

Gun Control FAQ

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US has very lax gun laws

- Individual states have very different laws
 - NJ, CT, NY, IL, NJ, DC, CA are far more restrictive than WA
 - It is almost impossible to legally carry handguns in many states
 - Registration and licensing required for guns in many states
 - Magazine capacity is limited to 10 in many states
- Incidentally, the most restrictive states are those are usually the states with most “gun violence”
 - There are no gun shops in Chicago
 - There are more shootings in Chicago in some weekends than in Seattle in a year
- Switzerland, on the other hand...
 - No license, no background check required for purchases of shotguns and bolt action long guns
 - License (equivalent to a background check) is required for purchasing handguns and semi-automatic long guns
 - 31% gun ownership rate (8M population has 420000 full auto assault rifles, 320000 semi auto assault rifles, total number of firearms is 1.2-3M)
 - Private transfers require no license, no background checks
- Czech Republic
 - Shall-issue license (including foreigners from EU, NATO countries, and permanent residents)
 - Allows owning guns for self-defense
 - Full auto firearms allowed (for collectors)
 - One can actually own a tank there
- Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_laws_in_the_United_States_by_state,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_politics_in_Switzerland,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_politics_in_the_Czech_Republic

Firearms ownership correlates with gun violence

- US has the world's biggest per-capita number of firearms
 - It is #111 by intentional homicide rate compared to other countries (4.7 per 100000)
- Guns are very difficult to get (legally) in Mexico
 - It is #22 (21.5 per 100000)
- Guns are practically impossible to get in Russia
 - It is #66 (9.2 per 100000)
- Switzerland has more liberal gun laws than most US states
 - It is #209 (0.6 per 100000)
- Czech Republic has some of the most liberal gun laws in Europe, and favorably compares to many US states
 - It is #189, same as Great Britain (1.0 per 100000), where guns are far, far more difficult to obtain
- Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_intentional_homicide_rate, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gun_politics_in_Mexico, <http://masterrussian.net/f51/gun-laws-regulations-russia-14893/>

Could there be another reason?

- How about inequality? US is unique among the developed countries because it has by far the highest rate of inequality
 - Turns out that correlation between gun ownership and homicide rates is far, far lower than the correlation between GINI coefficient and the homicide rate
 - In US violent crime happens overwhelmingly in poor neighborhoods
 - If you want to truly address the violence – you need to fight poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunities
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- Sources: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Number_of_guns_per_capita_by_country,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_income_equality,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_intentional_homicide_rate

What about Australia?

- Didn't Australia experienced a sharp decline in gun violence after it banned guns?
- Absolutely! However, it didn't do almost anything to the overall homicide rates (though the percentage of homicides performed with guns sharply declined)
- Were at least suicides positively affected?
- Nope!
- Source: <http://preciseshooter.com/blog/GunControlAustralia.aspx>

Why does one need an assault weapon?

- No one does - there is no such thing
- Most firearms derive from a small number of very common designs
 - For example, all bolt action rifles are extremely similar, most semi auto handguns are extremely similar, there are just a handful of semi auto rifle designs
- Militaries standardize some of these designs (for parts compatibility), and this “iconic” looks are born. But these guns aren’t any different from their civilian equivalent in function
- Thus “Assault Weapons Ban” laws ALWAYS regulate how the firearm can look, not how it functions
 - These are literally one of the world’s stupidest laws
- More here: <http://www.assaultweapon.info/>

Why does one need a high capacity magazine?

- One doesn't!
 - Vast majority of crimes involves less than 7 shots, well under capacity limits imposed by most laws
 - Most military firearms (including the legendary US 1911) throughout the history had magazines with 10 rounds or less
 - One of the perpetrators of Columbine massacre used a HiPoint carbine (AWB compliant!) with 10rd magazines. He just had a lot of them!
- However, these laws CAN turn a \$5000 extremely rare WWI handgun with 2 matching magazines into a \$2000 much less rare WWI handgun with no magazines
 - If someone arbitrarily reduced your net worth by \$3000 – FOR NO REASON! – you would probably also be very unhappy
- Source: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/204431.pdf>

Was AWB effective?

