



BAUDL Public Forum Debate December 2017:

Gun Rights

Resolved:

The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership.



HOW TO DEBATE: PUBLIC FORUM

SPEECHES AND TIME LIMITS

SPEAKER 1 (TEAM A, 1ST SPEAKER).....	4 MIN.
SPEAKER 2 (TEAM B, 1ST SPEAKER).....	4 MIN.
CROSSFIRE (BETWEEN SPEAKERS 1 & 2).....	3 MIN.
SPEAKER 3 (TEAM A, 2ND SPEAKER)	4 MIN.
SPEAKER 4 (TEAM B, 2ND SPEAKER).....	4 MIN.
CROSSFIRE (BETWEEN SPEAKERS 3 & 4).....	3 MIN.
SPEAKER 1 SUMMARY.....	2 MIN.
SPEAKER 2 SUMMARY.....	2 MIN.
GRAND CROSSFIRE (ALL SPEAKERS)	3 MIN.
SPEAKER 3 FINAL FOCUS.....	2 MIN.
SPEAKER 4 FINAL FOCUS.....	2 MIN.

EACH TEAM MAY USE UP TO TWO MINUTES OF PREP TIME.

Public Forum Debate is a team event that advocates or rejects a position posed by the monthly resolution topic (announced online at www.nflonline.org). The clash of ideas must be communicated in a manner persuasive to the non-specialist or “citizen judge”, i.e. a member of the American jury. The debate should:

- Display solid logic, lucid reasoning, and depth of analysis
- Utilize evidence without being driven by it
- Present a clash of ideas by countering/refuting arguments of the opposing team (rebuttal)
- Communicate ideas with clarity, organization, eloquence, and professional decorum

Case Development & Evidence

A team must develop both a pro and con case, persuasively supported by evidence and reasoning. A team, however, should research several arguments on both sides of the issue, so it can adapt its case to the opposing team’s claims as necessary. Having arguments in direct contradiction with each other will enhance clash in rebuttals. Organization of speeches is important so both judges and the opposing team can follow each of the arguments and their supporting evidence. Effective persuasion requires a mix of facts, statistics, expert quotations, studies, polls; but it may also be real-life examples, anecdotes, analogies, and personal experience. Since topics are based on current events, research should be accessible through periodicals, Web search engines and think tanks. Teams should not overwhelm their case with evidence; rather, they should select the best evidence to represent their claims.

The Coin Flip

The round starts with a coin toss; the winning team selects either:

- The side (pro or con) they will argue -OR-
- The speaker order (begin the debate or give the last speech)

The team that loses the toss will then decide their preference from the option not selected by the winner (i.e., if the winning team speaks last, then the losing team decides whether to be PRO or CON).



SPEECH OUTLINES

First Pro Speech

This speech constructs arguments advocating the resolution's worthiness. present major reasons why there is a problem. What is the risk of change versus the risk of not changing? This speech will have a brief introduction to frame the team's case. A few reasons for adopting the topic should be presented with accompanying evidence and definitions. Each reason should be an independent reason to vote for the resolution, and should explain why it is pertinent. The speech should conclude with a summary of the arguments covered.

First Con Speech

This speech constructs arguments showing disadvantages of the resolution and why it should not be adopted. If the pro speech has the advantage of a changing future, the con speech has a track record of experience (status quo) and why change is ill-advised. The rest of the speech elements will be the same as the pro speech.

Third + Fourth Constructive Speeches

Both debaters have the primary burden of refuting the other team's arguments by explaining flaws in the opponent's position. The debater should identify the opposition's key arguments and attack their legitimacy. To best accomplish refutation, both members of a team should have a consistent approach. What is important? Use reasons/evidence to compare and contrast. Allocate time to rebuild the original case. It is important to have clarity that is seldom attained by an intricate outline. Conclude with a summary.

Summary Speeches

These are complicated speeches because each debater has to find a way to explain issues in the light of all that has happened so far – in just two minutes – without speaking too rapidly. New evidence, but not new arguments may be presented, except responses (refutation). This means that a limited number of issues can be addressed. For example, perhaps develop one to two issues from the debater's side on the resolution and one from the opponent's side of the resolution. The speech should have a brief overview. On each key argument, try to add a short original quotation, anecdote, or fact. Wrap up each argument by stressing its importance in arriving at a fair decision.

