

## Gun Control Hot Summer Nights

### Intro – Monday Fox News Headline

- “Federal judge upholds Oregon gun control law described as 'nation's **most extreme**’. They also reported that “Gun rights activists are **appealing** the decision to the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals.”
- Last Friday’s ruling found that Oregon's law is in line with the Second Amendment because it is in keeping with a **U.S. tradition** of "regulating uniquely dangerous features of weapons and firearms to protect public safety."
- Oregon's Measure 114 **bans large capacity magazines** and requires residents to *obtain a permit before purchasing firearms*.
- The law does not affect large-capacity magazines already owned by state residents, but it restricts those gun owners from taking those firearms **outside their home** for any reason other than gun range practice, shooting competitions, or hunting.
- **The Oregon Firearms Association**, which first sued arguing the law was unconstitutional, expressed **outrage** at the ruling in a statement posted to their website. (see quote below)
- “Today, Judge Karin Immergut ruled against gun owners, the Second Amendment and a basic understanding of the English language...simple nonsense and sure to be overturned.”
- These headlines are constant as the **debate over gun control** continues to **rage** in our culture.

### 1. What is gun control?

- Gun control, or firearms regulation, is the set of **laws or policies** that regulate the manufacture, sale, transfer, possession, modification, or use of firearms by civilians.
- Most countries have relatively restrictive firearms laws, with only a few being categorized as **permissive**, such as Switzerland and the Scandinavian countries.
- Jurisdictions that regulate private access to firearms typically first restrict ownership of certain **categories of firearms**, and may then make further restrictions of the **categories of persons** who may be granted a license to own or carry.
- In some countries, such as the United States, gun control may be implemented at any of the **federal, state, or local** levels.
- The term “gun control” itself is considered **politicized**. Many gun control advocates prefer the use of terms like “*gun-violence prevention*”, “*gun safety*”, or “*common-sense regulation*” to describe their objectives.
- In 2007, a global supply of **875 million small arms** were estimated to be in the hands of civilians, law enforcement agencies, and national armed forces. Of these firearms, **650 million**, or 75%, were estimated to be held by civilians.
- U.S. civilians account for **270 million** small arms. About 200 million are controlled by military forces. Law enforcement agencies have 26 million small arms. Gangs possess about 2 in every 10.

## 2. Who is advocating for gun control?

- After the massacre of schoolchildren at Sandy Hook Elementary in Newtown, Conn., in 2012, the gun-control movement was **small and badly outspent** by the National Rifle Association.
- Parents seeking an outlet for their grief and rage congregated on **Facebook**, where they formed their own group, **Moms Demand Action**, to push for stricter gun laws.
- By far the most significant and best-known donor in the years since has been **Michael Bloomberg**, the billionaire and former New York City mayor.
- In 2013, his mayors' initiative merged with Moms Demand Action to create **Everytown for Gun Safety**, the closest thing that the gun-control movement has to a counterweight to the N.R.A. – they spent \$36.5 million in 2013 alone.
- Since then, more groups have sprung up, including **Giffords**, started in 2013 by former Representative Gabrielle Giffords, who was nearly killed in a mass shooting in Tucson, Ariz.
- Another group called "**March for Our Lives**," was founded by survivors of the 2018 school shooting in Parkland, Fla. Advocacy has peaked in the wake of **several mass & school shootings**.
- Advocates say that **gun sales & gun deaths** have risen in tandem, and that the number of **mass shootings** continues to increase, including more recently in Buffalo, Uvalde, & Nashville.
- In the wake of those tragedies, **large donors** have started supporting gun control legislation.

## 3. Who is opposed to gun control?

- The number one gun rights organization in America is the **National Rifle Association** (NRA). In 2022, they donated **nearly \$6 million** to the campaigns of gun rights candidates.
- The number one gun rights lobbying group in America is the **National Shooting Sports Foundation**. In 2022, they spent nearly **\$5 million** lobbying Congress to protect gun rights.
- The primary goal of all gun ownership advocacy groups is to **protect the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment of the Constitution**, which says, "*A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.*"
- Gun rights advocates see weapon possession as a matter of **individual** rights. They say that people have the right to arm themselves for hunting, self-defense, sport – or just because they want to.
- In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled for the first time, in a 5-to-4 decision, that the Second Amendment protects **an individual's right** to keep and bear firearms. Even so, debates continue to rage on what sorts of limitations on that right are allowable.
- Gun owners argue that weapons actually make society **safer**, giving people the power of self-defense, and dissuading criminals from victimizing people who might be armed. In particular, they say that an armed citizen can stop **a mass shooter**.

## 4. Does gun control work?

- If you ask gun **control** advocates this question, they'll obviously say **YES**. If you ask gun **rights** advocates this question, they'll say **NO**. But which group is correct, or is the truth in the middle?
- **The RAND Corporation** is a non-partisan American nonprofit global policy think tank and research institute that conducts research and development in multiple fields and industries.
- They found that POLICIES REGULATING WHO MAY LEGALLY OWN, PURCHASE, OR POSSESS FIREARMS – such as minimum age requirements – had **very little to no effect** on gun use outcomes.
- They also found that POLICIES REGULATING FIREARM SALES AND TRANSFERS – such as background checks and safety training requirements – had **very little to no effect**.
- BUT they did find that POLICIES REGULATING THE LEGAL USE, STORAGE, OR CARRYING OF FIREARMS – such as Child-Access Prevention Laws – had **a much more significant effect** on gun use outcomes.
- Thus, objective research seems to indicate that gun control measures **aren't as effective as one might hope** in protecting our citizens from gun violence. But **WHY?**
- Sadly, it's because **criminals don't obey laws**. You can require dealers to run background checks, but criminals don't buy from dealers. You can try to implement gun-free zones, but most criminals will disregard those restrictions.

## 5. What is the Christian response to gun control?

- First and foremost, Christians **stand against all forms of violence** (with the exception of just war principles). We believe in **protecting** our fellow man and prosecuting lawbreakers.
- Rom. 13:4 – “if you do evil, be afraid; for he (the governing authority) does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”
- The Golden Rule – “whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 7:12) – requires that we do all we can to **protect others** from violence and crime.
- As we work to protect others, we must avoid the temptation to **infringe upon their rights and privileges**. We need to realize that our forefathers wrote the 2<sup>nd</sup> amendment for a reason.
- Protecting the rights of our fellow Americans to keep and bear arms is **right**, because it preserves their ability to **protect themselves** from potential threats – intruders, robbers, tyranny, etc.
- Christians are also honest, and thus we need to honestly admit that **many gun control measures don't work**. In fact, many are counter-productive – they disarm law-abiding citizens, thus empowering criminals to commit violent crime.
- We must work together to enact some responsible, common-sense, & effective gun ownership measures that actually work. BUT, we must keep our **focus** on the **criminal** rather than the weapon. Violence is a problem **ONLY GOD** can fix!