- Nope! The only effect it had was that “Assault Weapons” and “high capacity magazines” were seized less frequently at the crime scenes
 - There was no effect on actual homicide rates
 - (This was because the restricted firearms were not commonly used by criminals in the first place)
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- Source: <https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/grants/204431.pdf>

Why not universal background checks?

- As you may have noticed (if you paid attention), I-594 had absolutely no effect on homicide rates
- This is because people who shoot up other people do not usually get their guns from people who care about the laws
 - Person-to-person transactions happen mostly between gun collectors who are very, very law abiding

What about Seattle Gun Tax?

- This is the second stupidest law regulating firearms (after AWB)
- It says that if you significantly raise prices on guns and ammunition in Seattle's two gun stores, people who want guns will stop buying them, instead of driving for 2 miles more, just outside the city, where there is over a DOZEN of unaffected gun stores (and where most of the transactions already happen today)
- This law was written by someone who does not understand very basic math and economics, let alone guns
- Source: <https://www.facebook.com/NoGunTax/>,
<https://www.preciseshooter.com/blog/SeattleVMath.aspx>

Why does gun community always resists common sense laws?

- Because these laws are only common sense for people who have NO IDEA about guns are not actually common sense
 - In fact, usually they make no sense at all. Like AWB. Or Seattle Gun Tax
- Gun owners are law abiding citizens who do not like criminals. We would be more than happy to support laws that can potentially have effects

Guns are made to kill! Why do people need them?

- Shooting sports was a part of Olympics since the very beginning
- US has 300 million guns – roughly 10,000 of them is used in homicides. This is one in 30,000
 - These guns are literally less harmful than hamburgers – try eating 30,000 of Big Macs, see what will happen to you
- Gun deaths in US are far, far below most common death causes. If you remove gang related deaths (Chicago Police Commissioner estimated that 80% of homicides in Chicago are gang-related), the number is even smaller
- We do not try to eliminate all dangerous entertainment modes, but if we did, we should focus on alcohol first: there is the same number of drunk driving deaths, and far more injuries, than homicides in US per year; there are more child deaths from drunk driving than from guns
- **The only reason people focus on guns and not alcohol is because they use alcohol and not guns – but this is intellectually dishonest**
- <http://www.madd.org/drunk-driving/about/drunk-driving-statistics.html>,
<http://www.alcoholalert.com/drunk-driving-statistics.html>,
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/12/24/guns-children_n_2359661.html

Guns enter illegal channel from legal owners

- ...by being stolen, etc. If we reduce the number of guns in legal channel, it will be more difficult for criminals to get them
- Well, no. US has 300 MILLION guns. They don't spoil – a 1891 rifle is as lethal now as it was then (and this is after it won WWII in 1945). By what percentage do you expect to reduce the overall amount such that criminals (who need only tiny number – well under 100000 guns) will feel the squeeze?
- You cannot assume linear reduction, you really need to get rid of 99% of what's already there for criminals to even feel it. Do you think that reducing the gun count in US by 99% is feasible?

Even if we can save one life, it's worth it!

- Bill Clinton said that Assault Weapons Ban cost Democrats the Congress. It has certainly cost Al Gore election
- If Al Gore were elected, 1000000 (yes, this is a MILLION) people in Iraq would be still alive. And counting...
- It will take 100 years for US gun violence to catch up to this number

- Source: <http://www.assaultweapon.info/>,
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lancet_surveys_of_Iraq_War_casualties

What should be done about gun violence?

- First of all, we should be addressing ALL violence, not just gun violence. As Australian example shows, if you ban guns you will simply redirect violent people to other tools
- Secondly, why do you ask me? Despite my rather large gun collection, I am a very non-violent person. I passed dozens of background checks, I was fingerprinted many times. I don't support our foreign wars, and I passionately dislike criminals
- How the heck do you expect me to know? I just know that my guns have absolutely no part in it!