The Final Focus

This frames, with clarity, why your team has won the debate. Again, no new arguments may be presented, however, new evidence may be introduced to support an argument made earlier in the debate. Before the final focus, ask, *"If I were judging this round, what would I be voting on?"* Strategies may include:

- Choose the most important argument you are winning, and summarize the analysis and evidence that make it so important.
- Turn a major argument from your opponent into the winning analysis and evidence of one of your important arguments; this technique clinches two arguments.
- Answer the most important argument you may be losing by summarizing the analysis and evidence that you believe takes out the opponent's argument.
 - Choose an argument that you believe the community judge will most likely vote on.
- Expose a major inconsistency made by your opponent when two arguments that contradict each other.



PUBLIC FORUM QUICK TIPS

- **Introduction**

- The introduction is optional, but it helps the judge take notes on your speech. A good introduction is short and memorable.

- **Resolution**

- This is when you let the judge know which side you're on for the round.

- **Definitions**

- This is the section where you will define certain words in the resolution.
- Generally people say, "[This word] defined by [Source] means _____"

- **Framework**

- The framework tells the judge how the winner of the round should be decided.
 1. You might say, "If the costs outweigh the benefits you should vote negative or visa versa." This is one of the most common frameworks.
 2. Utilizing our previous example, you might say, "if we as the negative can prove that Russia has more destructive weapons than China you should vote negative."
- The second portion of the framework is telling the judge why this is the best way to determine the winner.

- **Observations**

- Observations are optional part of your case.
- They are either important things you want the judge to remember or assumptions that you make utilizing the resolution. These are also numbered to maximize organization.
- It's important to keep in mind that if you're running observations they should be helping your case and making it stronger instead of just taking up unnecessary time.

- **Contentions**

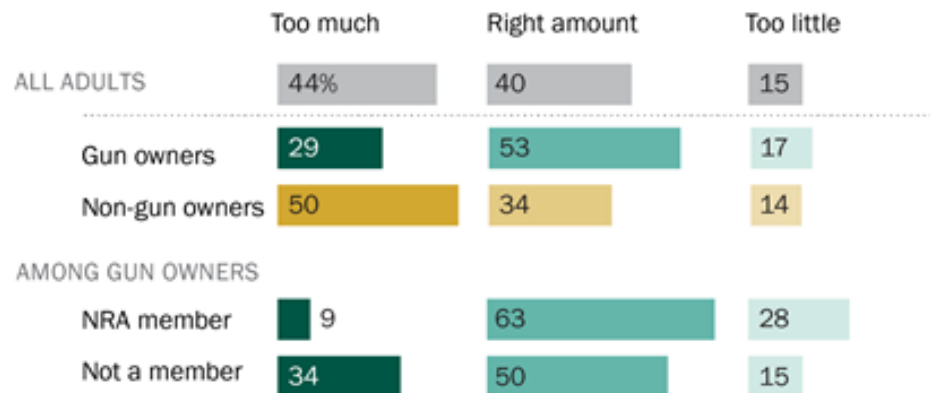
- These are your arguments, reason to vote for you. Most speeches have 2-3 contentions.



GUN RIGHTS - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Americans are divided between those who say the NRA has too much and the right amount of influence

% saying the National Rifle Association has ___ influence over gun laws in this country



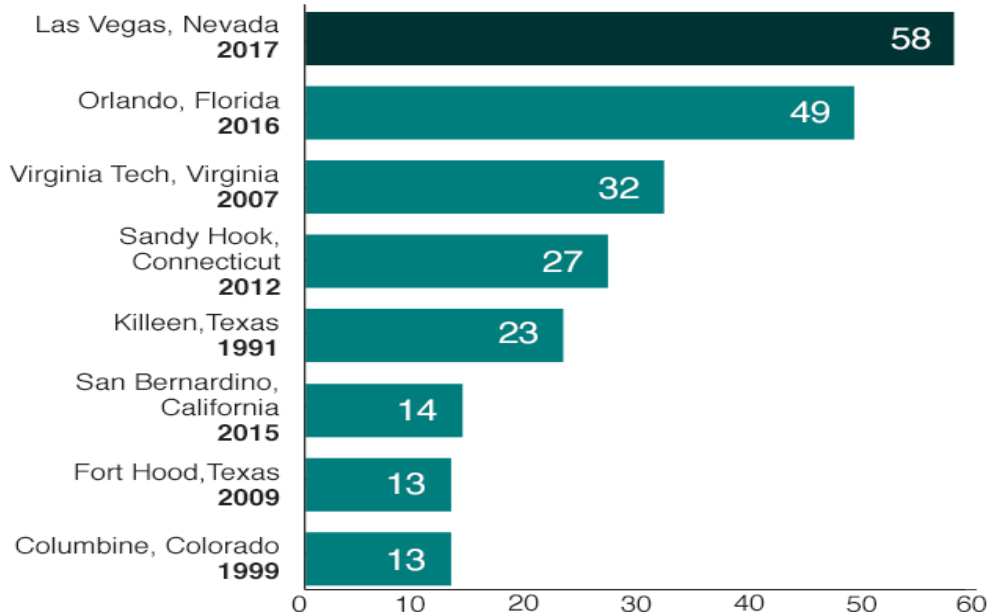
Note: Share of respondents who didn't offer an answer not shown.

Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 13-27 and April 4-18, 2017.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Worst mass shootings in the US since 1991

Victims killed



Source: FBI/Las Vegas police - figures are correct as of 2 Oct

BBC



GUN RIGHTS - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The United States has 88.8 guns per 100 people, or about 270,000,000 guns, which is the highest total and per capita number in the world. 22% of Americans own one or more guns (35% of men and 12% of women). America's pervasive gun culture stems in part from its colonial history, revolutionary roots, frontier expansion, and 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."*

Proponents of more gun control laws state that the Second Amendment was intended for militias; that gun violence would be reduced; that gun restrictions have always existed; and that a majority of Americans, including gun owners, support new gun restrictions.

Opponents say that the Second Amendment protects an individual's right to own guns; that guns are needed for self-defense from threats ranging from local criminals to foreign invaders; and that gun ownership deters crime rather than causes more crime.

Guns in Colonial and Revolutionary America

Guns were common in the American Colonies, first for hunting and general self-protection and later as weapons in the American Revolutionary War. [\[105\]](#) Several colonies' gun laws required that heads of households (including women) own guns and that all able-bodied men enroll in the militia and carry personal firearms. [\[105\]](#)

Some laws, including in Connecticut (1643) and at least five other colonies, required "at least one adult man in every house to carry a gun to church or other public meetings" in order to protect against attacks by Native Americans; prevent theft of firearms from unattended homes; and, as a 1743 South Carolina law stated, safeguard against "insurrections and other wicked attempts of Negroes and other Slaves." [\[105\]](#) Other laws required immigrants to own guns in order to immigrate or own land. [\[105\]](#)

The Second Amendment of the US Constitution was ratified on Dec. 15, 1791. The notes from the Constitutional Convention do not mention an individual right to a gun for self-defense. [\[106\]](#) Some historians suggest that the idea of an individual versus a collective right would not have occurred to the Founding Fathers because the two were intertwined and inseparable: there was an individual right in order to fulfill the collective right of serving in the militia. [\[105\]](#) [\[106\]](#)

Although guns were common in colonial and revolutionary America, so were gun restrictions. Laws included banning the sale of guns to Native Americans (though colonists frequently traded guns with Native Americans for goods such as corn and fur); banning indentured servants (mainly the Irish) and slaves from owning guns; and exempting a variety of professions from owning guns (including doctors, school masters, lawyers, and millers). [\[105\]](#)



PRO/CON FIRST SPEECH OUTLINE

[Write an Introduction or Hook]

We [Affirm/Negate] the resolution: ***The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership.***

We would like to present the following definitions:

1. _____ is defined by _____ to mean

2. _____ is defined by _____ to mean

The Framework for this round should be:

The reason this is the best Framework for the round is:

We would also like to present the following observations:

1. Observation 1 _____

2. Observation 2 _____



PRO EVIDENCE

Why we need universal background checks

By Gun Responsibility Advocates

We need Universal Background Checks because there is a very large loophole in the existing federal law that allows dangerous people to obtain possession of a gun.

When the Supreme Court ruled that the possession of a gun for personal protection was a constitutional right under the Second Amendment, they also ruled that several classes of people could be denied this right. Among the prohibited classes of people are felons and the seriously mentally ill. Almost everyone agrees that these are limited and reasonable restrictions on the right to own a gun.

In order to ensure that these prohibited people cannot obtain a gun, the FBI maintains the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS). Before selling a gun, a Federally Licensed Firearm Dealer is required to check with the NICS to make sure that the buyer is not on the prohibited list. Filling out the paperwork and checking with the NICS takes only a few minutes and 90% of the inquiries are resolved while the gun dealer is still on the phone. This system is quick and efficient and, since its creation in 1998, it has prevented the sale of guns to over two million criminals and other prohibited persons. The problem is that there is a large loophole in the system. It applies only to licensed dealers.

