

**Gun Control**

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**Introduction:** Does the constitutional right to bear arms in the second amendment mean that the government may not limit American gun ownership or regulate firearms without a Constitutional amendment? Should the government limit or regulate gun ownership? No other country has held so steadfastly to gun rights and no other country has been polarized by the disparate views of its scholars, lawyers, courts, organizations, and victims of gun violence. Many would agree that easy access to guns enables mass murder, impairs school safety, exacerbates domestic violence, and shortens Americans' life expectancy. However, others see unlimited gun ownership as a vital counterweight to tyranny and protection from lawlessness. How to move toward a more perfect union and a safer democracy divides us. One side feels few if any restrictions are justified, and that if responsible citizens are armed, we would better control crime and better assure freedom from government excess. The other side seeks to increase gun regulations and curtail gun ownership to reduce the killing. While other groups differentiate between types of guns, magazines, and ammo based on their own view of legitimate and responsible gun ownership.

Individual States and communities have grappled with gun violence and enacted laws leading to a mixed bag of results and are inherently limited by the ease with which guns are transferred to other jurisdictions. Although there may be some regional differences, everyone's local sphere includes family members and co-workers who passionately disagree on the path forward. Individuals and groups toss around memes, unchecked facts, and "popular" sayings hoping to make their point. This flood of misinformation only complicates the issues and further divides us.

In the last 10 years, gun control has been discussed in the debate community three times. (1) PF November 2017 Resolved: The United States should require universal background checks for all gun sales and transfer of ownership. (2) LD January/February 2016 Resolved: In the United States, private ownership of handguns ought to be banned. (3) PF September 2012 Resolved: Congress should renew the Federal Assault Weapons Ban. There has never been a policy debate topic around gun control. Additional note: There is a proposed Jan/Feb 2021 LD topic: Resolved: States ought to ban lethal autonomous weapons.

The literature on this topic is extensive. The topic itself will be accessible to both new and experienced debaters. The case area is large enough to keep it interesting throughout the year and narrow enough to have a manageable research burden. High school students have passionate thoughts and opinions about guns and their impact on their world. They want to debate this topic.

**Gun Ownership:** According to a Small Arms Survey, a project of the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, “There are more guns than people in the United States...There are more than 393 million civilian-owned firearms in the United States, or enough for every man, woman, and child to own one and still have 67 million guns left over” (Ingraham). The study further states that in 2017, the United States which is the world’s richest nation and approximately 4% of the world’s population, “owned about 46 percent of the entire global stock of...civilian firearms.” For every 100 citizens in the United States, there are 120+ firearms. This is twice as many as the next leading country, (Yemen with roughly 52 guns per 100 citizens). This study is referring to private ownership of guns and not those owned by the police/military.

Individuals might argue that there are more guns in circulation than reported as some gun owners might not be forthright when surveyed about how many guns they own. Individuals might not admit to owning guns when they do as gun owners have multiple reasons for owning guns. There are also 3D guns, ghost guns, and other types of illegal guns unreported. Others argue that with age, use, and other factors, many guns might not remain usable or in circulation, and therefore the estimates exaggerate the number of guns. There is no accurate/reliable record of how many guns are in our country, but the newspapers provide irrefutable evidence that they are ubiquitous.

However, regardless of our varied opinions on a solution, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) states,

87% of Americans believe gun violence is a public health threat, (77% of Republicans, 96% Democrats). In 2016, the American Medical Association (AMA), the country's largest physician’s group, adopted a formal policy calling gun violence "a public health crisis" (Brady).

### **Gun Harms:**

#### Money. Societal Costs and Cyclical Violence:

In 2010 alone, 36,000 victims of firearm assaults visited the emergency room, and 25,000 were admitted to the hospital — coming to a total cost of \$630 million in medical treatment. The majority of that price tag — or 52 percent — was charged to taxpayers through publicly funded health insurance, and 28 percent was billed to people who lacked health insurance (Brady).

For gun-violence survivors on the road to recovery, the monetary costs are high. In 2010, inpatient hospital stays for firearm assault cost \$14,000 more than the average stay...But the costs victims face extend far beyond medical treatment...They can’t pay rent, they can’t pay utility bills, phones . . . there’s a lot

of immediate financial things that can be impacted negatively because of it.” (Beiler).

Citizens who live in poverty were associated with a 27 percent higher rate of gun homicides (Noonan). These low-income areas result in families and neighborhoods being torn apart. When the streets are unsafe, kids don't play outside or at the park. They don't walk to the library or do other activities that help them grow and stimulate their minds. “Your neighborhood [is] supposed to be safe for you to go out and play,”...“But now, you know, with all this gun violence, parents [are] scared to let them play . . . kids can't be kids anymore” (Bieler). Furthermore, the local schools won't attract skilled teachers and there will be a lack of quality childcare options. Stores and other services won't stay in the area, thus limiting available jobs. Homeownership goes down, housing prices are unstable, and lenders are less likely to loan money in violent neighborhoods.

A 2017 report by the Urban Institute says, “as a result, gun violence hurts a community's housing prices and drives residents to relocate from or avoid moving to affected neighborhoods” (Brady). “Gun violence is estimated to cost the American economy at least \$229 billion every year...In addition to the medical costs of a shooting, indirect expenses take the form of impact on victims' quality of life and victims' lost wages” (Brady).

The indirect costs to humans, especially minorities, women, and children are difficult to quantify. The cycle of violence becomes ingrained and impacts on child development disproportionately impact the poor. When children are not taught how to handle anger and other negative emotions, they will repeat what they see and the cycle will continue (Collins). Teens report that “42 percent...having seen someone shot or knifed and 22 percent...having seen someone killed” (Bieler). Kyleanne Hunter, vice president for programs at the Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence, contended:

We hear about inequality often, whether it's in political debates or in socioeconomic discussions. But to see in black and white that the greater the inequality that exists, the greater likelihood that you're going to get shot, that's really stark. Inequality isn't just about making money or not making money; it's really about whether you're going to survive (Noonan).

Individuals who grow up worried about gun violence, or hearing about gun violence, often purchase guns for self-defense. These guns often become status symbols and embolden the owner. “Research suggests that youth who are exposed to gun violence—the same group likely to arm themselves—are also more likely to resort to

violence” (Beiler). When violence erupts, groups or individuals often resort to retaliation and the cycle continues. Unfortunately, in the act of retaliation, innocent people are hurt. “Retaliatory shootings sometimes target relatives of the original shooters, leaving innocent family members caught in the crossfire. In this way, gun violence can affect communities far beyond one original incident” (Beiler).

“Gun injuries and exposure to gun violence are often triggers for PTSD, and it’s not uncommon for sufferers to self-medicate with drugs or alcohol. This coping strategy imposes a variety of new health risks including, most tragically, increased risk of suicide” (Beiler).

#### Race, Domestic Violence, Suicide, and Murder:

Young men—particularly young African Americans—disproportionately go to the hospital for gun-violence assaults, but the concentration of violence is even tighter than broad demographics suggest. In one African American community in Chicago, 41 percent of all homicides were concentrated in a social network consisting of less than 4 percent of the population. However, gun violence is an issue that extends beyond particular neighborhoods: domestic violence, firearm accidents, and injuries from stray bullets can affect Americans from every neighborhood and all walks of life. (Beiler).

