The Great Gun Control Debate

One of the most visible issues under debate is whether the federal government should provide a stronger role in regulating handguns and related firearms. Methods of regulation include making it harder for dangerous persons to buy a gun, improving safety of guns, regulating sales at gun shows, and more.

The most visible group that is AGAINST more federal regulations is the National Rifle Association (NRA).

The most visible group that is IN FAVOR of more federal regulations is Handgun Control (HCI), along with its affiliate organization, the Center to Prevent Handgun Violence.

The NRA argues that the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution guarantees individuals the right to own and carry guns. They are concerned that federal regulations will continue to increase until owning a handgun will be difficult to achieve, infringing on their Constitutional rights. They also argue that if law-abiding citizens have guns, they are safer from criminals, bringing crime rates down.

HCI, on the other hand, argues that the Second Amendment of the U.S. Constitution does not guarantee individuals the right to own and carry guns. Further, they argue that when more people have guns, deaths and injuries from guns increase.

At the heart of the debate is a two-fold question:

“Does the government have the right to impose regulations on an individual freedom that appears to be guaranteed by the Second Amendment?” and:

“Does the Second Amendment actually guarantee individuals the right to own and carry guns?”

We will debate this issue in class. We will break into two groups - one that represents the views AGAINST more federal regulations (like the views held by the NRA), and one that represents the views IN FAVOR of more federal regulations (like the views held by the HCI).

You will have objectives to meet on both sides of the issues, research to complete, and prepare for an in-class debate.

Have fun!
TOPICS TO RESEARCH

Topic #1: The INTENT behind the Second Amendment:
A. Was the intent to protect individual citizens?
B. Was the intent solely for national defense? (i.e. "well-regulated militia")
C. Court cases to support each position.

Topic #2: Do more guns mean more deaths and injuries?
A. Statistics to support each position.
B. What about other weapons???

Topic #3: The Party Line and Money
A. Debate generally divided between Republicans and Democrats - explore the prominent members from both parties - including those who "cross party lines"
B. Political issues translate into lobbying and money. Explore the political contributions and lobbying efforts on behalf of both sides of the question.
C. Voting on the issue in the House and Senate - current bills regarding gun control.

Topic #4: Recent gun incidents that spark media attention and public outcry:
A. School shootings
B. Work-related shootings
C. Gang-related shootings