Under federal law, private sales or transfers of guns between individuals who are not licensed dealers are not covered. Sales at gun shows, between individuals, or via the internet can result in the gun being sold to a prohibited individual because no background check is required. This is a huge loophole in the federal law and it needs to be fixed.

The fix is simple. All gun sales should be subject to a background check. The rule that applies to licensed dealers should apply to all gun sales. This is what we mean by Universal Background Checks.

With rights come responsibilities. Although the primary owner of a gun undergoes a background check when the gun is initially purchased from a licensed dealer, the secondary buyer of that gun may not. Just as we are at risk from second-hand smoke from cigarettes, we are also at risk of being shot by a "second-hand gun."

Eighty-five percent of voters and 60 percent of NRA members support universal background checks.

It is a reasonable and simple request. There are three pieces of legislation pending at a federal level that could help reduce gun violence:

S. 551/ H.R. 1076, which would prevent individuals on the Terrorist Watch List from purchasing and owning firearms.

S. 2934/H.R. 3411, which would require that background checks be conducted on all private sales of firearms.

H.R. 4269, which would renew and strengthen the federal Assault Weapons Ban, which was in place from 1996-2006.

Gun Responsibility Advocates is a local volunteer citizens group dedicated to promoting common-sense regulation of firearms. For more information, visit our Facebook page or www.oakparkGRA.weebly.com.



PRO EVIDENCE

WHERE BACKGROUND CHECKS CAN WORK – by Ben Casselman

Homicides rose after Missouri loosened its gun laws. That carries lessons for everywhere else. When congressional Democrats staged a sit-in on the House floor last month to demand a vote on gun control measures, many of them touted a familiar policy solution: universal background checks.

Federal law already requires background checks for anyone purchasing a gun through a licensed dealer. But the law exempts private sales, a category that accounts for 40 percent of gun sales, according to one 1997 study. (Researchers are now working to update that figure.) That means there are few practical barriers keeping guns from people legally prohibited from owning them, usually because of a prior criminal record.

Background checks wouldn't have prevented the Orlando mass shooting that prompted the Democrats' protest, nor most other recent high-profile attacks. Omar Mateen, like other recent mass shooters, was allowed to carry firearms and apparently bought his guns through a licensed dealer.

But researchers believe background checks could have an impact on homicides of women by their partners and of young men by other young men. Both types of violence are frequently committed by people with prior criminal histories that prevent them from owning guns legally — and both kill far more people each year than mass shootings.

...

Background checks almost certainly wouldn't have prevented all of those sales; black markets for guns exist even in cities and states with strict background-check requirements, such as Chicago and Massachusetts. But there is evidence that requiring background checks makes it more difficult for criminals to obtain guns and, even more significantly, can reduce gun homicides.

The best evidence comes from Missouri, which in 2007 repealed a decades-old law requiring background checks for all gun purchases. A 2013 study from researchers at Johns Hopkins found that the repeal led to a 23 percent increase in gun homicide, the equivalent of 55 to 63 additional gun deaths per year. (Non-gun homicides, which shouldn't have been as affected by the law, didn't increase.)

Gun rights groups have criticized the study's methods, but other evidence from Missouri and other states

supports its findings. A separate peer-reviewed study found that when, in 1995, Connecticut adopted a background check law similar to the one Missouri repealed, gun homicides there fell by 40 percent. (Related research found the Missouri and Connecticut laws had a smaller but still significant impact on gun suicides.) Meanwhile, the gun control advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety last year found that since the Missouri law's repeal, more guns used to commit crimes there were purchased in state, and more were bought shortly before the crime was committed, a key measure of gun trafficking. Both trends suggest it has become easier for criminals to get guns in Missouri.

"All of these signals are telling you that guns sold in the state of Missouri are more readily available for criminal misuse," said Daniel Webster, one of the authors of the Missouri and Connecticut studies. "You had a system that wasn't perfect, but it was blocking a lot of risky transactions, and then you said, 'OK, no more accountability.'"

Kansas City Mayor Sly James said that since the repeal of the 2007 permitting law, illegal guns have become more readily available in his city. (Last month, Gov. Jay Nixon vetoed a bill that would have expanded gun rights in Missouri, including making it easier for Missouri residents to obtain concealed-carry permits. Republican lawmakers in the state have vowed to override the veto.)

