

Year	Estimated Murder Victims	Rate per 100,000 of the Population	Estimated Firearms-Related Murder Victims	Rate per 100,000 of the Population
2010	14,722	4.8	9,812	3.2
2011	14,612	4.7	9,903	3.2

Sources: CRS compilation of FBI crime statistics reported annually in the *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1993-2011 and Krouse (2010).

Table 2. Firearms-Related Deaths for All Ages 1993-2009

Year	Homicides	Legal Interventions	Suicides	Accidents	Unknown	Total Deaths	% Change
1993	18,253	318	18,940	1,521	563	39,596	
1994	17,527	339	18,765	1,356	518	38,506	-2.8%
1995	15,551	284	18,503	1,225	394	35,958	-6.6%
1996	14,037	290	18,166	1,134	413	34,041	-5.3%
1997	13,252	270	17,566	981	367	32,437	-4.7%
1998	11,798	304	17,424	866	316	30,709	-5.3%
1999	10,828	299	16,599	824	324	28,875	-6.0%
2000	10,801	270	16,586	776	230	28,664	-0.7%
2001	11,348	323	16,869	802	231	29,574	3.2%
2002	11,829	300	17,108	762	243	30,243	2.3%
2003	11,920	347	16,907	730	232	30,137	-0.4%
2004	11,624	311	16,750	649	235	29,570	-1.9%
2005	12,352	330	17,002	789	221	30,695	3.8%
2006	12,791	360	16,883	642	220	30,897	0.7%
2007	12,632	351	17,352	613	276	31,224	1.1%
2008	12,179	326	18,223	592	273	31,593	1.1%
2009	11,493	333	18,735	554	232	31,347	-0.7

Source: National Center for Health Statistics and Krouse (2010).

Table 3. Firearms-Related Deaths for Juveniles 1993-2009

Year	Homicides	Legal Interventions	Suicides	Accidents	Unknown	Total Deaths	% Change
1993	1,975	16	832	392	76	3,292	
1994	1,912	20	902	403	81	3,319	0.8%
1995	1,780	16	836	330	72	3,035	-8.6%
1996	1,473	9	720	272	49	2,524	-16.8%
1997	1,308	7	679	247	43	2,285	-9.5%
1998	1,045	17	648	207	54	1,972	-13.7%
1999	1,001	9	558	158	50	1,777	-9.9%
2000	819	15	537	150	23	1,545	-

							13.1%
2001	835	6	451	125	16	1,434	-7.2%
2002	872	7	423	115	26	1,444	0.7%
2003	805	8	377	102	25	1,318	-8.7%
2004	868	6	384	105	22	1,386	5.2%
2005	921	5	412	127	25	1,491	7.6%
2006	1,082	14	371	102	24	1,594	6.9%
2007	1,038	9	325	112	36	1,520	-4.6%
2008	984	6	361	98	26	1,475	-3.0%
2009	887	5	401	83	16	1,392	-5.6%

Sources: National Center for Health Statistics and Krouse (2010).

As shown in Table 1, from the information provided by state and local law enforcement agencies in the United States to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and published annually in the Uniform Crime Reports (Krouse, 2010), despite the fact that that rate of murder per 100,000 of the population has been decreasing since 1993 murder victims from fire arms continue to be significant. From 1999 to 2011, it fluctuate in the range of 5.6 to 5.8 until 2010 and 2011 which recorded 4.8 and 4.7 respectively.

Table 2 obtained from Krouse (2010) report to the United States Congress, clearly revealed the seriousness of the concern that firearms related deaths pose to all age groups in the in the country. Despite the fact that the available data indicate that rate of death from firearms across all age groups has decreased significantly since 1993 to 2011, the number of deaths recorded from firearms continue to be significant. And this remains one of the high point of the proponent of gun legislation in the country. However, those who support the deregulation of firearms remarked that the decrease witnessed support the fact that legislation is not needed to reduce and control firearms related deaths in the country.

As shown in table 2, the number of firearms related death for all ages in the United States has decreased slightly from since 1993 but it appears the decrease has stalled since 2005, with 30,695 firearms related deaths recorded across all ages in the country. The figure increased to 31,593 in 2008 and 31,347 in 2009. Table 3 provides a clear picture of juvenile death related to firearms. The table showed that firearms related deaths for juveniles has been decreasing from 1993 with 39,596 deaths to 1,475 deaths in 2008 and 1,392 deaths in 2009.

## Conclusion

It is the argument of the current paper that the multiple incidents of gun violence and mass shootings in the United States have further justified the need for action from the government to introduce legislation that would

curb the many cases of shootings across the country. This paper notes that engaging in new legislation designed to strengthen the current gun laws and reduce gun deaths remains one of the major agenda of the current United States government after the 2012 school shooting in Newtown, Connecticut. However, this agenda has not come to fruition due to the enormous politicking involved in this endeavor. In response, some states, such as New York and Connecticut, have tightened their gun laws, but almost as many have acted to loosen them (The Guardian, 2013).

To further expatiate on the difficulties involved in a universal approach to gun legislation in the country, the United States of America's Supreme Court 5-4 split decision in regard to whether gun restrictions violate the Second Amendment rights of citizens remains a reference point on how difficult the task has become. This paper is therefore justified because it has further strengthened and intensified the debate regarding gun laws and ownership as it relates to the present legislation in United States. Review of existing literature on gun legislation and gun ownership indicate that one comprehensive set of solutions suggested in recent years—and accepted by the government and through lawsuits against the firearms industry--has focused on design and manufacture. From the extant literature, background checks has been identified as workable policy to addressing rampant cases of gun incidents ( Burton, 20012; Krouse, 2010). Therefore, it has been suggested that instead of proposing gun control measures, it is important to include the extension of background checks on gun purchasers to cover transactions between private parties as well as those involving licensed dealers, as this could prevent casually motivated gun acquisition by convicted criminals and other high-risk persons (Kleck, 1997).

As indicated in the existing body of literature on gun control and legislation, gun-control groups have called for new laws that would place further barriers in the path of criminals and other people prohibited from buying firearms (Burton, 2002). The fact that investigators discovered that the weapons used in the Columbine massacre in 1989 were obtained illegally and it would have been prevented if there were adequate gun legislation to prevent such loophole has been cited as a reason for the call such measure. It is equally important to note that although Australia is touted as having efficient gun control policies, however, gun rights advocates assert that the Australian policy has not decreased the crime rate (Egendorf, 2002). The gun advocacy group Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (SSAA) contends that the buyback failed because millions of banned weapons remained on the streets (Egendorf, 2002).

The current study articulates some of the suggestions of Kleck (2009) that Americans use guns to ward off a criminal aggressor as many as 2.5 million times a year--a figure roughly three times higher and the situation

will continue to get worse until all responsible bodies are willing to sacrifice personal interest and work together towards an efficient and workable gun laws. Kleck (2009) further points out, that the number of gun-related crimes committed each year is alarming. Additionally, it has been noted that the issue of self-protection is important to the gun-control debate and the one concerning which proponents of gun control claimed to be deceitful. Bureau of Justice Assistance (2002) has suggested that one viable way of reducing gun deaths in United States is to continue to strengthen Federal programs that target illegal firearms trafficking have been shown to reduce gun violence. This is done by supplementing the capability of state and local law enforcement agencies to conduct more comprehensive background investigations on applicants requesting new or those who want to renew their existing firearms.

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