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ENG1121

Unit 2 Writing Assignment

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How are the roots of gun control, the impact of the second amendment and the social issues caused by the right to bear arms in the United States related to America's unique freedom?

The United States is a free and democratic country. Two hundred and forty four years ago, the Declaration of Independence proposed that "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" are the basic rights of human beings. In these two hundred years, the United States has been implementing it and leading the world in democracy and human rights. The United States protects the individual right to keep and bear arms. But, in modern times, there was a debate about the freedom of holding guns. Gun control has become an important social issue in the United States.

I often see news about gun injuries on social media. For example, "student Kills 2 at California High School", "Las Vegas shooting", etc. This has attracted my attention to the issue of guns. After reading these news, I began to think about why such

tragedies often happen in the United States; why most countries in the world, including democratic countries, prohibit people from holding guns, while the US Constitution allows, and what we can do to reduce and avoid such incidents.

In this research, I look forward to finding the information about guns, including the history of guns in the United States; The Gun Control Act; The Second Amendment; The impact of guns on crime. The issue of gun control is a sensitive issue in the United States. It has been debated from a hundred years ago. Some people say that individuals have the right to own guns, which is supported by the US constitution. They believe that guns are needed for self-defense. Some people object that guns will cause social chaos, and lead to more crimes and casualties even bring disaster to the United States.

OLIVIA B. WAXMAN. "How the Gun Control Act of 1968 Changed America's Approach to Firearms—And What People Get Wrong About That History". TIME. 25 OCTOBER 2018, <https://time.com/5429002/gun-control-act-history-1968/>

This article was published in time magazine on the 50th anniversary of the gun control act of 1968. The author introduced how The Gun Control Act was passed. The reason was because of the April 4, 1968, assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., shortly followed by the June 5 assassination of Robert F. Kennedy. The most important things the law changed are it banned the sale of guns to minors, drug addicts and mentally unbalanced people. It also banned interstate shipments of

firearms and ammunition. The Gun Control Act changed people's concept of guns and restricted the trade of guns. The article mentioned the Firearms Owners Protections Act proposed by the NRA, which modified some parts of The Gun Control Act of 1968. The Firearms Owners Protections Act makes it easier for individuals to sell firearms without a license. The author thinks people get wrong about the history of gun control because people consider that early colonial America had no gun laws. But in fact, gun laws existed from the beginning of the 1600's, and people didn't realize that gun laws were much tougher 150 years ago.

1968 was a period when civil rights were taken seriously in the United States. After the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., black riots occurred in some large cities in the United States. Robert F. Kennedy is a potential presidential candidate. If he is not assassinated, the history of the United States may be rewritten. At the beginning of the journal, Time Magazine described The Gun Control Act as "better than nothing" in 1968. This shows how difficult it is to pass the gun control laws. This reminds me of The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act enacted in 1993. The cause of the law was James Brady, who was shot and wounded while John Hinckley tried to assassinate President Ronald Reagan. John Hinckley Jr. has mental problems, but he has guns. Although the law clearly stated that mentally unbalanced people were unable to own guns, gun dealers were not virtually subject systematic scrutiny. Every time when a new gun control law comes out, it undoubtedly comes

with blood, which means there are always tragedies behind it.

“Though the 1968 law was a victory of sorts for gun-control activists, many were disappointed it didn't include a registry of firearms or federal licensing requirements for gun owners.” (Waxman, Para.3, Line.1)

Doherty, Brian. Gun Control on Trial: Inside the Supreme Court Battle over the Second Amendment, Cato Institute, 2008. ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/citytech-ebooks/detail.action?docID=690464>.

The title of the first chapter of the book is the roots of the second amendment, it tells the origin of the second amendment from a historical perspective. This chapter begins with the District of Columbia v. Heller and discusses the second amendment, which gives people the right to use weapons for self-defense. The author stated that one of the advantages of the Second Amendment is it prevents the United States from becoming tyrannical, because the people will have superior firepower. The author believes that the Second Amendment should be understood through the background in English history. The declaration of rights in Britain stipulated English right to arms. After Charles II came to power, in order to restore the monarchy, he disarmed tens of thousands of former soldiers of the Cromwell era, and also formulated strict gun control laws. The article mentions the unique "gun culture" of the United States, guns are common equipment in daily life during the founding era of America, which represents the American tradition. The United States is a country born in the

revolution. Gun culture represents the spirits of America which are the revolutionary spirit of brave resistance and the adventurous spirit of conquering the frontier.

Aristotle, a philosopher of Western civilization, and Cicero, a Roman statesman, both believe that self-preservation is the most basic of classical liberal rights. The second half of this chapter presents a couple of cases on gun control, it tells how the court adjudicates, and how it affects the gun control laws today.

The biggest controversy in the Second Amendment is whether the militia's right to bear guns means that the individual has the right to own guns. *District of Columbia v. Heller* was a landmark decision, because it protects the individual's right to keep and bear arms, which did not relate to the militia. The law also states that the right to bear arms is limited. Guns will continue to be controlled but will not be banned.