"The state of Missouri has totally taken away the ability of cities to have any impacts at all on the number of guns on the street," James said. "It makes it easier for people to get guns in this city, and from my perspective as the mayor of the city ... it's absolutely the worst thing in the world to have more guns on the street."

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Researchers don't know whether that approach would have the same impact as the stricter permit-to-purchase rules. (Webster and his colleagues are now studying this question.)



BAUDL Public Forum Debate December 2017:

Gun Rights

PRO EVIDENCE

FACT SHEET

Background Checks for All Gun Sales

February 2015

Bottom line: A significant loophole in federal law enables dangerous people who are legally prohibited from buying or possessing guns—including felons, fugitives, and domestic abusers—to easily evade the law and buy guns from unlicensed sellers without a background check and with no questions asked.

The United States has a significant gun violence problem:

- There are more than 30,000 gun deaths per year in the United States, and roughly 33 people are murdered with guns every day.¹
- In 2012 alone, 11,622 people were murdered with a gun in the United States—more than double the number of U.S. soldiers killed in combat during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.²

Strong gun laws—including universal background checks—effectively reduce gun violence:

- Background checks effectively prevent prohibited people from buying guns. Since November 1998, roughly 2.4 million gun sales to prohibited purchasers have been prevented because of background checks.³
- States that require background checks for all handgun sales have lower levels of gun violence compared with states that do not require background checks:
 - 46 percent fewer women are shot and killed by their intimate partners.
 - 48 percent fewer law enforcement officers are shot and killed with handguns.
 - 48 percent fewer gun suicides are committed.⁴
- After Missouri repealed a law in 2007 that required background checks for all handgun sales, the state's murder rate went up by 14 percent, and the firearm homicide rate increased by 25 percent.⁵
- The 10 states with the weakest gun laws collectively have an aggregate level of gun violence that is more than twice as high as the 10 states with the strongest gun laws.⁶

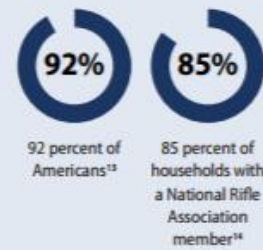
Current federal law suffers from a key weakness—it does not require background checks for all gun sales:

- Under current federal law, only federally licensed gun dealers, or FFLs, are required to conduct a background check for all gun sales.⁷ People who maintain that they only occasionally sell guns are not required to obtain a license or to conduct background checks.

In 2012 alone, 11,622 people were murdered with a gun in the United States—more than double the number of U.S. soldiers killed in combat during the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan combined.



Support for requiring background checks for all gun sales





CON EVIDENCE

4 Reasons Universal Background Checks for Gun Buyers are a Bad Idea

By Jacob Sullum – October 2015

Senate Democrats [plan](#) to ingratiate themselves with voters by introducing a new package of gun controls. In a letter to fellow Democrats, Sens. Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.) said they hope gun control advocacy "will be a rallying point for a public that is eager for congressional action and will be the basis for future legislation that we will demand," although there is zero chance that such legislation will actually pass. Schumer and Stabenow's wish list includes a requirement that everyone who acquires a firearm, whether from a private seller or a federally licensed dealer, undergo a background check. That particular change, [unlike](#) stricter gun control in general, does indeed [poll well](#), but that does not mean it's a good idea. Here are four major problems with requiring background checks for private gun transfers as a policy, as opposed to a political stunt:

1. Expanding the background check requirement [makes no sense](#) as a response to mass shootings (even though that is how it has been presented), because the perpetrators of these crimes, including last week's massacre in Oregon, typically either have actually passed background checks or could do so because they do not have disqualifying criminal or psychiatric records.
2. Expanding the background check requirement makes little sense as a response to more common forms of gun violence, since criminals with felony records can always [obtain weapons](#) on the black market, through buyers with clean records, or by theft.
3. Expanding the background check requirement, especially if it is coupled with "improved" databases, compounds the [injustice](#) of disarming millions of people who pose no threat to others but are nevertheless [forbidden](#) to own guns because they use illegal drugs, overstay a visa, were once subjected to court-ordered psychiatric treatment, or have felony records, even if they have never committed a violent crime.
4. Expanding the background check requirement is not the same as actually compelling people to perform background checks for private gun transfers. Many gun owners will balk at the inconvenience and expense of finding and paying a licensed dealer who is willing to facilitate a transaction. In Oregon, which expanded its background-check requirement in August, some local law enforcement officials have publicly stated they do not plan to enforce the new rule, either because they do not have the resources or because they view it as an unconstitutional intrusion. *The Oregonian* [notes](#) that "there is no centralized registry of guns in Oregon...that could be used to track a gun found in a criminal's possession." The federal government has no such registry either, so how can it possibly hope to track transfers and make sure background checks are performed? Even with hefty criminal penalties, widespread noncompliance is a certainty. Consider: Does the theoretical prospect of a [10-year prison sentence](#) deter gun owners from smoking pot or pot smokers from owning guns?