6 in 10 blacks, (57%) compared with 43% of whites and 42% of Hispanics, personally know someone who has been shot, accidentally or on purpose, (Pew Research Center). “Roughly a third of blacks (32%) say someone has used a gun to threaten or intimidate them or their family, compared with 20% of whites. About a quarter of Hispanics (24%) say this has happened to them or their family members” (Pew Research Center).

Women are often targets of gun violence through domestic violence. Here are some startling stats:

“Approximately 4.5 million American women alive today have been threatened by intimate partners with firearms. One million have actually been shot or shot at by their abusers” (Sorenson).

“35% of all women killed by men are killed by intimate partners with guns” (Violence Policy Center).

“Women in the US are 11 times more likely to be murdered with a gun than in other high-income nations” (Mayors Against Illegal Guns).

“Women killed by their partners are more likely to be murdered with a firearm than by all other means combined, and the presence of a gun in domestic violence situations can increase the risk of homicide for women by as much as 500 percent” (Mervosh).

“Black women in the U.S. are twice as likely as white women to be fatally shot by an intimate partner, gun control advocates say, and young black women are almost three times more likely to be shot and killed by an intimate partner than white women in the same age group” (Carlisle).

A study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine examined the increase in gun ownership from 1990 to 2016, the results are startling. While this study did not find an increase in guns used for mass shootings, guns instead were associated with an increase in domestic violence.

(The study) found that a higher rate of firearm ownership is associated with a higher rate of domestic violence homicide...that means that women, who make up most victims of domestic homicide, are among those most at risk...It is women...who are bearing the burden of this increased gun ownership (Mervosh).

According to the Harvard Public School of Health, gun ownership kills in other ways too, including suicide. While only one in 45 suicide attempts end in death, those that do are usually successful when they have a lethal weapon available, including a firearm. “Suicides outnumber homicides almost two to one” (Harvard). The study further explains that in states where gun ownership is higher, so is the suicide by gun rate, and states where there is less gun ownership, there are fewer suicides. Directly reducing access to guns will save lives. Studies show that most attempters act on impulse, in moments of panic or despair. Once the acute feelings ease, 90 percent do not go on to die by suicide (Harvard).

The majority of gun deaths are self-inflicted. The easy availability of firearms to those in distress makes suicide attempts far more likely to result in death... Most people who attempt suicide without a gun survive in both the short and long term— 90% of survivors do not die by suicide. But those who reach for a gun rarely have a second chance (Gifford).

Children are impacted by guns through domestic violence, suicide, and murder.

A 2017 study found that the majority—85 percent—of children 12 or younger who were shot to death from 2003 to 2013 were killed in a home. Roughly four in 10 kids aged 13 to 17 who were killed with a gun also died in a home; another four

in 10 were killed in the streets. Meanwhile, nearly two in three of the country's gun deaths (of all ages) are the result of suicide, according to a FiveThirtyEight analysis of federal data. The remaining third are homicides, the analysis notes, and public mass shootings make up less than 1 percent of firearm fatalities, according to separate reporting by The New York Times (Wong).

While schools are generally safe places, there has been an increase in school shootings, given the amount of press that they receive (Wong). Guns are used to terrorize schools. "According to a 2018 study by the Pew Research Center, the majority of U.S. teens fear a shooting could happen at their school" (Brady). "Since the Columbine shooting in 1999, at least 233,000 kids across 243 schools have been exposed to gun violence during school hours, (Beckett). The Guardian reported in 2019 that,

A gun is fired on a school campus in America nearly twice a week. Suicide, homicides, a police shooting, attacks on students by other students: more than once a month this past year, gunfire on American school and university campuses has turned deadly.

The article further explains that once again race is a factor,

As with other kinds of gun violence in America, students of color, and black students, in particular, were disproportionately affected...black students make up only 15% of the school population for K-12 schools, yet represented 24% of student victims in instances of gunfire on school grounds (Beckett).

Guns kill at home, in neighborhoods, at school and more mass shootings are occurring daily. In 2019 there were more mass shootings than there were days. Mass shootings are defined as four or more individuals being shot, not including the shooter. Mass murder occurs when 4 or more individuals are killed, again not including the shooter (Silverstein).

There were more mass shootings across the U.S. in 2019 than there were days in the year... 2019 had the highest number of mass shootings in any year since the research group started keeping track. By the end of 2019, there were 417 mass shootings in the U.S., according to data from the nonprofit Gun Violence Archive (GVA), which tracks every mass shooting in the country. Thirty-one of those shootings were mass murders (Silverstein).

**Proposed Resolutions.** The resolutions are listed from most broad with the most amount of ground to topics more limited in scope. The first two topics are bi-directional, but could be very interesting.

- 1) Resolved: The United State Federal Government should substantially change domestic private firearm regulations in the United States.
- 2) Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform domestic private firearm regulations in the United States.
- 3) Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase regulation of personal firearm ownership in the United States.
- 4) Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase the regulation of private ownership of firearms in the United States.
- 5) Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its regulation of personal firearm sales in the United States.
- 6) Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially limit access to personal firearms in the United States.

### **Definitions:**

**Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Bureau:** Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Bureau is a unique law enforcement agency in the United States Department of Justice and is responsible for the protection of the communities from violent criminals, criminal organizations, the illegal use and trafficking of firearms, the illegal use and storage of explosives, acts of arson and bombings, acts of terrorism, and the illegal diversion of alcohol and tobacco products. The Strategic Plan of the Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Bureau, to address these challenges is based on long-term legislative mission mandates, customer and stakeholder input, and Presidential and Departmental priorities. US Legal. Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives Bureau Law and Legal Definition.

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/a/alcohol-tobacco-firearms-and-explosives-bureau/>

**Ammunition, Armor Piercing Ammunition:** The term “ammunition” means ammunition or cartridge cases, primers, bullets, or propellant powder designed for use in any firearm.



(B)The term “armor piercing ammunition” means—

(i)a projectile or projectile core which may be used in a handgun and which is constructed entirely (excluding the presence of traces of other substances) from one or a combination of tungsten alloys, steel, iron, brass, bronze, beryllium copper, or depleted uranium; or

(ii)a full jacketed projectile larger than .22 caliber designed and intended for use in a handgun and whose jacket has a weight of more than 25 percent of the total weight of the projectile.

(C)The term “armor piercing ammunition” does not include shotgun shot required by Federal or State environmental or game regulations for hunting purposes, a frangible projectile designed for target shooting, a projectile which the Attorney General finds is primarily intended to be used for sporting purposes, or any other projectile or projectile core which the Attorney General finds is intended to be used for industrial purposes, including a charge used in an oil and gas well perforating device. U.S. Code § 921.

Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Antique Firearm:** The term “antique firearm” means—

(A)any firearm (including any firearm with a matchlock, flintlock, percussion cap, or similar type of ignition system) manufactured in or before 1898; or

(B)any replica of any firearm described in subparagraph (A) if such replica—

(i)is not designed or redesigned for using rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition, or

(ii)uses rimfire or conventional centerfire fixed ammunition which is no longer manufactured in the United States and which is not readily available in the ordinary channels of commercial trade; or

(C)any muzzle loading rifle, muzzle loading shotgun, or muzzle loading pistol, which is designed to use black powder, or a black powder substitute, and which cannot use fixed ammunition. For purposes of this subparagraph, the term “antique firearm” shall not include any weapon which incorporates a firearm frame or receiver, any firearm which is converted into a muzzle loading weapon, or any muzzle loading weapon which can be readily converted to fire fixed ammunition by replacing the barrel, bolt, breechblock, or any combination thereof. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Collector:** The term “collector” means any person who acquires, holds, or disposes of firearms as curios or relics, as the Attorney General shall by regulation define, and the term “licensed collector” means any such person licensed under the provisions of this

chapter. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute.  
<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Engaged in Business (Firearms):** The term "engaged in the business" means

(A) as applied to a manufacturer of firearms, a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to manufacturing firearms as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the sale or distribution of the firearms manufactured;

(B) as applied to a manufacturer of ammunition, a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to manufacturing ammunition as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the sale or distribution of the ammunition manufactured;

(C) as applied to a dealer in firearms, as defined in section 921(a)(11)(A) [18 USCS § 921(a)(11)(A)], a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to dealing in firearms as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the repetitive purchase and resale of firearms, but such term shall not include a person who makes occasional sales, exchanges, or purchases of firearms for the enhancement of a personal collection or for a hobby, or who sells all or part of his personal collection of firearms;

(D) as applied to a dealer in firearms, as defined in section 921(a)(11)(B) [18 USCS § 921(a)(11)(B)], a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to engaging in such activity as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit, but such term shall not include a person who makes occasional repairs of firearms, or who occasionally fits special barrels, stocks, or trigger mechanisms to firearms;

(E) as applied to an importer of firearms, a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to importing firearms as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the sale or distribution of the firearms imported; and

(F) as applied to an importer of ammunition, a person who devotes time, attention, and labor to importing ammunition as a regular course of trade or business with the principal objective of livelihood and profit through the sale or distribution of the ammunition imported.[18 USCS § 921]. US Legal. Engaged in Business (Firearms). Law and Legal Definition. <https://definitions.uslegal.com/e/engaged-in-business-firearms/>

**Firearm:** Under 26 USCA § 861 (a), firearms is defined as "'a shot gun or rifle having a barrel of less than eighteen inches in length, or any other weapon, except a pistol or revolver, from which a shot is discharged by an explosive if such weapon is capable of

being concealed on the person, or a machine gun, and includes a muffler or silencer for any firearm whether or not such firearm is included within the foregoing definition."

United States v. Adams, 11 F. Supp. 216, 217 (S.D. Fla. 1935). US Legal. Firearm Laws and Legal Definitions. <https://definitions.uslegal.com/f/firearms/>

The term “**firearm**” means (A) any weapon (including a starter gun) which will or is designed to or may readily be converted to expel a projectile by the action of an explosive; (B) the frame or receiver of any such weapon; (C) any firearm muffler or firearm silencer; or (D) any destructive device. Such term does not include an antique firearm. The term “destructive device” means—

(A) any explosive, incendiary, or poison gas—

(i) bomb,

(ii) grenade,

(iii) rocket having a propellant charge of more than four ounces,

(iv) missile having an explosive or incendiary charge of more than one-quarter ounce,

(v) mine, or

(vi) device similar to any of the devices described in the preceding clauses;

(B) any type of weapon (other than a shotgun or a shotgun shell which the Attorney General finds is generally recognized as particularly suitable for sporting purposes) by whatever name known which will, or which may be readily converted to, expel a projectile by the action of an explosive or other propellant, and which has any barrel with a bore of more than one-half inch in diameter; and

(C) any combination of parts either designed or intended for use in converting any device into any destructive device described in subparagraph (A) or (B) and from which a destructive device may be readily assembled.

The term “**destructive device**” shall not include any device which is neither designed nor redesigned for use as a weapon; any device, although originally designed for use as a weapon, which is redesigned for use as a signaling, pyrotechnic, line throwing, safety, or similar device; surplus ordnance sold, loaned, or given by the Secretary of the Army pursuant to the provisions of section 7684(2), 7685, or 7686 of title 10; or any other device which the Attorney General finds is not likely to be used as a weapon, is an antique, or is a rifle which the owner intends to use solely for sporting, recreational or cultural purposes. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute.

<https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Firearm Collector:** According to 18 USCS § 921 (13) firearms collector means “any person who acquires, holds, or disposes of firearms as curios or relics, as the Attorney General shall by regulation define, and the term “licensed collector” means any such person licensed under the provisions of this chapter [18 USCS §§ 921 et seq.].USLegal.

Firearms Collector Law and Legal Definition.

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/f/firearms-collector/>

**Firearms Dealer:** According to 18 USCS § 921(11) firearms dealer means “(A) any person engaged in the business of selling firearms at wholesale or retail, (B) any person engaged in the business of repairing firearms or of making or fitting special barrels, stocks, or trigger mechanisms to firearms, or (C) any person who is a pawnbroker.” US Legal. Firearms Dealer and Legal Definitions.

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/f/firearms-dealer/>

The term “**dealer**” means (A) any person engaged in the business of selling firearms at wholesale or retail, (B) any person engaged in the business of repairing firearms or of making or fitting special barrels, stocks, or trigger mechanisms to firearms, or (C) any person who is a pawnbroker. The term “licensed dealer” means any dealer who is licensed under the provisions of this chapter. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Firearms Manufacturer:** According to 18 USCS § 921 (10) firearms manufacturer means “any person engaged in the business of manufacturing firearms or ammunition for purposes of sale or distribution; and the term "licensed manufacturer" means any such person licensed under the provisions of this chapter [18 USCS §§ 921 et seq.].”US Legal. Firearms Manufacturer Law and Legal Definitions.

<https://definitions.uslegal.com/f/firearms-manufacturer/>

The term “manufacturer” means any person engaged in the business of manufacturing firearms or ammunition for purposes of sale or distribution; and the term “licensed manufacturer” means any such person licensed under the provisions of this chapter. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Firearm Silencer:** The terms "firearm silencer" and "firearm muffler" mean any device for silencing, muffling, or diminishing the report of a portable firearm, including any combination of parts, designed or redesigned, and intended for use in assembling or fabricating a firearm silencer or firearm muffler, and any part intended only for use in such assembly or fabrication.[18 USCS § 921]. US Legal. Firearm Silencer Law and Legal Definition. <https://definitions.uslegal.com/f/firearm-silencer/>

**Importer:** The term “importer” means any person engaged in the business of importing or bringing firearms or ammunition into the United States for purposes of sale or

distribution; and the term “licensed importer” means any such person licensed under the provisions of this chapter. U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Interstate:** The term “interstate or foreign commerce” includes commerce between any place in a State and any place outside of that State, or within any possession of the United States (not including the Canal Zone) or the District of Columbia, but such term does not include commerce between places within the same State but through any place outside of that State. The term “State” includes the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the possessions of the United States (not including the Canal Zone). U.S. Code § 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/18/921>

**Person:** The term “person” and the term “whoever” include any individual, corporation, company, association, firm, partnership, society, or joint stock company. U.S. Code 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/>

**Semiautomatic Rifle:** The term “semiautomatic rifle” means any repeating rifle which utilizes a portion of the energy of a firing cartridge to extract the fired cartridge case and chamber the next round, and which requires a separate pull of the trigger to fire each cartridge. U.S. Code 921. Cornell Law School. Legal Information Institute. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/>

**Affirmative Ground:** Affirmative teams will have access to a wide variety of unique affirmatives to run which can focus on hindering the sale of firearms, regulation of who can buy firearms, regulation of which firearms to sell, combating new markets of firearms that are in legal limbo and illegal markets, and regulating the storage and usage of personal firearms.

