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### Works Cited

Wilson, Brian. "Point: The Unrealistic Goals Of Gun Control." *Points Of View: Gun Control* (2015): 5. *Points of View Reference Center*. Web. 14 Jan. 2016.

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### **Point: The Unrealistic Goals of Gun Control.**

**Thesis:** Violent crime allows the lives of the majority to be influenced by a few people, so it is right to allow the people to possess guns to protect their families and property.

**Summary:** It seems like common sense: if you take all the guns off the streets, violent crime would take a nosedive. There are two problems with this argument: it assumes those who break a country's laws will somehow experience an attack of conscience, and it ignores the reality that even if guns disappear, bad people will find ways to do bad things. The often-scrutinized Second Amendment to the US Constitution guarantees the right of law-abiding citizens to "keep and bear arms." The nation's founders recognized the God-given right of citizens to protect themselves, and thus provided future generations the chance to use guns for protection. The answer to safer streets is not the gradual elimination of guns, instead the government should continue prosecuting gun crimes aggressively, instilling in those who commit gun crimes a fear of breaking the firearm laws again. While every law-abiding citizen would like to think that the world could be rid of violence, it is not realistic to think so. Since law enforcement cannot respond to every call for help, it is imperative that Americans able to handle the responsibility of owning firearms be permitted to buy and keep them without the fear of unnecessary government intrusion.

### **The Second Amendment**

In 1997, the same year Australia's tough restrictions took effect, Great Britain also passed a sweeping gun control measure, removing about 80 percent of the nation's 200,000 registered guns from the streets.

In contrast, the often-scrutinized Second Amendment to the United States Constitution guarantees

the right of law-abiding citizens to "keep and bear arms." The nation's founders recognized the God-given right of citizens to protect themselves, and thus provided future generations the chance to use guns for protection. Americans should be thankful: a 1993 study by Drs. Gary Kleck and Marc Gertz indicates that guns are used for self-defense as many as 2.3 million times each year.

Many gun-control advocates misinterpret the constitutional guarantee of an armed, "well-regulated militia." In the essay "Gun Control: Separating Reality From Symbolism," Don B. Kates Jr. refutes the argument that only states may maintain militias. He maintains that relatively few legal arguments against gun control deal with states' rights, while the majority of legal opinion since 1980 supports an individual's right to own firearms

Kates further explains that James Madison, who wrote the Second Amendment, intended to protect citizens against having their guns seized by the government. Limiting the operation of militias to the state level runs contrary to the founders' intentions. They established a representative republic to protect the minority from oppression by the majority, and to guard against tyranny. Violent crime, however, allows the lives of the majority to be influenced by a few people, so it is right to allow the people to possess guns to protect their families and property.

### **Making Streets Safer**

The original intent of the founders prevents politicians from trying to water down the right to bear arms. Still, there were many attempts during the 1990s to restrict gun ownership in the United States. Liberal politicians believe that tighter gun control measures will make the streets safer. The assault weapons ban and the Brady Law, both results of the administration of President Bill Clinton, exemplify this thinking.

A recent study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention indicates laws restricting gun ownership may not work as well as intended. Researchers concluded that more study on the subject is necessary, due to "inappropriate numbers of studies, unreliable data, inappropriate analyses, and inconsistent results."

In 1996, the University of Chicago's John Lott studied 15 years of FBI statistics and concluded that relaxed gun laws led to a decline in crime. His theory is that if people are unsure about who is armed and who is not, they are less likely to commit crimes. Conservatives have adopted this theory as the principle argument for laws allowing people to carry concealed handguns.

In a 1997 *Los Angeles Times* article, Lott said that between 1995 and 1996, 10 states approved laws allowing residents to carry concealed guns for protection, and by 1997, 31 states allowed residents to carry handguns.

### **Public Safety**

The answer to safer streets is not the gradual elimination of guns -- the experiences of Australia and Great Britain prove that. Instead, the government should continue prosecuting gun crimes aggressively, instilling in those who commit gun crimes a fear of breaking the firearm laws again. It also would be helpful for legislators to reconsider some of the gun control measures enacted in recent years. The five-day waiting period imposed by the Brady Law, for instance, has not worked

as its supporters intended.

Public safety campaigns are famous for using some form of the axiom: "If it saves one life, it must be worth it." However, if everyone followed this advice, no one would take even the most minimal of risks. While it sounds good on a press release or television commercial, it does not work in real life. Gun control is no different.

## Conclusion

While every law-abiding citizen would like to think that the world could be rid of violence, it is not realistic to think so. Since law enforcement cannot respond to every call for help, it's imperative that Americans able to handle the responsibility of owning firearms be permitted to buy and keep them without the fear of unnecessary government intrusion.

## Ponder This

1. What is the author's main argument against gun control?
2. How effectively do the author's examples of gun control in Great Britain and Australia support his argument? Discuss.
3. Analyze whether or not the author convincingly refutes the 'well-regulated militia' argument made by gun control advocates.
4. Discuss how effectively the author uses studies to support his main argument.
5. Do you agree or disagree with the author's conclusion that it is 'imperative that Americans able to handle the responsibility of owning firearms be permitted to buy and keep them'? Why?

## Bibliography

### Books

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