

Ten Ways that Thoughtful, Good-hearted People Disagree about Gun Control & Gun Rights

From Furious to Curious

A New Dialogue-Sparking Series from the Village Square¹



1. Is the gradual U.S. evolution in gun laws towards greater control something to fear or celebrate?

- *Celebrate and advance it.* Rather than a slippery slope, these are common sense moves that will only improve our safety as a nation. Honest citizens have nothing to fear from gun registration and licensing which will only curb crime by disarming criminals. And no, nobody's demanding gun confiscation – either now or in the future.
- *Fear it and fight it.* It's a slippery slope leading to the very thing our founding fathers warned against – and the changes are sure to make us less safe as a nation. There are reasons to believe that confiscation could even be allowed one day.

2. How effective are current laws in place about guns in America?

- The regulations in place across America are clearly ineffective in monitoring gun purchases - which are very easy to buy. For instance, anyone - even felons - can get guns at a gun-show or online without a background check. Better enforcement of existing laws is simply not enough; there needs to be considerable changes to make them more effective.
- There are effective, legitimate protocols in place across America already that regulate and monitor gun purchases – proven to be sufficient in their intended purpose. Criminals cannot simply get guns anywhere – including at gun shows or on the internet. Thus, no significant changes need to be made to make them more effective. Instead of improving our (poor) enforcement of laws, our federal government seems more interested in proliferating additional worrisome measures.

3. How effective will any of these newly proposed laws be to prevent these tragedies from continuing?

- Some laws could and would have a preventive effect – and can effectively deter criminal action. Better gun control is key to stopping gun violence and can save lives.
- No laws could have prevented the tragedy, since terrorists and criminals simply aren't deterred by laws. More gun control simply will not stop gun violence or change the behavior of violent criminals.

4. What do most Americans want to see happen in relation to federal gun laws?

- The general consensus of Americans favor new additional federal gun controls – and share a belief that greater gun control is needed to prevent mass shootings in the United States. This is especially true in relation to semi-automatic firearms, which have no legitimate sporting purpose and are the preferred weapon of choice for criminals.
- People like to *say* the majority of Americans favor strict additional federal regulations. The reality is large numbers of Americans are hesitant about additional gun control, with more and more people becoming gun owners every day. Banning semi-automatic firearms could be a slippery slope to banning other kinds of guns.

5. Does having more guns in a community (and more armed citizens) make that community more or less safe from mass shootings - compared to places that don't allow guns?

- *Less safe!* Mass shootings are rarely if ever prevented by 'good guys' (concealed carriers). Gun-free zones are safer and have been shown to prevent gun violence.
- *More safe!* More 'good guys' with guns *can* stop rampaging bad guys. Shooters target gun-free zones - which are clearly more vulnerable to such violence.

¹ The intention is to fairly "map out" both key questions and the associates responses - drawing upon the strongest arguments, in the simplest and most objective language possible. The attempt here is to represent fairly the most reasonable and nuanced perspectives on both sides - in a way that would be recognizable to each side - 'yes, that's it!')

6. Are people who own guns personally – keeping them in their home or on their bodies – more or less safe?

- While people who carry guns may *feel* more safe, the potential for accidents is high (toddlers killed more people than terrorists in 2016). Since a gun in a home is many times more likely to kill a family member than to stop a criminal, armed citizens are not a deterrent to crime.
- In the vast majority of cases, carrying a gun for self-defense makes you safer – and in many cases in modern life, is essential for self-defense. The existence of sloppy people who do not follow precautions well enough, does not change this fact - nor the reality that keeping a gun at home also clearly makes you safer.

7. Are deaths by firearms getting worse in America?

- *Yes they are.* Gun violence is clearly skyrocketing - with an average of thirty people shot dead in America each day.
- *No they are not.* While the 'skyrocketing gun violence' supports a particular political agenda, the reality is that gun violence is currently decreasing in America.

8. Do comparative rates of violence and gun use across different countries suggest a particular course of action here?

- *Yes.* Stiff gun control laws are effective as shown by the low crime rates in England and Japan, while U. S crime rates continue to soar (25 times higher than other high-income countries)
- *Yes.* Strict gun control has *not* reduced violent crime in other countries, as much as people like to say - and it has only impacted law-abiding citizens, making no difference in whether criminals use guns.

9. Are we misinterpreting what the Founding Fathers intended in the Second Amendment – one way or the other?

- The right guaranteed under the Second Amendment is limited specifically to the arming of a 'well-regulated Militia' that can be compared today to the National Guard.
- The right to defend oneself was never intended to be restricted to those within a militia unit. This is simply another way to restrict firearm rights in the country.

10. Is all the attention being paid to guns fair or overstated?

- *Quite fair.* Since guns are the proximal cause of many deaths, it can hardly be said that Americans are over-focusing on their regulation. Sporting aside, the primary purpose of most guns is some kind of violence. Period. So yes, guns kill people.
- *Hugely overstated.* We are vilifying inanimate objects (guns) and over-focusing on them to the exclusion of the whole complex picture of contributing factors in killings (involving many other factors like social isolation, broken families, video games, drug-induced violence – both illegal and prescription). Guns are just a tool, like knives and hammers. Guns don't kill people—people kill people.