CON EVIDENCE

Universal Background Checks Do Little To Stop Mass Shootings, Study Finds

By FOX NEWS - January 05, 2016

A new study is questioning long-held government claims that background checks on private gun transfers could help stop mass public shootings.

The report, [published by the Crime Prevention Research Center](#) on Jan. 2, argues that not only are background checks expensive, but that they have failed to thwart mass public shootings. The findings come as President Obama on Tuesday formally announced plans to expand background checks and make other changes to America's gun rules through executive action. The White House has aggressively pushed for background checks following mass public shootings.

After the December murders by a husband and wife terror team in San Bernardino, Calif., Obama told the nation there were steps the U.S. could take to "improve the odds that they don't happen as frequently: commonsense gun safety laws, stronger background checks." The study, however, states that the initial data on universal background checks does not confirm the claims of supporters and the White House.

"Despite the frequent calls for expanded background checks after mass public shootings, there is no evidence that background checks on private transfers of guns would have prevented any of the attacks that have taken place since at least 2000," the study states, adding that there is no statistical evidence that proves the mass public shootings are "rarer in states with background checks on private transfers."

"Simple regression estimates provide no support for the claim that background checks reduce mass public shootings or the harm from those attacks," the study states. "Mass public shootings may vary between states for many reasons that have nothing to do with background checks." Since 2013, states with "universal" background checks have had 124 percent more mass public shootings and dramatically higher rates of death and injury.

"Per capita, there were 267 percent more deaths and 1,431 percent more injuries," the study states. The study also found the per capita rate of deaths and injuries from mass public shootings increases after states pass stricter background checks on private transfers. In addition, the study calls out the costs of expanding background checks to private transfers – specifically, the fees attached to private transfers.

"Law-abiding poor blacks who live in high crime urban areas and who benefit the most from protecting themselves will be the ones most likely priced out of owning guns for protection," the study finds. "Without some benefits in terms of either reduced crime or mass public shootings, it is hard to see how these rules pass any type of cost-benefit test." Obama, speaking Tuesday at the White House, acknowledged that the changes can't stop "every act of violence." But he said, "We maybe can't save everybody but we could save some."

Federal law requires a criminal and mental illness background check for every person who buys a gun through a federally licensed dealer. Felons as well as those who have been involuntarily committed for mental illness are banned from buying a gun.



CON EVIDENCE

The Racist Origins of US Gun Control Laws

Designed to Disarm Slaves, Freedmen, And African-Americans
by Steve Ekwall

OVERVIEW

Before the Civil War ended, State "Slave Codes" prohibited slaves from owning guns. After President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, and after the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution abolishing slavery was adopted and the Civil War ended in 1865, States persisted in prohibiting blacks, now freemen, from owning guns under laws renamed "Black Codes." They did so on the basis that blacks were not citizens, and thus did not have the same rights, including the right to keep and bear arms protected in the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, as whites. This view was specifically articulated by the U.S. Supreme Court in its infamous 1857 decision in *Dred Scott v. Sandford* to uphold slavery.

The United States Congress overrode most portions of the Black Codes by passing the Civil Rights Act of 1866. The legislative histories of both the Civil Rights Act and the Fourteenth Amendment, as well as The Special Report of the Anti-Slavery Conference of 1867, are replete with denunciations of those particular statutes that denied blacks equal access to firearms. [Kates, "Handgun Prohibition and the Original Meaning of the Second Amendment," 82 Mich. L. Rev. 204, 256 (1983)] However, facially neutral disarming through economic means laws remain in effect.

