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Recently, the issue of gun control has been put under the spotlight in the United States of America. This year, nearly every month there has been at least one mass shooting that captivates the attention of Americans, sparking more and more debate about what actions should or shouldn't be taken to prevent events like these from happening.

However, no notable bills have passed through the federal government to change gun control policy in the past few years.

There is a clear need for change in government policy concerning gun control in the US.

In an average day, about 30 Americans fall victim to firearm homicide, as well as an additional 58 people per day who end their own lives with guns. Part of this is caused by firearms being in the hands of the wrong people. In what is known as the "gun show loophole", people in most states can set up a table to sell guns or sell them online without having to perform background checks. This is not a minor issue- in a survey of over 2,000 firearm owners conducted by a researcher at the Harvard School of Public Health, 40 percent of the gun owners responded that they had most recently bought a firearm without a background check. The loophole leads to the possession of guns by people who would not be able to purchase a gun in a retail store that uses background checks. Furthermore, an exemption exists that automatically allows a gun sale to go through if a background check isn't completed within 72 hours. This rule allowed the

shooter from Charleston, South Carolina to purchase a firearm and kill nine people in June of 2015.

Another large issue is the tracking of US firearms and firearm owners. While efforts have been made to require paperwork for the purchase of each gun, there is no database of people who own guns, and therefore not a very good chance of the government being able to stop a potential shooter. Having a gun in public is becoming more common, as restrictions on possessing firearms have been reduced in some states recently. In Georgia, the “guns everywhere” bill was passed last year, which allows people to carry firearms in more public places, like bars, government buildings, airports, and churches. Texas passed a similar law more recently. In addition, the “stand your ground” laws have become more common, with 23 states having adopted them. While the purpose of these laws is to allow people to lawfully use a firearm to fend off a potential killer, they can bring more gun violence problems to the table, as was evident in the Trayvon Martin case a few years back. People could fire a gun at someone who actually is posing no danger to them and be protected by the law.

The solution to reducing gun violence does not lie in increasing gun ownership of citizens. The NRA suggests that more ubiquitous gun ownership in the United States would offer the possibility to live with more security, but it would more likely bring upon just the opposite- constant fear. Armed Americans would be in a continual standoff with each other. Instead of this, Americans should be ensured that they do not have to worry about protecting themselves by purchasing firearms. A practical way to accomplish this is implementing universal background checks nationwide for people purchasing firearms. These background check laws need to be tightened up- they should extend

past requiring only licensed gun dealers to initiate the background checks and eliminate loopholes. Anyone who sells guns regularly should be required to do background checks- this would eliminate the “gun show loophole”. Furthermore, the exemption that automatically allows a gun sale to go through if a background check isn’t completed within 72 hours should be eliminated.

While background checks help keep guns out of the wrong hands, there is more that can be done to limit gun violence without infringing on the rights granted by the second amendment. A very simple step the government can take is increasing the funding for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, which tracks the flow of illegal guns. Additionally, another step that could go a long way to preventing shootings is the creating of a national database of all gun owners and firearms. If someone commits a felony, it could be known that the person has firearms and they could be confiscated. While some might be opposed to a national database, it would not affect gun owners who abide by the law, and their privacy would not be intruded. These policy changes could go a long way to reducing the average of 30 Americans who fall by gun homicide each day.