

Government vs. Guns

ISSUE: Should the government be able to regulate the products that gun manufacturers and retailers manufacture or sell?

Following mass shooting tragedies in theatres and schools, the current administration is pushing for gun control reforms. Proposed reforms include reinstating the assault weapons ban that was in effect from 1994 to 2004, limiting magazine capacity to ten rounds each, and requiring criminal background checks for private gun sales (What's In Obama's Gun Control Proposal). Controversy over the importance of Second Amendment rights and the prevention of future mass shootings has been stirred by these proposals.

Supporters of the proposal want reforms to prevent future mass shootings from happening again, arguing that if the shooters in the recent tragedies didn't have access to guns, and had to reload new magazines more often, less people would have been killed. Gun control advocates dismiss the 2nd Amendment argument by saying that assault weapons and high capacity magazines are not necessary for hunting or home protection. The Brady Campaign is an organization that works to reform the gun industry by enacting and enforcing sensible regulations to reduce gun violence. The Brady Campaign supports gun control reform and also represents victims of gun violence (Brady Campaign). Many victims and/or family members, including former Arizona Representative Gabrielle Giffords, are advocating for gun control reform.

The National Rifle Association (NRA), widely recognized today as a major political force and as America's foremost defender of Second Amendment rights, is against gun control reform. They argue that the Second Amendment was written by our forefathers to ensure the people's protection and freedom. Many citizens are protesting reform. Since the proposal was announced, there has been high demand for guns, magazines, and ammunition. The gun manufacturing and retailing industry is also against the proposal due to the negative business impacts it will create. Changes to products such as magazines will require changing production processes and manufacturing equipment. Restricted manufacturing and sales will cause many people to lose their jobs in an already underemployed economy. The already stretched federal budget will also have to absorb not only the many funding proposals in the plan, but

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also the cost of implementing and enforcing the proposed laws. States, counties, and cities will also be affected by changes. Magpul, a magazine manufacturer in Colorado, has threatened the state to move its business elsewhere if proposed state regulations, already passed in the House, are passed in the Senate. The Denver Post interviewed Magpul's Chief Operating Officer Doug Smith, "If we're able to stay in Colorado and manufacture a product, but law-abiding citizens of the state were unable to purchase the product, customers around the state and the nation would boycott us for remaining here...staying here would hurt our business" (Lee). Magpul provides hundreds of jobs and is expected to spend about \$85 million this year in Colorado. The community will suffer from the loss of jobs and money funneled into the local economy by Magpul, and the government will lose tax revenue earned from Magpul.

Which is more important—protecting society from the possibility of future tragedies or the rights of the people and businesses as well as the economic benefit of gun manufacturing and sales?

There are two sides to every issue:

1. It is necessary for the government to regulate gun manufacturers/retailers in order to protect society?
 2. Gun manufacturers have the right to produce and sell products that the market demands.
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