Affirmative teams can propose plans such as increasing and imposing sin taxes on firearms and ammunition to further discourage people from buying more firearms and even if they are purchased the collective taxes gained from the firearms are directed towards issues that can be formulated into the affirmative’s advantages and use the success of tobacco sin taxes as ground for solvency.

Regulating who can own firearms types of plans can range from reforming and mandating rigorous background checks, expanding and reforming Red Flag laws, reforming Stand Your Ground laws, and Concealed-Carry laws. These types of affirmatives can be typically structured as soft left types of affirmatives of preventing and

combating domestic abuse, preventing mass shootings, and white supremacists/alt-right vigilantes murdering people of color.

Regulating specific types of weapons can mean bans on assault weapons or large-capacity ammunition magazines. These affirmatives can function as methods to stop the smuggling of weapons which then are abused by certain organizations that have mass effects on regional economies and states.

Affirmatives can also be constructed to combat the illegal markets of firearms and modern or markets of firearms with extremely lax regulations. Affirmatives can construct plans to create federal level buybacks to remove illegal and untraceable guns. Affirmatives can develop proposals to require liability insurance for firearms to discourage the accumulation of arsenals and provide for victim compensation. Of course, financial requirements may raise issues of discrimination and the success of past buyback programs is still up for debate, making clash on case during these debates plentiful. Affirmative cases can also be formulated to either ban or regulate self-constructed untraceable firearms without any serial numbers known as Ghost guns. Finally, affirmative teams can argue for the regulation or ban of the design or creation of 3D printed firearms.

### **Negative Ground:**

**DISADVANTAGES:** Negative teams will have access to integral disadvantage ground readily able to link to any affirmative. Traditional Politics DA's will have solid links through the extremely partisan nature of gun control. The scenario of these disadvantages can take on the form of either extreme congressional infighting leading to other important bills not passing in a timely matter or that for the affirmative to pass certain concessions would be required of certain members of political parties allowing potentially harmful policies to be passed. An illegal market fill-in DA can function as a solvency takeout, case turn, or a proper disadvantage. A terminal solvency deficit argument can be made by highlighting the fact that illegal markets could provide guns to those the affirmative targets effectively circumventing the plan. The case turn would function that the illegal suppliers would have no regulation or checks on the individuals obtaining the weapons effectively making the affirmative's harm worse. Illegal market filling in would also make organized crime structurally more powerful which can be linked to terminal level impacts. The federalism disadvantage could also provide an effective avenue for negative teams by arguing that gun control falls under the jurisdiction of individual states, and that federal overreach can affect other initiatives dependent on the federal and state divide.

**KRITIKS:** Negative teams will have access to key kritik ground and will be able to link to the wide array of different affirmatives on the topic by utilizing links and root cause claims to analyze gun control reform as methods to see who is justified in owning and controlling the means of violence in society. Identity politics teams can emphasize the harms of removing guns from oppressed folk who can typically use them to defend themselves against others and systems that wish to harm them. Structuralist teams can easily argue that the affirmative's plan will inevitably result in serial policy failures by externalizing the harms of the affirmative to guns rather than structures and ideologies that created them in the first place which only functions to shift attention away from issues against these systems. Postmodern teams can question the truth claims of the affirmative and the harms and failures of laws and actions.

Sample evidence for generic kritiks

1) Race

**Gun control historically is rooted in keeping arms out of black hands.**

**Mock 19** (Brentin Mock is a reporter for CityLab “Will Pittsburgh’s Gun Control Laws Get More Black People Killed”

<https://www.citylab.com/equity/2019/03/gun-control-laws-pittsburgh-racial-equity-ending-violence/584458/> 03/11/19).

By the end of 1975, the military conflict in Vietnam had ended and many black veterans returned to a Washington, D.C. that had been dubbed “Chocolate City” by the funk band Parliament. The label referenced D.C.’s confluence of a booming black population, an emerging black political leadership, and a growing quorum of successful black businesses. However, there had also been a (then) record 407 killings the year prior, with 60 percent of those attributed to guns, and the majority of the victims African Americans. These murder trends had been steadily building up since the early 1960s, leading Washington Post reporter Carl Bernstein to call D.C. “Dodge City” in a news story headline. There was enough outrage about the rising gun violence that the city council was able to pass the “Firearms Control Regulations Act of 1975,” which made it illegal for residents to carry or purchase handguns. Anyone who possessed a handgun had to register it with the District and keep it “unloaded and disassembled” in their homes. It was, at the time, considered one of the most stringent gun control laws in the U.S. If the driving force behind the bill, city council member John Wilson, had it his way, it would have been even stricter, requiring every resident who owned a gun to turn them into the city or face prison time. In December 2018, Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto and city council members Corey O’Connor and Erika Strassburger proposed a far more lenient package of gun control ordinances: People within Pittsburgh city limits could keep their guns, but no assault weapons could be carried in public. The bills also prohibit the sale or purchase of assault weapons and ammunition, but there are no gun stores in Pittsburgh. The last one, Braverman Arms Company, closed in December 2017. “If it’s proposing to disarm black people, no, not in the age of Trump, and Charlottesville.” Like the 1975 D.C. gun law,