After the adoption of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in 1878, most States turned to "facially neutral" business or transaction taxes on handgun purchases. However, the intention of these laws was not neutral. An article in Virginia's official university law review called for a "prohibitive tax...on the privilege" of selling handguns as a way of disarming "the son of Ham," whose "cowardly practice of 'toting' guns has been one of the most fruitful sources of crime.... Let a negro board a railroad train with a quart of mean whiskey and a pistol in his grip and the chances are that there will be a murder, or at least a row, before he alights." [Comment, Carrying Concealed Weapons, 15 Va L. Reg. 391, 391-92 (1909); George Mason University Civil Rights Law Journal (GMU CR LJ), Vol. 2, No. 1, "Gun Control and Racism," Stefan Tahmassebi, 1991, p. 75] Thus, many Southern States imposed high taxes or banned inexpensive guns so as to price blacks and poor whites out of the gun market.

In the 1990s, "gun control" laws continue to be enacted so as to have a racist effect if not intent:

- Police-issued license and permit laws, unless drafted to require issuance to those not prohibited by law from owning guns, are routinely used to prevent lawful gun ownership among "unpopular" populations.
- Public housing residents, approximately 3 million Americans, are singled out for gun bans.
- "Gun sweeps" by police in "high crime neighborhoods" whereby vehicles and "pedestrians who meet a specific profile that might indicate they are carrying a weapon" are searched are becoming popular, and are being studied by the U.S. Department of Justice as "Operation Ceasefire."



CON EVIDENCE

Policy Analysis

CATO
INSTITUTE

DECEMBER 1, 2015 | NUMBER 784

The Costs and Consequences of Gun Control

BY DAVID B. KOPEL

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In politicizing mass murders, gun control advocates, such as President Obama, insist that more laws against firearms can enhance public safety. Over and over again, there are calls for common sense gun controls, such as a system of universal background checks, a ban on high-capacity magazines, and a ban on assault weapons. And yet such proposals are not likely to stop a deranged person bent on murder.

Although universal background checks may sound appealing, the private sale of guns between strangers is a small percentage of overall gun sales. Worse, the background check bills are written so broadly that they would turn most gun owners into criminals for innocent acts—such as letting one's sister borrow a gun for an afternoon of target shooting.

Magazine bans are acts of futility because the extant supply is enormous. Today, magazines of up to 20 rounds for handguns, and 30 rounds for rifles, are factory standard, not high-capacity, for many of the most commonly owned firearms. These magazines are popular with law-abiding Americans for the same reason they are so popular with law enforcement: because they are often the best choice for lawful defense of one's self and others.

Gun-control advocates have been pushing for a ban

on assault weapons for more than 25 years. This proposal is essentially a political gimmick that confuses people. That is because the term is an arbitrarily defined epithet. A federal ban was in place between 1994 and 2004, but Congress declined to renew it after studies showed it had no crime-reducing impact.

President Obama points to the mass confiscation of firearms in Great Britain and Australia as models for the United States. Such confiscation would be impossible, as a practical matter, in the United States, and if it were attempted, the consequences would be catastrophic.

Policymakers can take steps to make treatment available for persons with serious mental illness, and, when necessary, to incapacitate such persons if they are proven to be at grave risk of perpetrating violent crime. Better care, treatment, and stronger laws for civil commitment (consistent with constitutional safeguards) could prevent some horrific crimes.

Finally, before adding new gun regulations to the legal code, policymakers should remember that several mass murders in the U.S. were prevented because citizens used firearms against the culprit before the police arrived on the scene.

David B. Kopel is research director at the Independence Institute and is an associate policy analyst with the Cato Institute.



PRO/CON 3rd + 4th Speech Outline

Contention 1. _____

Our argument is [Claim] _____

The evidence to support this is [Warrant] _____

This matters because [Impact] _____

Contention 2. _____

Our argument is [Claim] _____

The evidence to support this is [Warrant] _____

This matters because [Impact] _____

Contention 3. _____

Our argument is [Claim] _____

The evidence to support this is [Warrant] _____

This matters because [Impact] _____

We have presented 3 strong arguments which were _____

Please vote in [Affirmation/Negation] to the resolution.



NOTES

1. Write the main reasons why the judge should vote for your team:

2. Point out any contradictions in the other team's evidence:

Did your opponent use evidence that disagreed with their original statement? Were you able to stump them with a crossfire question? This is the time to remind the judge of those things.

3. Answer the question "so what?"

Spend 30 seconds talking about why the judge should care. This is a time to appeal to the judge's morals using your original case evidence. Put this in your own words.