Charles I was executed by Cromwell in 1649. Cromwell took over the power of Britain and was basically a tyrant. This is a warning to the United States Constitutional Convention more than a hundred years later, how to prevent a tyrant like Cromwell in the United States in the future. After the US Constitution was promulgated, the Founding Father of the United States, James Madison and Thomas Jefferson, realized that the Constitution only considered the rights of the government and Congress. They believe that there should be laws to protect the rights of the people. The Bill of Rights introduced later gave the people rights and the second amendment in this law which gave the people's right to keep guns. Unlike when the

Constitution was promulgated; the Bill of Rights was passed without objection at the Constitutional Convention, which reflected the support of the people and representatives for personal gun ownership at that time. Historically, the American people had always had the habit of holding guns during the colonial period. The War of Independence was due to the first shots fired by 70 militiamen in Lexington. The continental army established by General Washington was composed of militiamen from each colony. In the magnificent Westward Movement in the United States, every caravan was packed with guns in addition to carrying food. They had to face wild beasts and Indians when they settled in the west, and they needed guns to protect themselves. In Hollywood movies that reflect western culture, the cowboy's waist is always equipped with a revolver, which is the iconic element of the United States. The Second Amendment gives the people the right to hold guns, and it is also a symbol of the American spirit of freedom.

“To most, it would have been so obvious that the government can’t legitimately disarm a free people that even spelling it out would have seemed bizarre and pointless.” (Doherty 1)

“The United States was a country whose citizens had a right— which the government could not abrogate—to possess arms for their personal use.”(Doherty 6)

CAITLIN O'KANE. "Florida sheriff encourages residents to shoot looters if they try to break into homes." CBS NEWS, 3 June 2020, _

<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/florida-polk-county-sheriff-gary-judd-encourages-shooting-looters/>

The news was released on June 3, 2020, when the George Floyd incident triggered parades in some cities in the United States, some of which developed into violence. Polk County Sheriff Judd Grady said at a news conference that some people would bring crime into the community. He encouraged people to own guns and blow out criminals if there was a burglary. His speech caused controversy in the society. Some people praised what he said, while others believe that his words will increase the potential for violence.

People's reaction to what Sheriff Judd said shows people's different attitudes towards guns. The sheriff suggested that every family should own guns for their protection, because the police cannot protect everyone. We can imagine that if a riot suddenly happens, there are looters holding guns and trying to break into people's houses. You can only protect yourself and your family by using weapons. We often see some shops being robbed on TV. Through the security camera, we see the shopkeeper taking out a gun under the counter to kick out the gangsters. This kind of crime happens suddenly. We don't have the time and opportunity to call the police. So, if we don't own a gun, we will be in danger. Guns are not the main cause of killing

people. If someone wants to kill people, he can use any tools by any methods to do so. Guns are tools to people, like cars; we can't ban the use of cars just because of frequent traffic accidents. The usage of guns depends on whether people abide by the law. We can't prohibit everyone from owning guns because some people commit crimes through guns. This is unfair to most citizens. If people lose the right to bear arms, they lose the ability to protect themselves. If the criminal has weapons, but the citizens do not have weapons to defend themselves, it will only bring more innocent deaths and chaos to the country.

"Because the people of Polk County like guns, they have guns, I encourage them to own guns, and they're going to be in their homes tonight with their guns loaded, and if you try to break into their homes to steal, to set fires, I'm highly recommending they blow you back out of the house with their guns. So, leave the community alone."(O'KANE, Para.3, Line.2)

The United States has been founded for 244 years, and the government was stable. There was no coup or revolution in the United States. One of the main reasons why the United States has become a superpower in the world is the Constitution and Bill of Rights. The first Amendment specifically prohibited Congress from passing any law restricting the right to freedom of religion, speech, press, peaceable assembly or petition. The second Amend guaranteed people's right to keep and bear arms. The protection of the people's right to bear arms is as important as the right to freedom of

speech. On this point, the thirteen colonies agreed unanimously. Through research, I found a theory that respecting tradition is more conducive to national stability and people's living and working in peace and contentment than destroying tradition. For example, the Roman Republic was the most prosperous state at that time, but it gradually declined when the Roman republic become the Roman Empire. If guns are banned, the Second Amendment will be overturned, which will have a chain reaction that will be unpredictable like dominoes. The Declaration of Independence in 1776 proclaimed national freedom, the constitution in 1787 proclaimed political freedom, and the Bill of Rights proclaimed individual freedom. Americans have always believed in these three freedoms. The spirit of freedom in the United States comes from the Bible, The Mayflower Compact of 1620, and the rebellion against the British tyrant. The readers of this article are people who were interested in gun control, especially those who support the prohibition of guns and the abolition of the second amendment in the United States. It is easy to ban guns, but it will have serious consequences for American traditions and liberal democracy. This article is also written to people in other countries in the world, telling them why the United States has gun control problems. It comes from Americans' desire and protection for freedom, which is unique to the United States. I may become a qualified gun owner in the future, and I will buy a gun and put it in my drawer. I will feel proud every time I see it and touch it, because only in America people have such freedom.