Pittsburgh's are in response to urban gun violence. Specifically, they are the gauntlet that city leaders promised after anti-Semite and [white nationalist](#) Robert Bowers used three Glock .357 handguns and an assault rifle to kill 11 people at the [Tree of Life synagogue in the Jewish neighborhood of Squirrel Hill](#). However, the sponsors of the ordinances say that the [ordinances are also meant to address gun violence throughout the city, including in neighborhoods where African Americans are more frequently the homicide victims](#). Yet, there is an unresolved tension amongst some African Americans that outlawing guns could leave them more vulnerable to both racist and state-sanctioned violence while giving police yet another pretext for arresting and locking up young black people. That outcome is not entirely out of the question for a city where young African Americans have been [arrested and imprisoned just for rapping about guns](#). Such concerns were also present back in 1970s "Chocolate/Dodge City" D.C. days. Many [black organizations and leaders opposed the D.C. gun laws out of fear that they could further criminalize their communities](#). And they were right to be concerned: In 1993, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that [African Americans were arrested at five times the rate of whites for gun possession, despite white men owning guns at much higher rates](#). However, the handgun ban in D.C. appeared to be serving its essential purpose: One study found that the gun-control law ["coincided with an abrupt decline"](#) in gun-related homicides and suicides. As Pittsburgh attempts to join the [growing surge of cities and states](#) placing new restrictions on gun handling, one major thing it will have to figure out is how to create laws that will take more illegal guns off the streets and save more lives, [while ensuring that black people don't become criminalized collateral damage in the process](#). "You could do a house-by-house round up, potentially under the law, of certain neighborhoods," says Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto. "That isn't the way that we intended and that's certainly not what we will do through the administration of it. It will be used as a deterrent in order to keep guns from proliferating in all of our neighborhoods, and it will be used as a way to help those who are going through and struggling with a difficult time in their lives, but it will not be used in a way that will target specific zones or neighborhoods." The best way to follow issues you care about. Whether Pittsburgh can use the ordinances at all is still in question. D.C.'s handgun ban was [struck down in 2008](#) by the U.S. Supreme Court in the case D.C. vs Heller. Five justices had been convinced that [the Second Amendment bestowed an unequivocal right](#) for an individual to keep a loaded gun in their house. Since then [several additional federal court rulings have made it more difficult for states and cities to regulate gun activity](#). Pittsburgh leaders are [pushing their ordinances through despite](#) overbearing legal precedents and [threats from the county's district attorney that he might have to criminalize the mayor and city council members](#) if they pass them. The [bills themselves don't come up for a vote until later this month, but when they were first introduced in December, there was little formal discussion about whether the gun control ordinances would actually make black communities safer, or if it would make them more heavily targeted for police harassment](#). In the months since, there have been several public hearings where African Americans have voiced concerns about racial equity issues in the bills. Activist Khalid Raheem of the New Afrikan Independence Party told the Public Source that [gun control legislation doesn't address all of the systemic failures](#) of public institutions that lead to gun violence. "If it's proposing to disarm black people, no, not in the age of Trump, and [Charlottesville](#)," says Claude "Paradise" Gray, an activist who worked to stem violence in New York City in the 1980s and 1990s through organizations such as [Blackwatch](#). He is also co-founder of [1Hood Media](#), a Pittsburgh-based social justice organization. "We need to learn how to be safe with guns. I think



every black child should be taught gun safety and gun control, but the gun control I want black people to learn is how to control your gun and how to control yourself.” There is a long black history of gun control opposition—or at least, skepticism—that supports this viewpoint. Consider that in the late 1960’s after Martin Luther King was killed, it wasn’t the NRA that was gung-ho on gun rights like it is today—it was black racial justice organizations that had adopted and arguably popularized the campaign for every individual’s right to bear arms. When the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense marched on the California capitol building with rifles and shotguns in 1967, it was to protest a bill introduced by a Republican to prohibit carrying loaded weapons in cities—which the NRA supported. “The Black Panther party for self-defense calls upon the American people in general and the black people in particular to take careful note of the racist California Legislature which is considering legislation aimed at keeping the black people disarmed and powerless at the very same time that racist police agencies throughout the country are intensifying the terror, brutality, murder and repression of black people,” said Black Panther leader Bobby Seale that day. The legislature passed and then-Governor Ronald Reagan signed the gun control bill into law several days after the demonstration. Before the Black Panthers took up the mantle, black activists such as Malcolm X, Fannie Lou Hamer, and Julian Bond had openly advocated for the right for black people to defend themselves with guns, and even Martin Luther King was packing for a minute. Black gun clubs were spread across the South to defend black families against the Ku Klux Klan and similar white supremacist outfits. In 1919, a band of black war veterans in D.C. got engaged in full-armed combat with a white mob that was planning to attack their neighborhood. That race riot had not been forgotten by black activists in 1970s D.C. who were on the frontlines of fighting police violence, many of whom, themselves, had grown up fighting off violent racists throughout the Jim Crow South. As James Forman Jr. wrote in his book Locking Up Our Own, an organization called the Black United Front fought the proposed 1975 handgun ban from the outside while D.C. city council member Douglas Moore fought it from inside government lines. Their main concern was that white areas outside of D.C. had no corresponding gun control laws in place, which meant African Americans within the district would be left open to gun violence committed by people who lived outside of it. This sentiment was shared in other cities like Detroit where Mayor Coleman Young once said, “I’ll be damned if I let them collect guns in the city of Detroit while we’re surrounded by hostile suburbs and the whole rest of the state.” Robert Bowers, the gunman in the Tree of Life Shootings, lived in the Baldwin Borough about 30 miles south of Pittsburgh. While that shooting targeted Jewish worshippers, a guy like Bowers could have just as easily attacked a black church, as Dylann Roof did in South Carolina in 2015. The Southern Poverty Law Center lists 36 hate groups in Pennsylvania, several of which are located near Pittsburgh, including a white nationalist group called the American Freedom Union. This past January, hundreds of mostly white men and women stormed Pittsburgh’s City Hall building, many of them brandishing military-grade firearms, to protest the city’s proposed gun control ordinances. It was a photo-negative picture of what the Black Panthers did in 1967 except this time the NRA is on the gun rights demonstrators’ side. Should Pittsburgh fail to achieve the same legislative outcome that California achieved after armed black activists stood their ground on this issue 52 years ago, it will be difficult to claim that racism doesn’t play a role in the gun debate. \*\*\*\*\*  
There were 58 homicides in Pittsburgh in 2017. Of those, 76 percent were African American.

Eight were white. Some have wondered why the city doesn't respond with the same urgency when black people are killed.

## 2) Feminism

**The 1ac recreates a binary of either the disarmed feminized victim or armed masculine hero ignoring the complex nature of gender and guns extending beyond the gun/no gun binary**

Jennifer D. **Carlston** 03/30/2014 (“From Gun Politics to Self-Defense Politics: A Feminist Critique of the Great Gun Debate” by Jennifer Carlston who is an Associate Professor of Sociology and Government & Public Policy at the University of Arizona, where they courses about guns, criminal justice, law and politics and gender. In Violence Against Women pg. 375-376).

American women may find themselves caught in a political bind prefigured by the tension between gun rights and gun control politics. Practically and politically, women are often asked to choose between two options—self-protection with a gun or no protection at all. From a feminist perspective, both of these positions are problematic because neither adequately acknowledges the array of social conditions in which women may find that they need to defend themselves and the range of self-defense options that exceed the gun/no gun binary. Women's varying relationships with guns are more complex than both the gun rights and gun control lobbies often acknowledge. But the irony is that in remaining silent about self-defense, the gun control lobby has actually left the pro-gun contingent with ample space to court women and defines self-defense on their terms. The NRA has done far more than the Brady Campaign to make this shift possible; though their political rhetoric focuses on gun rights, they have put into place some infrastructure to train and educate people about self-defense beyond guns. This includes their Refuse to be a Victim program, which is a non-firearms self-defense course, as well as the Eddie Eagle program, another weapons-free, gun safety course for children. In many ways, the NRA does provide more to women looking to defend themselves than any other national political organization. It is, after all, the nation's largest, most well-known self-defense training organization. That the Brady Campaign has allocated this entirely to the NRA explains in part why gun control advocates are unable to gain much ground in public debate. The gun control lobby has so fetishized the gun that it has forgotten what supposedly drives its political agenda: safety from violence. A move from gun politics to self-defense politics would constitute an important feminist shift. By acknowledging a range of self-defense options, not limited to but including armed self-defense, feminists can help break down the binary between disarmed, feminized victim and armed, masculine hero. Broadening the public debate from the issue of guns to that of self-defense would likely provide women with more accessible tools of self-protection without binding them to either carry guns or be defenseless.

