**Introduction**

The United States is experiencing the highest rate of gun deaths in the world. According to Gramlich (2022), there were approximately 45,222 deaths caused by gun-related injuries in 2020. This figure includes homicide and suicide cases involving the use of a gun. Extra-judicial killings and unintentional deaths associated with the use of guns have also increased in the recent past. These unfortunate deaths can be attributed to the high number of licensed guns owned by citizens. As a result of the rising cases of murders, many people have advocated for gun control through legislation. Gun control reduces gun violence, suicide, and accidental gun injuries; but opponents argue that it may not be effective in deterring crime and could infringe on the rights of individuals to self-protection.

**Pros of Gun Control**

One of the advantages of gun control legislation is that it reduces the number of guns in the hands of ordinary citizens, leading to the decline of gun violence in society. According to Melgar and Dunn (2018), 74% of shootings that occurred between 1982 and 2017 involved the use of legally purchased guns. The remaining 26% of mass shootings involved guns owned by family members or those purchased illegally. This statistic shows that gun ownership increases the chances of violence; and the problem can be remedied by regulating gun use through legislation. Gun control laws help in restricting gun ownership (Santaella-Tenorio, 2016). This does not necessarily mean banning the purchase of guns, but it gives authorities the power to conduct background checks and limiting the use of such guns so that they do not end up in dangerous hands.

Another advantage of gun control is that it reduces accidental injuries and suicides caused by firearms. According to Napit (2021), approximately 200 people die from accidental shooting every year. Furthermore, 23,941 people were reported to have died as a result of firearm suicide in 2019 (UC Davis Health, 2020). This represents more than half of all the deaths caused by gun use in the United States, while a further 37% of the gun deaths resulted from homicide. Based on these statistics, it is clear that guns are responsible for a large number of suicide cases in the country. The problems of suicide and accidental gun deaths can be solved by creating gun control laws that will reduce the ownership and use of guns in society.

Gun control laws should also be enacted in the United States to reduce domestic violence against women and children. Research has shown that the risk of a woman being killed in a domestic conflict increases by 500% if a gun is available (Gerney and Parsons, 2014). At least five women die every day as a result of injuries caused by a gunshot. There were more women killed in a domestic violence involving a gun between 2001 and 2012 than there were soldiers killed in Afghanistan and Iraq wars between 2001 and 2015 (Gerney and Parsons, 2014; Defense Manpower Data Center, 2015). Indeed, the deaths of women as a result of domestic violence is exacerbated by the presence of a gun. This problem can be addressed by developing gun control policies that will limit gun ownership and use in domestic settings.

**Cons of Gun Control**

Opponents of gun control argue that restricting the use of guns may infringe on people’s constitutional right to own guns. Those who hold this view base their argument on the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution which states that people’s right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed. In this perspective, gun control is not appropriate because it goes against the American tradition of gun ownership, which has been in existence before independence. In the case of *District of Columbia et al. v. Heller,* the judges affirmed the individual rights of individuals to possess and use firearms for lawful purposes such as self-defense. However, the same court argued that the right to own guns is not an unlimited right. This means that the Court did not intend to override the government’s role of prohibiting gun ownership among felons or the use of guns in sensitive areas such as school grounds.

Another disadvantage of gun control is that it may deny people the right to use guns for sports and hunting. The use of guns for hunting has been a longstanding tradition in the United States. As of 2011, there were approximately 13.7 hunters using guns in the United States (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2011). Gun control would deny this population their right to sport. It would also reduce the economic potential of the hunting and sport industry.

**Conclusion**

Gun control has become a controversial topic in the United States due to increased cases of gun deaths. Mass shootings, gun suicides, and accidental gun deaths have cost the United States a lot of lives. Gun control can help in reducing the ownership and use of guns in society. Consequently, this leads to a decline in violence rates, domestic violence involving guns, and gun deaths caused by homicides. Opponents of gun control argue that limiting gun ownership may deny people their rights to own guns for self-defense and hunting. However, gun control does not necessarily mean outlawing the use of guns for hunting and sport; nor does it mean stopping people from owning guns for self-defense. Gun control is important to regulate how guns are sold and used to ensure that they do not end up in the wrong hands.

**References**

Defense Manpower Data Center. (2015). *Defense Casualty Analysis System (DCAS).* Accessed from https://dcas.dmdc.osd.mil/dcas/app/home.

Gerney, A. and Parsons, C. (2014). Women under the Gun: How Gun Violence Affects Women and 4 Policy Solutions to Better Protect Them. *Justice Research and Statistics Association*, https://ncvc.dspacedirect.org/handle/20.500.11990/583.

Gramlich, J. (2022). What the Data Says about Gun Deaths in the U.S. *Pew Research Center*, https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2022/02/03/what-the-data-says-about-gun-deaths-in-the-u-s/.

Melgar, L. and Dunn, L. (2018). Since 1982, 74 Percent Of Mass Shooters Obtained Their Guns Legally. *KUNC*, https://www.kunc.org/2018-11-02/since-1982-74-percent-of-mass-shooters-obtained-their-guns-legally.

Napit, R. (2021). 8 Pros and Cons of Gun Control. *Honest Pros and Cons*, https://honestproscons.com/pros-and-cons-of-gun-control/.

Santaella-Tenorio, J., Cerdá, M., Villaveces, A., Galea, S. (2016). What Do We Know About the Association Between Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Injuries? *Epidemiologic Review*, 38(1), 140-157.

UC Davis Health. (2020). *Facts and Figures: The Human Toll*. Accessed from https://health.ucdavis.edu/what-you-can-do/facts.html.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (2011). *2011 National Survey of Fishing Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. Available at: https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/fhwar/publications/2011/fhw11-tx.pdf [Accessed September 24, 2022).