## 3) Capitalism

**The harms of the 1ac are grounded in capitalism and perpetuate the system through propagating the State apparatuses' monopoly on violence by**

## disarming the working class which only functions to strip them of their revolutionary potential.

**Socialist Appeal** June 4, 13 (The Socialist Appeal is a Marxian organization under the International Marxist Tendency. "USA: Gun Control and Class Struggle" @ <https://www.marxist.com/gun-control-and-class-struggle.htm>).

The recent attacks in Colorado, Connecticut, Boston, and across the country have shocked everyone. As has been previously explained in the pages of Socialist Appeal, these repeated incidents of violence signify the decay of American capitalism. The decline of capitalism offers no future for today's youth, only distractions, desperation, and escapism. High unemployment, debt, lack of health care facilities, alienation, and a widespread feeling of insecurity is enough to push some over the edge. Only by changing society to one which will give everyone hope of a better future, only by engaging people in a way that they will want to live their lives rather than escape from them, can we put an end to these horrible crimes. However, many capitalist politicians are telling us that there is a quick and easy solution: stricter gun control laws. This "solution" flies in the face of actual experience. Alcoholism is as prevalent and intractable a problem today as it was in the 1920s. In January 1920, the 18th Amendment was put into effect, prohibiting the production and sale of alcohol. The argument was put forward that by banning alcohol, alcoholism would fade away. Nothing of the kind happened. Prohibition strengthened organized crime, giving criminal gangs a monopoly over all aspects of the production and distribution of alcohol, and alcoholism continued as before. Today, states with tough gun control laws like New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, and California are still among those that experience the most violent crime involving firearms. Illegal guns are most commonly acquired from other states, by individuals who can legally purchase firearms, and from the illegal sale of guns by licensed dealers. Although this seems like an argument to broaden the strict gun laws to the federal level, there is no reason to assume firearms won't make their way into the hands of those with malicious intent. There is already an underground market for firearms, and like the prohibition of alcohol in the 1920s, stricter gun control laws would only bolster this lucrative black market. There are already designs on the internet that would allow someone to use a 3D printer to produce a fully functioning handgun out of plastic. And one look at the Mexican drug cartels, which are often better armed than the police and army, shows how ineffective efforts to curb access to guns have been (or the illicit drugs they trade in, for that matter). The "right to bear arms" is a right that has been championed perhaps more in the U.S. than in any other country in the world. The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, along with the other nine Amendments that make up the "Bill of Rights," were a concession on the part of the early American ruling class, in order to pass the less democratic aspects of the constitution such as the creation of the Senate and Supreme Court. At the time of the signing of the Constitution, despite the reining in of the revolutionary energy of the masses by the ruling class, the capitalist system was still young and historically progressive. A strong state apparatus had not yet been developed. The ruling class did not yet need one, as the proletariat had not yet developed into a powerful and massive force constituting the vast majority of society, as is the case today. It could depend on geography and local armed militias for national defense and to put down local uprisings, supplemented by a small standing army, and above all, a strong navy. But things have changed in the United States. The slogan "we are the 99%" is a close approximation to the actual class balance of forces today, with a tiny minority of capitalists on one side, and a mass

of workers on the other. The working class has tremendous potential power in its hands—the ability to bring production and society as a whole to a grinding halt. With the capitalist crisis deepening, the ruling class can no longer rely on ideology or a few concessions to keep class peace. In the face of such a threat, the capitalists have developed an imposing state apparatus in order to maintain their rule. Frederick Engels, in his classic work *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, explains the role of the state: “The state is therefore by no means a power imposed on society from without... Rather, it is a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction and is cleft into irreconcilable antagonisms which it is powerless to exorcise. But in order that these antagonisms, classes with conflicting economic interests, shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, apparently standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of ‘order’; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state.” When capitalist politicians call for “gun control,” they are really saying that the working class majority should give more power to the bourgeois state in determining who should have access to arms. The capitalist class would breathe a sigh of relief at the complete disarmament of the working class. The capitalist state would then have a complete monopoly of arms, on top of its monopoly of the courts, prisons, police, spy agencies, military, etc. Therefore, from the point of view of the capitalist class, the real essence of “gun control” is not the disarming of criminal elements or unstable individuals—who would still have access to guns through illegal channels—it is the disarming of the working class on the whole. We have seen how this has been used in the past. When the Black Panthers had arms for self-defense, the bourgeois state violently attacked them. Far-right groups, on the other hand, are armed to the teeth and the state typically looks the other way. The United States has a long history of gun violence on the part of the state against immigrants, blacks, and against the working class on the whole, especially when they dare to struggle. Nearly every major labor battle in the U.S. has been marked with violent attacks by the state against the striking workers. As one boss infamously put it, his striking workers needed to be “shot back to work.” Against this overwhelming force of the capitalist state, the working class must defend its basic democratic right to defend itself and its organizations, including its right to access arms. There are no quick fixes to the problem of gun violence, and no solutions within the limits of capitalism, a system based on the organized exploitation and violence of one class against another. Only the organized and united working class can offer a solution to the violence of class society, whether it be perpetrated by the capitalist state when breaking a strike, or by unstable and alienated individuals on a killing rampage. The labor movement, by organizing a political party of its own, could begin to deal with the ills of our society—but only if that party is armed with a socialist program. Corporations like Colt and Smith & Wesson make huge profits from the sale of weapons. A workers’ government would nationalize the arms industry and place it under democratic workers’ control. Under a workers’ government, the working class would democratically organize itself to protect society. As socialism spreads worldwide, and relations between nations are increasingly based on solidarity, not exploitation, the need for national defense and the military will fade away, along with national borders themselves. Here at home, the need for a special police force standing above society, with special powers and privileges, would likewise disappear. With the immense wealth and resources of our society geared towards providing jobs and raising everyone’s standard of living, we could eliminate the

instability, alienation, and inhuman conditions of capitalism that give rise to the senseless violence that plagues our society.

#### 4) Settler Colonialism

**The 1ac’s reliance on the tropes and narratives of liberal democracy for gun control reform only shifts who has the monopoly on the means of violence which only strengthens the settler state and disarms marginalized folk who need firearms to protect themselves.**

Olivia **Baker** 06/18/2018 (“Guns Don’t Kill People, Settlers Do: The Second Amendment and the Myth of Defense” by Olivia Baker who is a PhD candidate at the University of New Mexico. His research and teaching focuses on the intersecting histories of settler colonialism, racial capitalism, white supremacy, and class inequality in American literature and culture. Here’s the link

<https://www.pyriscence.ca/home/2018/6/18/guns-dont-kill-people-settlers-do-the-second-amendment-and-the-myth-of-defense>).

It was clear he wanted me to understand that he had guns to defend against, in his eyes, Black people coming to loot his home in the event of a “societal collapse,” and that he’d be ready with an arsenal of firepower to repel them. That is, gun ownership for him was about using violence to defend his property-as-whiteness from racialized populations whom he recognized were deliberately excluded from the formal economy and corralled in inner-city ghettos. His guns were the lynchpin for maintaining this line between the “good guys” like himself—the productive worker, the property holder, the respectable law-abiding citizen—and a zombified surplus population marked for death. This metaphor is telling: of all the firearms he showed me that day, he was most proud of some recently purchased specialty ammunition with the tagline: “Supply yourself for the Zombie Apocalypse.” Guns and zombie rounds animated the fantasy of defending whiteness by mowing down a racialized surplus humanity on the gravel roads of rural Missouri. I heard this fantasy many times growing up in such hyper-masculine spaces, in which it is taught that the man of the house has to be prepared to defend his home(stead) from perceived criminal (racial) threats and maintain order in his home. True men are providers and protectors; anything less, and you’re an emasculated loser. In this way, the property holder was simply being a good patriot and male leader by preparing for the moment when, in his eyes, he would use guns in self-defense against the racialized poor. From this perspective, all the patriots out there that day sharpening their firearm skills claimed to be doing so for reasons of self-defense. Each saw himself as a Josey Wales, John Wayne, or Dirty Harry, or (more recently) an American Sniper or Rick Grimes, neutralizing racialized criminal threats encountered on the Indian frontier or spilling out from the Black ghetto. People will often say hunting is the reason they own firearms, but the underlying structural reason, whether acknowledged or not, has more to do with white settler fears of racial rebellion. Indeed, the NRA—the most politically influential gun organization—isn’t powerful because it has a lot of money to spend, but rather because it markets gun ownership as a means of reinforcing white settler sovereignty. Gun ownership is about staving off the loss of the white settler’s power, honor, and privilege, which the global economy no longer respects and the state, it is believed, tramples in its accommodating of the marginalized. Despite the rhetoric, gun ownership has never been

about hunting or defending democracy against authoritarianism, which white settlers are ready to embrace if it maintains their power. In other words, the fear of the dispossessed challenging their subjugation drives gun ownership and gun culture among white settlers in the United States—not hunting, a tyrannical government, or, as I argue, reasons of self-defense. American gun ownership has its structural roots in the desire to uphold and reproduce colonial and racial hierarchies and to maintain the power and benefits received from such hierarchies, putting guns in the hands of white settlers with fantasies of nostalgic redemption through violence. Make America Great Again, indeed. At its core, then, gun ownership for white settlers is about using tools of violence to defend the political category of white settler sovereignty, which is to say, using guns to harm, kill, or terrorize colonized and racialized people in order to keep them unfree—as their freedom means the dissolution of these categories of power and honor. Historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz’s recent book *Loaded* (2018) argues that the history of the Second Amendment and the right to bear arms was fundamentally the state-granted right of settlers to arm their households and form voluntary militias in order to seize Native land and/or police enslaved Black people. Gun ownership today maintains what Dunbar-Ortiz contends was the founding vision of the settler state to distribute its monopoly of violence to its settler-citizens in order to carry out campaigns of dispossession and secure white property against threats of rebellion: [...] Building on Dunbar-Ortiz’s analysis of the Second Amendment, I want to suggest that we understand gun ownership as a material practice through which white settlers engage directly in the work of counterrevolutionary violence that consolidates and maintains U.S. liberal democracy. It is a way of strengthening settler democracy that promises empowerment and redemption. Firearms are the tools and symbols of a larger counterrevolutionary policing that binds settlers together despite contradictions of class in their mutual support of upholding colonial and racial hierarchies. Through gun ownership of today—what was, earlier, participation in militias—the white settler defends the state that in turn ensures his sovereignty and superiority. In this way, the settler state depends on deputizing its settler-citizens to be the police of dispossessed populations, just as the settler relies on the state upholding his rights of property, or his “pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness.” This is why gun ownership is seen as fundamental to liberal freedoms. The Second Amendment is upstream from the other amendments precisely because counterrevolutionary policing maintains the public order of civil society in which liberal freedoms can flourish. There are three conclusions, then, I would like to discuss that follow from the claim that Second Amendment-sponsored gun ownership in the United States is counterrevolutionary violence harmonizing intra-settler relations. The first is that self-defense belongs to the oppressed and never to the oppressor. From a structural perspective, there is no such thing as white settler self-defense. The second is that gun culture from the 1960s onward serves as an important site at which settlers organize politically across class and gender lines to protect whiteness in response to marginalized peoples’ demand for freedom and neoliberalism’s attack on labor. The third is that the practice of community self-defense among those targeted by colonial violence radically undermines the ideology of white victimization through which counterrevolutionary violence is legitimated. [...] For all the wrong reasons of preserving their power, such groups actually have a perceptive understanding of the Second Amendment as a law authorizing counterrevolutionary violence. For them, guns are not about hunting or even self-defense, but about the right to ensure colonial and racial rebellion is controlled and that state power is recaptured in ways that it abandons neoliberal multiculturalism for more direct forms of settler-colonial white-nationalist capitalism. Indeed, it is

not surprising that Oathkeepers and Three Percenters show up to police Black rebellions or put down antifascist counterdemonstrations. They see themselves as an extension of the police, the National Guard, and border patrol. Like the KKK of yore, these militias, filled with current and former police and military, believe they fulfill the original function of the state—under the Obama years seen as liberal and weak—in putting down racial rebellions. Gun culture, then, serves as a symbolic yet very material compensation for the state’s support of neoliberal multiculturalism and the dismantling of welfare capitalism. Just as credit is offered in place of decreased wages, gun culture supplies compensatory ammunition to bolster the value of whiteness in the face of deindustrialization, increased intra-settler inequality, and globalization’s attack on U.S. nationalism. Arming the Police, Arming White Supremacy It is important not to forget that support for counterrevolutionary violence extends far beyond patriots and right-wing gun culture. Liberals who call for gun regulation but fully support the police and military and their work of upholding mass incarceration at home and imperial violence abroad support the same structures of violence celebrated by the gun-nuts such liberals love to disparage and against whom they define their commitments to nonviolence. The difference is a choice between a monopoly of state violence in repressive state apparatuses or the distribution of state violence among individual settlers and citizen militias. In other words, patriots believe the violence should be democratized and liberals believe it should be concentrated in the hands of state institutions. While one wants to stand alongside the police and military, the other wants the bloody work to be accomplished without getting their hands dirty. Avowed and disavowed to varying degrees, both support counterrevolutionary violence to protect settler democracy. In this way, liberals, despite their pacifist posturing, are not any less supportive of colonial violence than their gun-nut counterparts because they call for a strengthening of the settler state and a disarming of the populace, which will only make marginalized people more vulnerable to killings and incarceration. This is a view that has the audacity and class privilege of asking marginalized people targeted by state violence, and its extended forms of vigilante violence, to appeal to the same state for protection. While patriots take up actual weapons to target marginalized people, liberals weaponize gun control policy to the same ends of putting people of color in body bags or cages. The only gun control that would reduce gun violence would be disarming the police, the military, domestic abusers, and anyone with ties to white nationalist and misogynist political groups, along with demilitarizing schools and campuses. Whether they are appealing to the Second Amendment or asking people to trust the authority of the police and military, white settlers on the Left or Right demonstrate that the violence they commit, fantasize about committing, or have no problem with the police and military committing for their protection is necessary for their redemptive vision of liberal democracy. It matters not if this vision is a return to when liberal democracy more forcefully upheld colonial and racial hierarchies, or some future point at which this violence and policing ensures genuine equality of opportunity for people believed to be formerly colonized and enslaved. Community Self-Defense While it may be easy to oppose right-wing white victimization and liberal support for state violence, it’s still very hard for many to accept the premise that marginalized peoples, those targeted by such violence, have the right to use any means necessary to defend themselves and their communities. Yet we have to see, as Malcolm X made very clear, that the only people who have the moral authority to lay claim to the use of force as a means of self-defense are the people targeted by colonial violence in first place. The struggle to get free, gain control over one’s life, and have a say in the governing of one’s community is always a struggle of self-defense rather than aggression or

provocation. The meanings of self-defense in settler society are purposely inverted to legitimate counterrevolutionary violence and to discredit the self-defense actions of communities struggling to get free. Robert Williams emphasized this point over and over again while organizing armed community self-defense to protect the Black community against KKK violence in Monroe, South Carolina in the 1960s. In *Negroes with Guns*, Williams explains: “The Afro-American militant is a ‘militant’ because he defends himself, his family, his home and his dignity. He does not introduce violence into a racist social system—the violence is already there and has always been there. It is precisely this unchallenged violence that allows a racist social system to perpetuate itself. When people say that they are opposed to Negroes ‘resorting to violence’ what they really mean is that they are opposed to Negroes defending themselves and challenging the exclusive monopoly of violence practiced by white racists.” When a relationship between people is asymmetrical, meaning it is structurally impossible to rectify or reconcile, the violence that defends this power imbalance appears legitimate while anything that would take power away from the oppressor or build power for the oppressed registers as illegitimate and irrational violence. With the same force, then, that we can acknowledge the illegitimacy of the notion of white settler self-defense, we should recognize the legitimacy of marginalized peoples’ right to self-defense. As theorist Chad Kautzer argues, “our understanding of self-defense must, therefore, account for the transformative power of self-defense for oppressed groups as well as the stabilizing effect of self-defense for oppressor groups.” What this looks like is, on the one hand, disempowering, delegitimizing, and disarming institutions of white settler violence such as the police, patriot, and other white-nationalist gun culture groups, and on the other, using a diversity of tactics to create and maintain community self-defense networks among marginalized communities. Community self-defense, as a theory and praxis, can help produce identities, relationships, and habits necessary not only to deter and prevent violence and build/protect power, but also to delegitimize the ideology of white victimization so crucial to white settlers’ use of violence to defend their power. This framework reveals who is fighting a war of counterrevolution and who is fighting a war of liberation, whose fight is legitimate and whose is illegitimate. In this way, community self-defense helps clear the way for matters of seeing where allegiances lie in a war that has been ongoing for over 500 years. For those picking up a gun to defend property that sits on stolen land and that has value through an economy built by and through stolen people, it becomes clear they are arming themselves to kill and die for colonialism and anti-Blackness. For those calling for peace between the oppressor and oppressed, community self-defense forces their hand, exposing where their allegiances actually lie: in support of colonial and racial violence. For those told that their struggle to exist, to be free, to control their own lands and bodies is irrational and illegitimate, they prove through community self-defense that it is irrational, let alone careless, to think that the structures of violence holding them captive or targeting them for elimination will be destroyed through peaceful negotiation and compromise.

## **COUNTERPLANS**

Negative teams will have access to agent counterplans to test who would be the best actor for the affirmative. This would include debates about the effectiveness of the courts or congress dealing with the affirmative and can lead to an understanding of judicial branch and legislative branch operate and interact with each other. Teams can



also argue whether the 50 states acting would be better than an overarching federal plan.

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Summary Report  
Gun Control  
Jennifer L. LeSieur  
Harman Singh  
Clackamas High School, Oregon

Resolved: The United State Federal Government should substantially change domestic private firearm regulations in the United States.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially reform domestic private firearm regulations in the United States.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase regulation of personal firearm ownership in the United States.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase the regulation of private ownership of firearms in the United States.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its regulation of personal firearm sales in the United States.

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially limit access to personal firearms in the United States.

**Affirmative Ground:** Affirmative teams will have access to a wide variety of unique affirmatives to run. Affirmatives can also be constructed to combat the illegal markets of firearms or markets of firearms with extremely lax regulations. Affirmatives can construct plans to create federal level buybacks to remove illegal and untraceable guns. The success of past buyback programs is still up for debate, making clashes on case during these debates plentiful. Affirmative cases can also be formulated to either ban or regulate self-constructed untraceable firearms without any serial numbers known as Ghost guns. Finally, affirmative teams can argue for the regulation or ban of the design or creation of 3D printed firearms. Cases could include:

- ★ Ban assault weapons or large-capacity ammunition magazines.
- ★ Combating new markets of firearms that are in legal limbo and illegal markets.
- ★ Expanded/Add rigorous background check.
- ★ Expand/Reform Red Flag, Concealed-Carry, and Stand Your Ground laws.
- ★ Government buybacks.
- ★ Hindering/Banning the sales of firearms.
- ★ Adding a sin tax on firearms and ammunition.
- ★ Regulation of usage and storage of personal firearms, who can own, buy firearms, which types of arms that can be sold, etc.



- ★ Requiring liability insurance for firearms to discourage the accumulation of arsenals and provide for victim compensation.

DISADVANTAGES: Negative teams will have access to integral disadvantage ground readily able to link to any affirmative. Traditional Politics DA's will have solid links through the extremely partisan nature of gun control. An illegal market fill-in DA can function as a solvency takeout, case turn, or a proper disadvantage. The federalism disadvantage could also provide an effective avenue for negative teams by arguing that gun control falls under the jurisdiction of individual states, and that federal overreach can affect other initiatives dependent on the federal and state divide.

- ★ Constitutional Rights
- ★ Federalism
- ★ Politics
- ★ Illegal Markets
- ★ Individual Rights
- ★ Current Gun Laws Don't Work

KRITIKS: Negative teams will have access to key kritik ground and will be able to link to the wide array of different affirmatives on the topic by utilizing links and root cause claims to analyze gun control reform as methods to see who is justified in owning and controlling the means of violence in society.

COUNTERPLANS: Negative teams will have access to agent counterplans to test who would be the best actor for the affirmative. Teams can also argue whether the 50 states acting would be better than an overarching federal plan.

**Rationale:** Does the constitutional right to bear arms in the second amendment mean that the government may not limit American gun ownership or regulate firearms without a Constitutional amendment? Should the government limit or regulate gun ownership? Many would agree that easy access to guns enables mass murder, impairs school safety, exacerbates domestic violence, and shortens Americans' life expectancy. Individual States and communities have grappled with gun violence and enacted laws leading to a mixed bag of results and are inherently limited by the ease with which guns are transferred between jurisdictions. Although there may be some regional differences, everyone's local sphere includes family members and co-workers who passionately disagree on the path forward. A gun control debate would allow debaters to further understand the topic and dispel the belief that only two sides of this topic exist which leads to hyper-partisanship of the issue.

The literature on this topic is extensive. The topic itself will be accessible to both new and experienced debaters. The case area is large enough to keep it interesting throughout the year and narrow enough to have a manageable research burden.